



Basingstoke Canal funding under further threat

First it was Hart and Surrey Heath Councils, then Runnymede, and now it is one of the actual owners of the Basingstoke Canal, Surrey County Council, that has decided to cut its contribution to the Canal Authority's budget.

As a result of cuts in Government funding to local authorities, Surrey County Council is proposing to reduce its contribution to the Basingstoke Canal budget by £50,000 in 2006/7 and by the same amount in 2007/8. This represents a reduction of about one third in the grant made to the canal by Surrey. These reduced contributions come on top of substantial budget cuts made by Hart, Surrey Heath and Runnymede in recent years which are likely to be repeated this year.

Consultants brought in to advise the county (at a cost of over £1m) on how to save the £50 million cut from their Central Government funding have stated that owning and maintaining a waterway for navigation should not be a County Council responsibility. They suggest that Grant Funding should be reduced and that alternative funding sources should be explored.

The reduced funding for the canal resulting from these cuts in grant will have a severe adverse impact on the ability of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) to maintain and operate the canal in the year ahead. We are already seeing the effects of the financial cutback on the canal infrastructure - decaying lock chambers, shallow sections which need dredging etc.

The reduced contributions by the local authorities come at a time when the whole future management and funding of the canal is under debate. In October 2005 the canal Joint Management Committee (JMC) took a decision to launch a full-scale review of the options available to the county and district councils. This review is now underway and the report by the group responsible for the relevant studies is likely to be available in the autumn.

One of the consequences of Surrey's decision is likely to be loss of some BCA staff and it seems possible that the Head Ranger post that Ian Brown occupied before his recent appointment to BCA Director may go unfilled.

Surrey's consultants seem not to have recognised the responsibilities that still rest on the Canal's owners to maintain it in a safe condition, nor to have made any suggestion as to how the County might relinquish its ownership.

The Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society (S&HCS) is

fully engaged in the review process and they are doing their utmost to ensure that, whatever the outcome, the canal remains as a fully navigable waterway connected to the main system.

The Society has suggested previously that it would be better off in the hands of British Waterways, but they would require a lot of money to take it over, particularly in its current poor condition. One thing is certain though, that this condition will only get worse and the problem more acute the longer the Canal is left in its current under-funded state.

Surveys of the Deepcut locks in January 2005 indicated that considerable repairs are required; at the time of writing, no priorities or estimates of funding needed have been prepared by the engineers. The only work carried out is the temporary repairs to the lower wing walls of lock 22 following total collapse, in order to re-open the canal.

The volunteers did not work for a quarter of a century just to have it allowed to slide back into dereliction. Many letters have already been sent to councillors together with copies of a brochure based on Leigh Thornton's excellent Value for Money paper for the JMC.

Surely someone in government can see the ridiculous illogicality of spending large sums of public money to restore the Cotswold Canals whilst allowing one that has already been restored to go into decline?

The forthcoming Campaign Rally at Brookwood could hardly be better timed. Please come and

support it and show the politicians that we mean to keep our canal!

Basingstoke Canal News - Spring 2006

Shortly before going to press, an update to the above information came to the editor's attention:

The S&HCS mounted a vigorous campaign; 'Rather like the old days,' one person told me. Members of the public and the Society have sent many letters and emails to councillors, MPs, the county council and other bodies. Articles have appeared in the press, both local and national. Interviews have been broadcast on radio and television.

As a result of this show of public opinion, Surrey County Council have agreed that no cutback in their funding will be made in the immediate future. The situation will be considered again once the report on the review process is published. This is expected to be in the autumn.

Peter Oates

Missing articles A number of items for the Newsletter have been sent to the Editor by several members in the last few months, for which he's very grateful. However, lack of space has meant these cannot be included at present. Production timings also mean the report of last month's meeting will appear next month.

Waterways Diary

The following is a list of waterway events taking place within approximately 50 miles of Southampton. Hopefully you can find something to interest you. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the correctness of this information, please check with the listed

contact who will be glad to confirm and supply further details of that event.

