

BASINGSTOKE CANAL SOCIETY**Report to JMC – 10 October 2013****1. Recent work on the canal**

Over the summer months the Society's volunteer work parties have been active on various projects along the canal. These activities included the following:

- Repairs to brickwork and rotten beams at the barn at Colt Hill purchased by the Canal Society earlier this year to support its trip boat operations. Other work at the barn included treatment of the beams and the installation of external power points.
- Undertaking a depth survey at Swan Cutting, North Warnborough in preparation for the repairs planned by HCC to the towpath and to enable dredging operations to be planned.
- Replacement of a dislodged balance beam at Lock 12

2. Waterway Recovery Group (WRG)

The Canal Society hosted a week long work camp for the Waterway Recovery Group which is a national voluntary organisation dedicated to restoring and preserving our inland waterways. The WRG camp was attended by about 20 volunteers, mainly young people, who gave up part of their annual holidays to work on canals. Activities carried out during the WRG week included:

- Constructing a retaining wall at Lock 27
- Installing sheet steel piling on a wing wall at Lock 27
- Dealing with a leak at Lock 27 and repacking with clay
- Cleaning out buried quadrants at Locks 26 and 27
- Excavating steps at Lock 25
- Painting rails at Lock 25

3. Weedcutter

Canal Society work parties completed the re-wiring of the BCA's weedcutter, installed a solar panel trickle battery charger and undertook most of the re-painting. The Society also designed and fabricated rain-proof engine compartment covers. It is hoped that work on the

weedcutter will be completed by the end of October so this must-needed vessel can be put to work clearing some of the build-up of floating weed at the eastern end of the canal.

4. Man-days (md) of effort during the period (Equivalent Value In Kind – EVIK)

Since the June JMC meeting – approximately 270 md/£23K EVIK

Since 1st January 2013 – approximately 530 md/£42K EVIK

About 150 md/£16K has been expended on repairs to the weedcutter. In addition to this, the Canal Society has contributed £3000 in cash towards the purchase of equipment etc required for the refurbishment of the weedcutter.

The Canal Society may also be undertaking repairs to other craft operated by the BCA.

5. Promoting the canal

The Canal Society is urging the Canal Partnership to make greater efforts to promote the canal in order to widen its public appeal and to generate additional income. The Canal Society itself is working on a number of projects including, for example, a new exhibition at the Milestones Museum in Basingstoke which will emphasise the important contribution that the canal made to the economic development of Basingstoke and north east Hampshire. The Canal Society is also exploring possibilities for joint working with organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund (which will shortly open its new headquarters in Woking) which have a mutual interest in promoting the health of the canal and ensuring that its value is fully appreciated by the communities it serves. However, the Canal Society strongly believes that other members of the Partnership should be doing more to publicise the importance of the canal as a local amenity. Options include using local authority newspapers and booklets to attract more residents to use the canal for walking, boating, canoeing, fishing and cycling. There is also considerable potential for co-operation between local museums and visitor centres to promote the canal and advertise its attractions. We would invite district authority members of the JMC to nominate officers who could work with the BCA, the Counties and the voluntary organisations in developing these initiatives.

Philip Riley
Chairman
The Basingstoke Canal Society