



## REPORT TO THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – JUNE 2019

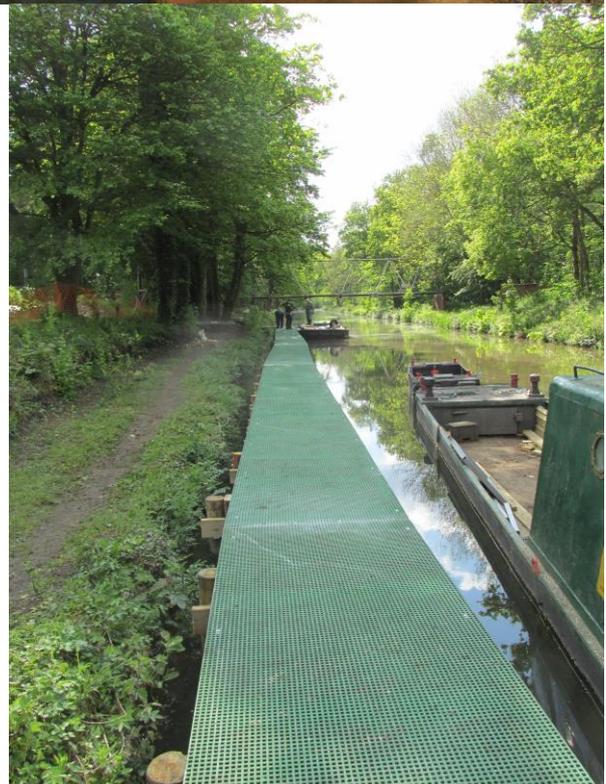
### 1. Workparty Activities



The BCS regular work party completed the re-building of Crookham Wharf (*above*) at the end of last year. This project, to lower the level of the landing to make it more accessible to boats, had proved more difficult to undertake than was previously envisaged but the final result has been well received by the Parish Council and by boat owners.

Work continues on the planned 200m-long Farnborough Road (the “Holland”) mooring. Half of the supporting posts (around 140) have now been driven but that work has had to be suspended until the autumn at the request of Natural England because of their concerns about turbidity affecting aquatic plants. Meanwhile, fibreglass platforms have been installed as far as possible (*right*).

The team will now return to Ash Lock to continue with the refurbishment of the Society’s workboat *Fly II* and to install a water point more suitable for boaters.





The Society Engineering team was asked to investigate the refurbishment and recertification of the BCA's dredger *Unity* (above). The vessel has languished unused for 4 years, having failed its all-important PUWER (Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations) test. The necessary repairs were identified and carried out, including to a faulty stabilisation leg, and as a result certification has again been achieved. A little more work to obtain a boat safety certificate will be all that is necessary to return the craft to full operation.

The team will now look at engaging a contractor to assist with further refurbishment, which would not have been appropriate without first achieving this milestone. The additional work will include potential replacement of some hydraulic components and improvements to the boat propulsion mechanism.

## 2. Trip Boat Operation

The *John Pinkerton II* cruising season has made a good start. The slight fall in bookings last year seems to have been turned around by a vigorous social media campaign. Some new themed trips are now being offered and the first of these - Murder on the Canal - was very well supported.

The Society's small trip boat *Kitty* (right) has also started the season strongly, with over 600 passengers booked to date. This boat continues to attract an international clientele with passengers coming from many overseas destinations including Russia, Hungary, Brunei and Nepal. There is no doubt that the presence of the boat in Woking has made a significant contribution to the raising of the profile of the canal in the Woking area. The Society is currently examining options for an electrically powered or a hybrid electric boat which would future proof the boat operation when the expected emission controls on boats become a requirement.