If YOU know of an event taking place that should be in this list then please contact the editor.

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Thu 6 Apr 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"The BCN Then and Now - early 1970's and 2005" with SCS members Eric and Sue Lewis. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sat 15 Apr 2006	Basingstoke Canal Authority	Dawn Chorus walk. Join a Ranger for an early morning stroll down the Canal, listen and learn about birdsongs. £2 per person. Booking essential. Location to be confirmed.	BCA: 01252 370073
Wed 19 Apr 2006 8.00pm	Surrey and Hampshire CS	"The Andover and Southampton & Salisbury Canals" - Peter Oates will illustrate the history of these long abandoned canals. Parish Pavilion, Station Road, Chobham, nr Woking, Surrey.	Peter Coxhead: 01923 344564 or David Millett: 01252 617364
Sat 22 Apr 2006	Southampton CS	SCS outing to Whitchurch Silk Mill and Longbridge Mill. Meet at Whitchurch Mill at 10.30am.	Maureen Greenham: 023 8040 6951 Email: maureen.greenham@dsl.pipex.com
Sun 23 Apr 2006	Wilts & Berks CT	Sponsored walk Chippenham to Lacock taking in the canal at Pewsham. The start will be at the Buttercross in Chippenham at 10.30 am. Entrance fee of £3 will be charged for individuals or family groups.	Peter Williams: Email Peter.Williams32@btinternet.com
Wed 26 Apr 2006 7.45pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Newbury Branch Annual General Meeting followed by 'Berkshire Countryside at Risk' by Margaret Cubley of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356 Email: grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Thu 27 April 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"History of the Royal Naval Cordite Works at Poole" with SCS member Bob Dukes. NB: this is the "May" meeting! Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Sat 6 May 2006	Basingstoke Canal Authority	Dawn Chorus walk. Join a Ranger for an early morning stroll down the Canal, listen and learn about birdsongs. £2 per person. Booking essential. Location to be confirmed.	BCA: 01252 370073
Sun 14 May 2006 10.00am to 4.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	The Winston Harwood Memorial Small Boats Rally at Lordings, south of Newbridge near Wisborough Green, West Sussex. See the restored aqueduct and waterwheel. See article on page 4.	Sally Schupke: 01483 503029 Email: rallies@weyandarun.co.uk
Sun 14 May 2006	IWA Guildford & Reading Branch	Small boat cruise on Abbey River - this 2 mile long stream bypasses Chertsey Lock on the Thames. See article on page 3.	Tony Clark: 01932 340607 Email: tony@tugno1.org.uk
Thu 18 May 2006 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	"Lots to do at the Soo". A look at North American waterways with Colin Ward. The Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Sun 21 May 2006 9.00am to 4.00pm	Wey & Arun CT	Annual Small Boats Rally at Loxwood, West Sussex. See the ongoing work to build a new lock and deepen the channel under the B2133 to a lowered Brewhurst Lock.. See article on page 4.	Sally Schupke: 01483 503029 Email: rallies@weyandarun.co.uk
Sat 27 - Mon 29 May 2006	Inland Waterways Association	IWA National Campaign Rally. The objectives of the rally are to safeguard and ensure the long-term future of the Basingstoke Canal. Brookwood Country Park, near A324, close to the A322 junction. See also page 4.	Booking enquiries: James Bell - 01932 830493 Email: publicity@brookwood2006.com
Thu 1 June 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Idle Women" by Runnalls Davis with the story of the women who stepped in to operate the working narrow boats during World War II. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Fri 9 - Sun 11 June 2006	The Child-Beale Trust	Beale Park Thames Boat Show. Beale Park, Pangbourne, near Reading.	Tel: 0870 7777160 Email: events@bealepark.co.uk
Sun 11 Jun 2006	Wey & Arun CT	34th Annual PADDLE Sponsored Walk 2006. start and finish at Mill Pool House, in Godalming, Surrey with lunch at Hascombe Village Hall. To raise money towards the gates at the new Lock in Loxwood.	Jo Beagles: 01483 418195 Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk Website: www.weyandarun.co.uk
Fri 23 June 2006 7.30pm	Reading Borough Council	Mikron Theatre. Open air performance at Abbey Ruins, Reading.	Jo Keen - Events Officer: 0118 939 0373
Sat 24 Jun 2006	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	River Arun Relay Cruise. Larger boats: Littlehampton to Pulborough; smaller boats: Pulborough to Pallingham. See article on page 4.	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765 Email: pete@greensleeves.freeserve.co.uk
Sat 24 Jun 2006	Reading Borough Council	Reading Water Fest on the River Kennet in Reading Town Centre.	Jo Keen - Events Officer: 0118 939 0373
Thu 6 July 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Waterways at War" with George Fleming. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Fri 7 July 2006 Open from 6.30pm onwards	Wey & Arun CT	Mikron Theatre - I. K. Brunel from Mrs Brunel's perspective. Fisher's Farm Park, Newpound Lane, Wisborough Green. Tickets £8 to include free car parking at Fisher's Farm Park. Advance booking essential	Tel: 01483 503029 Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk
Sun 9 July 2006 5.00pm	Surrey & Hants CS	Mikron Theatre with their new production "Mrs Brunel". The Fox and Hounds, Crookham Road, Fleet.	Peter Coxhead: 01923 344564 or David Millett: 01252 617364
Thu 20 Jul 2006 7.00pm	IWA Salisbury Group	Boules & BBQ at the Green Dragon, Alderbury, Salisbury.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322 Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Sun 23 July 2006	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Chichester Harbour Cruise - Itchenor to Dell Quay and beyond. See article on page 4	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765 Email: pete@greensleeves.freeserve.co.uk
Thu 27 July 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	Annual General Meeting followed by waterways DVD. NB: this is the "August" meeting! Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384

