

A potted history of the Basingstoke Canal

In the 18th century the development of a national waterway network including rivers and canals was at it's height. Waterways were capable of transporting large quantities of goods between towns and cities. Barges, towed by horses, could carry up to fifty tons of cargo...much more than horse and cart!



The aim of the Basingstoke Canal was to increase trade between Hampshire and London.

200 men armed with little more than shovels and wheelbarrows constructed the 37 mile long canal in just six years.

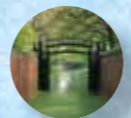
This included building 29 locks, a 1,230 yard tunnel, 69 bridges, 5 Lock houses, 4 wharves and 3 warehouses!



The canal was opened in 1794 but, despite best attempts to operate on a commercial basis, the canal seemed destined to struggle. Materials for the construction of the London to Southampton railway were carried on the canal and once built it proved an unbeatable competitor. Over the next century the canal slowly fell into a state of dereliction with lock gates rotting, the canal choked with weed and it's towpath overgrown.

In the mid 1970s Hampshire and Surrey County Councils purchased the derelict canal following a campaign for public ownership by local residents. These residents formed the Surrey and Hampshire Canal Society, a volunteer workforce that restored the canal with the County Councils providing the funds and technical back up. The Society still support projects on the canal today and welcome new members. For contact details call the Canal Visitor Centre on 01252 370073 or visit www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk.

The canal was reopened in 1991 with Hampshire and Surrey County Councils managing their own sections. However it soon became clear that one organisation should represent both County Councils and the six Borough Councils along the length of the canal that provide financial contributions for it's management. Therefore the Basingstoke Canal Authority was formed.



The Authority employs a team of rangers that carry out maintenance and protect wildlife. The offices for the canal are based at the visitor centre in Mytchett where a small team deal with administration and develop services for canal users.

It is estimated that the canal is used by millions of walkers, cyclists, anglers and boaters every year. The Authority manages the balance between recreation and conservation by providing a beautiful facility that offers fantastic opportunities for everyone.

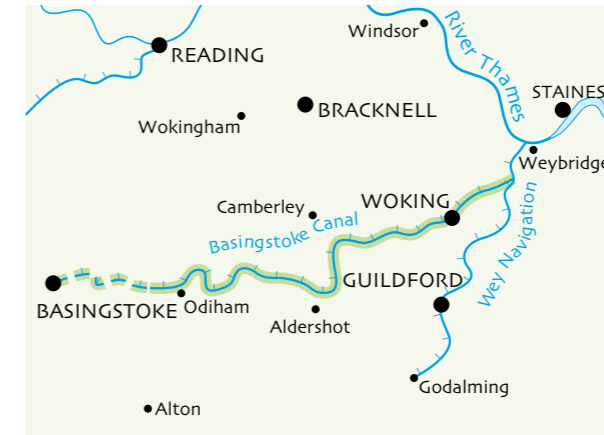
Visitor Centre

The Canal Visitor Centre at Mytchett is the perfect place to start exploring the canal or simply relax and watch the boats pass by. It's the ideal place to bring the family

- 'Trailblazer' play area
- Gift shop
- Tearoom
- Picnic space in attractive grounds
- Free parking
- Information point with friendly staff
- Camping
- Function room (family parties and business meetings)

The Canal Visitor Centre is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10.30am – 4.45pm from Easter to the end of September and Tuesday to Friday 10.30am – 4pm (fri 3.45pm) from October to March.

Visit www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk for lots more information about the canal!



The Basingstoke Canal Authority gratefully acknowledges the support of: Hampshire County Council, Surrey County Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Woking Borough Council, Guildford Borough Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, Rushmoor Borough Council, Hart District Council, English Nature, Inland Waterways Association, Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society



If you would like to know more about... taking a boat on the canal, the canal Schools Programme, group visits, community talks, events or anything else simply contact us.

Canal Visitor Centre
Mytchett Place Road
Mytchett
Surrey
GU16 6DD

For general information call 01252 399000
Tel: 01252 370073
Fax: 01252 371758
email: info@basingstoke-canal.co.uk
www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk



Surrey and Hampshire's Canal

32 miles of nature reserve for walking, boating, fishing and cycling



A beautiful waterway that runs from Greywell Village in Hampshire to Woodham in Surrey



Recreation

The following information aims to help you plan your visit to the Basingstoke Canal. There are plenty of clubs and organisations that will be able to help you. We have included their contact details so that you can get in touch to find out more...



Walking

Whether a gentle stroll or a long distance walk, exploring the canal by foot is a great way to discover its tranquillity. Different parts of the canal hold their own surprises such as the flights of locks in Surrey, the lakes and flashes near Mytchett or the rolling fields and picturesque cottages near Odiham. There are numerous pubs to reward the weary and convenient train stations should you need transport back to your start point.



Cycling

Cycling the towpath is a good option if you want to explore a little further. The towpath can be a bit muddy in places so mountain bikes may be preferred. The towpath is generally quite narrow and there are lots of low bridges where you will need to dismount. Please give way to walkers and make sure you give them advance warning if you are approaching from behind.

