



REPORT TO THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – NOV 2018

A. QAVS Celebrations and Award

Around 150 volunteers, both past and present, converged on the Canal Centre at the end of August to celebrate the Society having been awarded a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (equivalent to an MBE for groups). Co-hosted by the BCA team, a hog-roast was laid on with music. The feedback we have had suggested it was a great success.



We have received notification that HRH The Duke of Kent will be making the actual presentation of the [glass trophy and certificate signed by Her Majesty](#). This will take place on November 13th at the Canal Centre (further details to be announced).

B. Inaugural Odiham Raft Race

The first Odiham Raft Race was held at the beginning of September. The idea of Odiham Parish Councillor David Stewart, the event was organised by the Society and Galleon Marine, assisted by ABA. Seven adult teams took part, paddling a mile and a quarter from the North Warnborough lift bridge to Colt Hill wharf on home-made craft built to exacting specifications. Two



children's teams also competed along a shorter course. The winning team were the

BCA, on their “Raft for Life” (*above*), and all teams received prizes from Air Chief Marshal Sir Joe French, one-time Commander-in-Chief of RAF Strike Command. Over £500 was collected for the Society for the benefit of the canal.

C. Work Parties

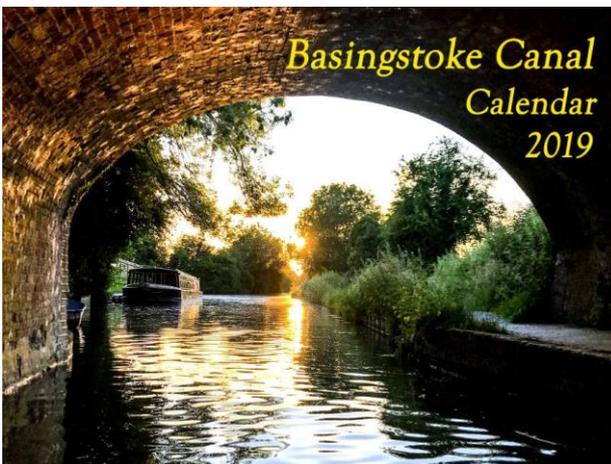


Since the last JMC report the BCS weekend work party has been engaged on the rebuilding of the wharf near Crookham Village. The historical wharf was constructed too high for users of typical canal boats to access easily. The Society team, at the request of the Accessible Boating Association, has addressed this by removing 4 courses of bricks along the length of the wharf, and reprofiled the bank behind and re-laid the towpath. Sundry other works have been completed at the site. Unfortunately, the job has taken longer than expected because repair of damaged sections of wall (*left*) was necessary. Reprofiling of the towpath upstream to match the new wharf level has still to be done. As a result, it is not expected to return to building the new mooring at Farnborough Road (on which work is limited to the

winter season) until late November.

The BCS engineering team led by John Wharf repaired the fence damaged when a caravan caught fire on the field recently. They have also taken out the weedcutter a few times to remove hydrocotyle weed along the Woking pound, which had spread in the hot weather. They are currently also investigating the possibility of undertaking a major refurbishment of the BCA’s *Unity* dredger.

D. Promoting the canal



Interest in the canal continues to grow through the Society’s efforts via social media channels. Around 2600 people now follow our [Facebook page](#), since this was set up a year ago, and there are over 1400 [Friends of the Canal](#) now in receipt of the bi-monthly Basingstoke Canal Bulletin.

Another photography competition has taken place since the last JMC

report. [Fourteen winning photos](#) were chosen from over 200 Facebook entrants, which now appear in the Society's 2019 calendar, [now on sale](#).

Work continues to build closer links between Society reps and individual local councils for the benefit of the canal and local communities, including on Health/Wellbeing and planning issues. We ask that the councils support this initiative.

E. John Pinkerton Canal Cruises

This year has been a successful season for our two trip boats, the weather no doubt encouraging bookings, but low water levels have created many challenges for the *John Pinkerton II*. It has largely not been possible to run trips to King John's Castle since mid-July to the time of writing (19 September) because of the risk of becoming stuck at Swan "Cutting" (see below). This has resulted in the loss of bookings. Trips in the opposite direction have also taken longer than 3 hours, with sticking points in shallow sections, extreme fouling of the propeller and damage to running gear making navigation particularly difficult. Cancellation of trips because of low water conditions was only just avoided. Spot dredging is therefore urgently needed.

Kitty cruises in Woking (which remains in water because of the Society-led back-pumping scheme) have grown dramatically. It has carried nearly 1200 passengers on 144 trips, and looks as if it will have covered its entire capital cost by the season's end. The relationship between the *Kitty* team and the Lightbox/Woking BC has strengthened with collaborations on Party in the Park, Heritage Open Days and Living Well Week. Other trips have included hosting Woking's mayor and councillors, visiting children from Chernobyl, and many other international visitors including from Rome, Toronto and Gothenberg.



We are already thinking about the possibility of replacing *Kitty* with an environmentally friendly electric boat. A project team led by Ian Moore has been set up to investigate and will be visiting the Chesterfield Canal Trust to gain from their experience with their hybrid trip boat [Hugh Henshall](#).

F. Major Projects

1. Hatchwood Farm Boat Basin Proposal

As previously reported, the Society has acquired a 10m strip of land adjacent to the canal at Colt Hill, which it is hoped to use for the construction of a boat basin accommodating up to 20 boats. A proposal for the boat basin has been written by a Society team, with draft plans and costings for consideration by Odiham PC and to gauge its support for pursuing this project further.

The proposal hinges on the Society being able to take an interest in another 10m strip of land behind that already acquired (through a long-term lease or licence), to give the required space. This additional land is currently owned by the developers of the surrounding housing estate but is the subject of a S106 agreement which would result in its transfer to Odiham PC.

This will be a major project if it goes ahead, requiring substantial fund-raising effort and volunteer involvement.

2. Swan “Cutting”

Swan Cutting has been raised to a Priority 1 issue on the BCA’s register because of its potential impact on navigation, particularly on the *John Pinkerton II* (see above). Dredging urgently needs to take place here but this cannot happen unless done in conjunction with the stabilisation of the banks.

At the Society’s request, IWA Honorary Consultant Roy Sutton has spent considerable time producing a detailed survey, plans and costings for a number of engineering solutions for a bank repair, however Hampshire CC have yet to respond formally to him. Negotiations between Hampshire and the adjacent landowners also need to take place. We look forward to further progress being made with this project.



G. Canal & River Trust

It is with some disappointment that the Society notes that there has been little recent news on the negotiations between the Counties and C&RT on the transfer of the canal. The Society has long concluded that the future of the canal would be best served by its being incorporated into the national waterway body. We urge the Counties to redouble their efforts to achieve a settlement with the C&RT, before factors like local elections and C&RT’s own contract renewal with the Government become major distractions. The Society will be looking into how it can assist with reinvigorating these negotiations.

Martin Leech
Vice-Chairman
The Basingstoke Canal Society