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Chairman's Column and Bits 'n' Pieces

Congratulations to Peter Oates

I must start off my April column with congratulations to Peter Oates, the Editor of the Society Newsletter, for his excellent production of Issue No 400 last month. I particularly liked the new design of the front page which I believe is to be adopted for future issues. Many thanks Peter and also to Martin Cripps for undertaking the printing.

April Meeting

Following on from David and Margaret James's presentation at our March meeting, we are very pleased to 'welcome back' another of our long term membership teams, Eric and Sue Lewis, who will be talking to us about 'The BCN Then and Now'.

May Meeting

I know it is very confusing but just to remind you that our May meeting will, in fact, be held on **27 April**. This is due to the hall not being available on the first Thursday in May.

Future Printing of the Newsletter

Time is beginning to run out for us. If we haven't been able to make

alternative arrangements for the printing of the Newsletter by the Annual General Meeting at the end of July, there will be no more Newsletters. That would be a catastrophe, particularly as we have just celebrated Issue No 400. Do you have appropriate computer printer facilities at home which you could use for this purpose, or do you have a community minded employer who might be prepared to sponsorship the Newsletter, with full acknowledgements of course, or who might be prepared to assist in some way? If you have any ideas or can help in some way, can you please contact Peter Oates (contact details in this Newsletter) as soon as possible. Thank you.

Spring Outing – Last Call

This is the last call for anyone wishing to join the Society's outing to Whitchurch Silk Mill and Longbridge Mill on Saturday 22 April. If you would like to join that trip, please contact Maureen Greenham or me immediately. Maureen's contact details are shown in the Waterways Diary whilst mine are, as normal, on the back cover of this Newsletter.

Paul Herbert

Small Boat Cruise on the Thames

On Sunday 14th May, IWA's Guildford & Reading Branch is organising a small boat cruise down the Abbey River, reviving a branch tradition of exercising rights of navigation. The Abbey River is a lock bypass stream leaving the main channel of the Thames at Penton Hook and meandering for about two miles, re-appearing just below Chertsey Lock. Through passage is available to small craft, such as dinghies and canoes. About halfway along the Abbey River, there is an interesting set of boat rollers under a listed bridge, bypassing a small weir. The cruise will be during the afternoon and on the way down the stream the branch has arranged to stop at

Chertsey Abbey where a guided tour may be arranged.