Boating

If you have your own boat and would like to use it on the canal you'll need to purchase a licence. Simply print the information off our website www.basingstoke-canal.co.uk or contact us at the Canal Visitor Centre and we'll send you a boating information pack. Licences for unpowered boats can even be arranged over the phone tel. 01252 370073.

The Basingstoke Canal Boat Club welcome new members and arrange social boating events throughout the year. For more information visit www.boatingclub.org.uk

Public narrowboat trips are offered from the Canal Visitor Centre at weekends and during school holidays April -September. You can also hire a boat for the day or bring friends and family together for a private party cruise. For more information contact John Cale Canal Cruises on 01252 837165 or 07984 952712.

2½ hour public trips and private party cruises aboard the "John Pinkerton" narrowboat are also available from Odiham. Trips operate regularly from April to October and further information is available by contacting the operator on 01962 713564. Galleon Marine in Odiham has a fleet of narrowboats available to hire for a single day, a short break or a longer holiday. Also on offer are rowing boats, punts and canoes. For more information call 01256 703691 or visit www.galleonmarine.co.uk



Accessible Boating offer a day hire boat "Dawn" which takes 12 passengers (6 of which can be wheelchair users). There is also a seven berth luxury holiday boat "Madam Butterfly" specially designed for disabled use. Both boats operate from Odiham and the contact number for more information is 01252 622520 or you can visit the website www.accessibleboating.org.uk

Free trips are offered for small groups aboard "Maggie G" a special boat designed for wheelchair users. Trips operate April to October from Woking and can be arranged by calling 01483 761499.

From Easter to the end of September trips are also offered near Woking for disadvantaged community groups on a specially designed boat called "Swingbridge". The boat, which is wheelchair accessible, is operated by the Surrey Care Trust who work with volunteers and offenders on Community Punishment Orders to carry out conservation work along the canal... thereby benefiting the whole community. For more information about trips call 01483 426990 or 01252 622229.



Canoeing

The Canal is perfect for Canoeing. The calm waters offer the ideal environment for a relaxing paddle or doing a spot of distance training. Two clubs use the Canal, The Basingstoke & Deane Canoe Club meet regularly at Colt Hill wharf in Odiham May - August tel. 01256 363921 and the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club who meet regularly at the Canal Visitor Centre tel. 01252 629800 or visit www.b3c.org.uk

Both clubs welcome new members, run canoeing courses and arrange regular trips and social events. Based at Court Moor School in Fleet the North East Hants Water Activities Centre Association takes groups of all ages and abilities canoeing on the canal. All kinds of courses are offered including 'try a canoe' and Duke of Edinburgh Awards. For more information call 01252 315856.

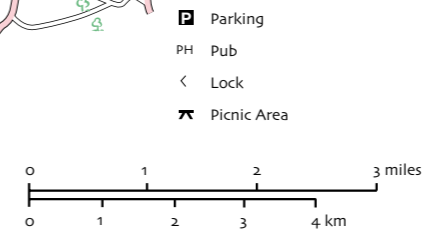


Fishing

Fishing from the towpath is extremely popular and the canal is stocked with Pike, Carp, Tench and Bream to name a few! An Angling Association manages fishing on the canal and permits can be purchased from the Canal Visitor Centre or from most local tackle shops. Please pick your spot carefully as your equipment should not obstruct the towpath for other users. For contact details call the Canal Visitor Centre on 01252 370073.



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Please follow the advice given below to help you enjoy your visit...

Take home everything that you bring with you, and leave the canal as you would hope to find it. Clean up after your dog and keep it under control.

Report pollution, fly tipping or fish in distress to the Environment Agency 0800 807060 (24 hrs).

Report birds or animals in distress to the RSPCA 08705 555 999 (24 hrs).

Nearby Pubs

Greywell	
Fox & Goose	01256 702062
North Warnborough	
The Swan	01256 702727
Jolly Miller	01256 702085
The Anchor	01256 702740
Odiham	
Waterwitch	01256 702778
George Hotel	01256 702081
Winchfield	
Barlismow	01252 617490
George & Lobster	01252 615336
Fleet	
Fox & Hounds	01252 663686
Ash Vale	
Standard of England	01252 325539
The Swan	01252 325212
Mytchett	
Potters Steakhouse	01252 513934
Frimley Green	
King's Head	01252 835431
Brookwood	
Brookwood Hotel	01483 472109
St. John's	
Rowbarg	01483 761618
Woking	
Bridge Barn	01483 763642
Wheatshaf	01483 773047
West Byfleet	
Claremont	01932 345048

Public Transport

Train Stations within walking distance of the Canal: Byfleet & New Haw, West Byfleet, Woking, Brookwood, Ash Vale, North Camp and Winchfield. For more info telephone National Rail Enquiries on 0845 7 48 49 50. For local bus timetables please telephone stagecoach South 0871 2 00 22 33