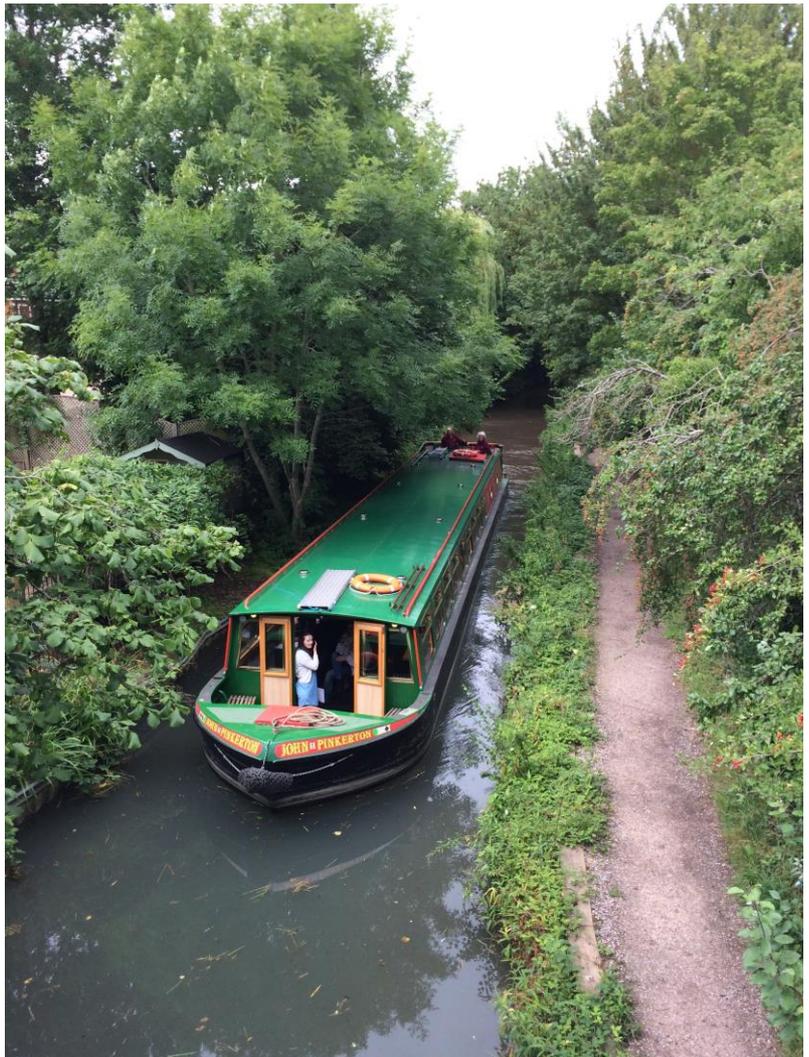
### 3. Woking Wharf

The Society was pleased to make a contribution to the cost of Woking wharf which was formally opened on 31st May. This project was jointly funded by Woking BC, Surrey CC and the Society. The opening ceremony was performed by the Deputy Mayor of Woking in the presence of other councillors including Surrey deputy leader Cllr Colin Kemp, Jonathan Lord MP, and Society and BCA members. The event attracted a number of local boats which made a colourful spectacle in the town centre (*previous page*). The unveiling of a new information panel (paid for from the Surrey CC community fund) also took place (*above*).



### 4. Water Supplies

The continuing dry conditions, following a winter and spring with limited rain, is a cause of serious concern, and may result in closures to the navigation later in the year. Already, the level on the Hampshire pound is in decline. The Society is continuing to examine the limited options to supplement the increasingly inadequate water supply, and the project to provide real-time water level data to rangers' phones and PCs continues.



### 5. Swan Cutting

The Canal Society expressed concerns about the state of Swan Cutting (*right*) at least 3 years ago and, since then, the condition of the cutting has further deteriorated. If the problem continues, the Society is concerned that the *John Pinkerton* trip boat operation (which generates considerable income for the canal) could be prejudiced (the boat when loaded simply cannot get through in low water conditions). The Society would like to see the pace at which the agreement on the solution to this problem accelerated. All aspects of the re-building project - engineering design, funding, relationship with neighbouring properties, Natural England etc, need to be tackled in parallel, not sequentially. The Society would like to see significant progress on this project before the year end.

## **6. Reinforcing the Canal Partnership**

The Canal Society is putting a considerable effort into galvanising their commitment to the canal of the six riparian districts who belong to the Canal Partnership. In particular, we have encouraged the Districts to promote the canal in their publicity material. We have also supported local events including the Woking Food Festival, Dogmersfield show and the Odiham Raft Race etc. On 22nd June we will be hosting a trip on the *John Pinkerton* for councillors (county, district, town and parish) and officers at the Hampshire end of the canal. We are also supportive of the proposal to invite Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council to join the Canal Partnership.

## **7. Funding**

We were very disappointed to learn that the canal is not to benefit from a Water Environment Grant through Natural England. We would seriously question why the canal, which is generally regarded as one of the most important habitats in the country, should not receive grants from the national environmental protection body. We would appreciate an explanation from Natural England for the reasons behind the failure of the canal to qualify for this substantial grant.

## **8. Commemorative Benches**

The Society is pleased to hear that a policy for handling requests for commemorative benches to be installed along the canal has now been agreed, and that offers to individuals who have made such requests will be made shortly.

Philip Riley  
4 June 2019