There is no entry fee for the event, which will be based at Penton Hook Marina where car parking and slipway facilities will be available. The cruise will show participants part of the river that most visitors probably would not normally visit, and combine it with a visit to a site of historic interest. Participants will need to bring along their own small boat. Bookings to attend can be made via the branch chairman, Tony Clark (01932 340607 or e-mail: tony@tugno1.org.uk

IWA Head Office Bulletin - March 2006

Waterway Recovery Group Canal Camps 2006

Waterway Recovery Group has published its 2006 programme of Canal Camp online, at www.wrg.org.uk/camps_bod.htm and a booklet with all the details is likely to be available shortly. The programme includes regular sites such as the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire, Grantham, Wey & Arun and Monmouthshire canals, a return to the Chesterfield Canal and new sites such as Lord

Rolle's Canal in north Devon and the Wilts & Berks Jubilee Junction project, which will create a brand new junction between the Thames and the Wilts & Berks Canal near Abingdon in Oxfordshire. The programme starts at Easter, with two Camps, one on the Lichfield Canal (at Tamworth Road Locks on the outskirts of Lichfield) and another on the Wilts & Berks (at Seven Locks) in Wiltshire.

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Waterways Events Continued from page 2

Time	Organiser	Details	Contact
Sun 30 July 2006	Kennet & Avon CT	Newbury Waterways Festival. Victoria Park, Newbury.	Graham Smith: 01635 580356. Email: grahamv.smith@virgin.net
Sat 26 - Mon 28 August 2006	Inland Waterways Assn	2006 IWA National Waterways Festival and Boat Show on the River Thames. Beale Park, Pangbourne, near Reading.	IWA Head Office: 01923 711114. Website: www.waterways.org.uk
Thu 7 Sept 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"Early Canalling Days on Standard 8 Cine" with Brian Evans. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
Thu 21 Sept 2006 7.30pm	IWA Salisbury Group	George Fleming, a local historian, talks about The Royal Military Canal.	Jon Van de Geer: 01722 412841. Ron & Myra Glover: 01722 710322. Email: ronmyra.glover@virgin.net
Sun 24 Sept 2006	IWA Solent & Arun Branch	Beaulieu River Cruise - Buckler's Hard to Beaulieu Quay. See article on page 4.	Peter Boyce: 07729 139765 Email: pete@greensleeves.freereserve.co.uk
Thu 5 Oct 2006 7.45pm	Southampton CS	"A Calendar of British Wildlife" with Dennis Bright. Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.	Eric Lewis: 023 8086 0384
15 - 17 Apr, 29 Apr - 1 May, 27 - 29 May, 24 - 25 Jun, 29 - 30 Jul	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Pumping Station - Steaming days 2006. Open from 10.30am to 5.00pm. Adults £5.00, Seniors £4.00, Children £1.00, Children under 5 free, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £10.00.	Phone: 01672 870300 Website: www.croftonbeamengines.org Email: eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org
14 Apr - 1 Oct 2006. 10.30am to 5.00pm	Kennet & Avon CT	Crofton Pumping Station - Non-Steamming days: Adults £3.00, Seniors £2.50, Children £1.00, Children under 5 free, Families (2 adults & 2 children) £7.00. Open 7 days/week.	Phone: 01672 870300 Website: www.croftonbeamengines.org Email: eq01ntz9@CroftonBeamEngines.org

SOUTHAMPTON CANAL SOCIETY

Established 1967

The objectives of the Society are to foster interest in canals and inland waterways, to assist in their preservation, restoration and development, and to give practical help on waterway projects.

Meetings:

Normally 1st Thursday each month at 7.45pm.
Chilworth Parish Hall, Chilworth, Southampton.

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Brian Evans.

