

BASINGSTOKE CANAL JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Date: 25 June 2015



Canal Management Report



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BCA Canal Manager

The BCA Canal Manager reports that:

Works

- Paddle on lock 11 had an emergency drain down and repair.
- Lots of trees down as result of winds in early May which Ranger team have been clearing. Some recharging to happen for neighbours trees.
- New cills were fitted on Lock 27 which had caused us some issues last season.
- New Lock gates fitted at 11, 10 and 20.
- Further work on replacing jack heads.
- Lots of work on researching and procuring emergency equipment.
- Aqueduct drained down and inspected.
- Painting of visitor mooring bollards.
- Installation of new oak bollards at Woking wharf.

Events

- Share the space drop your pace campaign launched in Woking on Fri 15th May by Cllr Kemeney. Volunteer lengthsmen gave out 300 water bottles with slogan on. Successful event to now be rolled out to other sites such as St Johns and Fleet.
- Canoe clean up day held in Woking on 9th May in conjunction with Woking lions and song of the paddle forum. 15 sacks of litter removed from canal.
- Successful Easter treasure trails at the canal centre.
- Regular Rosebud trips have started again on weekends, now fully driven by volunteers.

Staffing

2 staff recruited for day to day hire of unpowered boats from Canal Centre.

Volunteers

- Lots of preparation at Odiham castle preparing for the Magna Carter celebrations, cutting grass and carrying out weeding of paths and internal area of castle.
- Replacement interpretation sign installed at castle.
- Piles of floating pennywort removed from Woking stretch of canal.
- A big clear up around bridge barn and Scotland road bridge car park.
- New storage shed installed at the canal centre.
- Increased numbers of corporate volunteer groups who have been working on pennywort removal and removal of graffiti from bridges in Woking.

Workboats

- All workboats underwent a Boat Safety certificate examination. Quite a bit of work to now get these up to standard. Work has already begun....

General

- A break in at the canal centre has meant works to increase security at all our sites.
- 1st permanent mooring taken up at bridge barn pub.
- Preparation and procurement for new unpowered hire boats.
- Annual mooring licences renewed.
- 1st end of year finance review with new IBC computer system, survived!
- Lots of positive feedback from boaters lately

“In case you haven't guessed, we've really enjoyed the Basingstoke. It was definitely the right decision to explore it and we highly recommend it to other boaters. Don't let the moaners discourage you!”

Narrowboat Pas Meche April 2015

“I spent two weeks on Basingstoke last summer, absolutely loved it,....”

Narrowboat Brindley Jan 2015

“Our lock keeper Matt was great - really enthusiastic and keen to make sure we had a good trip.” Narrowboat May 2015

“All the staff and rangers have been so friendly and helpful and they have always arrived promptly and have the locks ready for us - with lock gates open or the locks full. In some ways it must be like how cruising used to be-only a few boats about and a sense of adventure in that you have to make the journey.” Narrowboat Black Bess June 2015

SCC / HCC Strategic Manager

The Strategic Manager reports that:

Water Strategy

The **telemetry** project, now being called “Smart Canal”, is somewhat behind schedule – but progress is being made with the software even though the sensors have yet to be installed.

Volunteers from the Canal Society and IWA have continued to assist me with investigations to the cause of the duckweed blooms in Woking. The matter was debated at the Conservation Management Steering Group with useful information being offered by Dr Eaton, Natural England and the EA.

Navigation safety

I have continued to attend AINA meetings and am contributing to major reviews of the national safety regimes for non-passenger and holiday hire boats, to ensure that safety is improved but unworkable regulations are not imposed on independent waterways.

Capital programme

Major works continue to be planned and executed in both Counties – funded from the capital programme.

Hampshire

- **Dogmersfield landslip** – the adjoining landowner has already carried out works on his land, leaving HCC to repair the canal banks and stabilise the whole of the slopes through piling and ground anchors as agreed. A planning application has now been made to Hampshire County Council's Planning Department for these works. Hampshire Engineering Consultancy are expecting to let the tender during the summer in time for a prompt start to these works in October.
- A small amount of remedial works at the landslip enabled the towpath to be reopened to the public on May Day. The towpath will close for the installation of the piles and anchors on 31 October; a 2 or 3 day towpath closure may be required during the summer for the installation of a trial anchor – a navigation update will be issued by the BCA as soon as a date is known.
- The works to **Barley Mow culvert** will now be included with the Dogmersfield Landslip contract and will be carried out concurrently with the installation of the piles and anchors at the landslip. Engineering consultancy have also been instructed to repair several other culverts, but these repairs are not expected to interrupt navigation or towpath use.
- A discussion has started with Engineers regarding the refurbishment of **Zebon Copse Swing-bridge** and in particular the replacement of the pivot.
- HCC engineers' appointed specialists Atkins have reported on the long standing issues at **Swan Bridge, North Warnborough** proposing several possible options for a permanent repair; all of which appear likely to be costly. Their report is being discussed with Engineers. Meanwhile the towpath was temporarily topped up with quarry stone to level it and make it more available for all users in time for the the Magna Carta celebrations.
- Contracts to fix leaks at **Eastrop House Embankment, Dogmersfield** and **Crookham Cottage Embankment** have been let, and are works likely to be under way by the time of this meeting.

Surrey

- The **Frimley Lodge Embankment** and towpath repairs at Mytchett are due to begin week commencing 25 May and will take approximately 8 – 10 weeks to complete.
- Works to the **Rive Ditch (Woking) culvert**, **Hermitage weir** and **Scotland Bridge Road car park** are being designed by the SCC Engineer.
- A programme of lock wing wall repairs is being planned for the winter work programme.

Both counties

- A depth survey is being procured to inform a dredging programme in the winter of 2015/16 and 2016/17.
- The SCC Engineer is still considering alternative approaches to repairing the leaks in **Ash Embankment** as investigative works have ruled several repair options out, and re-puddling or lining the canal in some way may be the only options.
- Packages of priority **tree surgery** will need to be carried out in the autumn – these are trees identified by the arboricultural inspector as requiring felling or works from a safety perspective as a priority (urgent works have already been carried out). In accordance with the Conservation Management Plan areas with a high number of trees requiring work from a safety perspective will also be targeted for shade reduction from a conservation perspective.

Equipment

- A **mini-tractor and flail** has been purchased for the BCA's use in winter cutting of the banks and hedges.

- The **BCA dredger *Unity*** has failed her hydraulic safety tests, and the excavator head and hydraulic system are now considered beyond economic repair. Advice is being sought from a Marine Survey on the likely costs of a major refit / rebuild - once these are known a review of the business case for the continuance of owning a purpose built dredger will be made.