



REPORT TO THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 29 OCTOBER 2015

1. Work parties

Since the last JMC report, the regular Society workparty has been concentrating on the refurbishment of an overflow weir adjacent to the Deepcut top lock 28. The weir provides an important water escape route in case of rapid rise in level in the Mytchett pound, however this structure has leaked for many years.

Work has involved removal and replacement of one brick wall of the weir channel and repair of the other, re-concreting and brick-lining the channel bed, and sealing of leaks around the connected lock bypass chamber.

This work has taken rather longer than expected, not least because the weir channel wall to be replaced was located next to the foundations of a garden wall above, and that needed to be supported.

The opportunity has also been taken to repair and build up an embanked section of towpath with a large washout located just below Lock 28.



A visiting Waterways Recovery Group undertook repairs to some brick quadrants on Deepcut locks 23 and 24 over a weekend in July, including laying a concrete foundation for a new quadrant to replace that previously lost owing to subsidence behind the lock 23 chamber wall. They also cleaned up a couple of wooden seats.



Meanwhile work has continued on the BCA patrol boat refurbishment by the Society engineering team (*below*). Some delay resulted from the theft from Ash Lock of the outboard motor bought specially for this boat, however the replacement (complete with proprietary theft deterrent) is now installed. Painting is also almost completed, and the boat has passed its safety certification (as has the weedcutter).



Since the last report the Society has provided approximately **260 man-days** of effort, equivalent to **£21k equivalent value in kind**.

2. Work camps 2016

We have reported previously of our intentions, with the support of the BCA, Guildford Borough Council and Ash Parish Council, to refurbish the Ash Wharf site and improve the facilities there. The Society has now engaged with a Guildford BC engineer, however unfortunately it has been decided that it would be premature to plan for a WRG visiting group to work there in 2016, since there are still many issues to resolve. We hope instead that a team will be able to install a new visitor mooring at Runway's End in Farnborough.

A weekend workparty to clear rhododendrons overhanging the canal channel at Wharfenden Lake (not far from the Canal Centre) due to take place in September this year has been deferred at WRG's request to early 2016.

3. Events

Next year the Society will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of its formation and a celebratory rally and landside event is to take place over the weekend of **6th/7th August 2016** in the centre of Woking. This rally, to be called the **Woking Canal Festival**, will be a joint event with the Historic Narrowboat Club, which is also celebrating its 50th anniversary next year. The opportunity will also be taken to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the reopening of the canal following its restoration.

Preliminary discussions have already taken place with the HNBC, and by the time of the JMC, detailed planning sessions will have started. Woking BC have also been approached and we are pleased that they have agreed to participate in the organisation of the event. HNBC expect about 40 of their historic boats to attend, including traditional pairs and at least one loaded boat (with wood or coal), making the total attendance possibly as many as 100 boats.

4. Dredging

During the Summer period where dropping water levels resulted in the temporary closure of the canal, the Society was concerned that it would be no longer possible to continue running John Pinkerton trips because some sections (for example, Swan "cutting") were particularly shallow. A few trips to the castle had to be cancelled or postponed, with a resulting loss of income.

The Society believes that a programme of dredging, particularly in the Hampshire pound, should be undertaken as soon as possible, otherwise closure of the JP trip boat operation may be unavoidable.

Martin Leech
Vice-Chairman, The Basingstoke Canal Society
21 October 2015

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