Chairman:

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Society Website:

<http://www.whitenap.plus.com>

IWA Solent & Arun Branch Jubilee Events 2006

Saturday 27th to Monday 29th May - Basingstoke Canal - Campaign Rally

A Rally at the site of Brookwood Country Park, west of Woking, to campaign for the Basingstoke Canal, now desperately short of water and maintenance funds. Over 100 boats have already booked in, and we will be running a display stand to promote 'our' restoration causes and the Itchen Navigation Project. Volunteers are very welcome to help run the stand over the bank holiday weekend, and entry forms are available on the IWA website or from me if you would like to bring your boat.

Sunday 14th May Lordings Lock - Wey & Arun Canal Trust

Sunday 21st May Loxwood - Wey & Arun Canal Trust Small Boat Rally

These two events celebrate the recent restoration progress on the Wey and Arun Canal. At Lordings you can see the restored aqueduct and waterwheel, and at the Onslow Arms in Loxwood you can view the major work there to build a new lock and deepen the channel under the B2133 to a lowered Brewhurst Lock. Details from WACT, The Granary, Fritchfold Farm, Loxwood, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 ORH. Tel. 01403 752403. More details will be found on the website www.weyandarun.co.uk.

Saturday 24th June River Arun Relay Cruise

A navigation of the whole of the tidal Arun, Littlehampton to Pallingham. This year tide times allow us to repeat the full river navigation we successfully carried out last year. Suitable for larger and powered boats from Littlehampton to Pulborough, where boats under 14ft and 400kg can use the slipway. The larger boats will have to return immediately on arrival at Pulborough to Littlehampton before the tide turns, while smaller and unpowered craft can join the fleet and launch at Pulborough for the return trip to Pallingham Quay. We will be carrying commemorative items of the journey and the IWA's Diamond Jubilee, relaying them onwards at Pulborough.

Launch at Littlehampton at 09.00 for the whole river or Pulborough at 13.00, to Pallingham for 15.00. Recovery at Pulborough by 17.00. Larger boats return from Pulborough to Littlehampton for a low water recovery at 17.00, or if suitable and confident, anchor overnight on the river and return to Littlehampton on Sunday.

Sunday 23rd July - Chichester Harbour - Itchenor to Dell Quay and beyond

We will be exploring the top end of the Chichester Channel of the beautiful Chichester Harbour. There is the entrance of the Chichester Ship Canal to visit, and quays at Dell Quay and Fishbourne to discover. A spring tide will give us enough water to reach the tidal limit, where the Romans landed to reach Noviomagus and the great Palace. We will launch at West Itchenor at 10.00 hrs, and make our way up the channel to Fishbourne, calling for refreshment at Dell Quay on the way back, to recover around 16:00 hrs. There will be car park and day ticket charges to be paid at Itchenor.

Saturday 26th to Monday 28th August - Beale Park, National Waterways Festival

The 'National' revisits the lovely Thames and the striking location of Beale Park for Diamond Jubilee celebrations at this popular Festival. The Branch will be hosting the Wey & Arun and Chichester Ship Canal Trusts' displays, and presenting its own work with the Itchen Navigation Project. We will be seeking volunteer help to run the stand over the three days - in return for free entry!

Sunday 24th September Beaulieu River - Buckler's Hard to Beaulieu Quay

This is what I said two years ago and needs no improvement... "This Indian Summer cruise up the beautiful Beaulieu River is one of our favourites. Bring a picnic as the tide is perfect for a gentle glide up-river to moor by the tide mill, partake of lunch *al fresco*, and then drop back down through the afternoon light for cream teas at the Master Builder. Bliss."

Launch from Bucklers Hard Marina from 10.00 hrs. If you want to explore down river then do so in the morning on the rising tide - launch at least an hour earlier for this. There is a charge for use of the slipway, payable at the office on the Marina quayside. Canoes can be launched off the beach and not the slipway. Picnic lunch at Beaulieu quay by the tide mill, high water 12.55 hrs, and explore the village. Recovery around 15:00hrs.

For details of locations and times, please contact Pete Boyce by letter, email or phone.

Write to: Greensleeves Cottage, Hambledon Road, Denmead, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 6PW. Tel: 07729 139765. Email: pete@greensleeves.freeserve.co.uk