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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Welcome to the March Edition of**  **B3C Matters!** | | |

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | * Club Courses and Taster Sessions * Waterways and Canal Maintenance * Please Close the Doors! * Hare & Hounds, Saturday 16th March * The Other End of the Canal * Basingstoke Canal Society Needs You! * Putney to Tower Bridge becomes Itchenor to Chichester Harbour * And finally ......... Access Codes | | |
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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Don't forget, our new 2024 beginner course schedule has now been published on [our website](https://u1099264.ct.sendgrid.net/ss/c/u001.M5oPhOmqWx5ygc7RoR3fkZB47wXMBiwrWM0sOR1nFbup92osgl1abWLa6it28Q1XGDKSLgvTacLV8owv3YSXDqXmgBTYoQQwLx-Xhp6ozL39m7eh45BGaJz1FoGlYPzY/44f/89eCJCrVTKeV76awCrM59g/h0/h001.KvBj2ox8QqwK8gqnsUHdaAkVAlMqlUzE1lbyrg3q5lo). Help us generate new club members by letting friends and family know about the new taster sessions that start next month.    If you are interested in attending any of the above courses, or know someone who is, please contact [b3c.courses@gmail.com](mailto:b3c.courses@gmail.com)    **BCCC Coaching Team** | | |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A person and person on bicycles  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Waterways and Canal Maintenance** | |  |  | | --- | | Check out the latest updates on maintenance and closures of our local waterways by visiting the [Basingstoke Canal website](https://u1099264.ct.sendgrid.net/ss/c/u001.M5oPhOmqWx5ygc7RoR3fkd48znZzzHO1dL7OfItauk556vPesmbg70Qa9wle_ZZFf8zrXfNUXgikHlJNgVltCKnDGJOVwJyYYT5mhz7U12c/44f/89eCJCrVTKeV76awCrM59g/h1/h001.6VVdHoqFaVLT25T08WH-izjuGx9nlH42AJ7_fqvHOH0). This includes, updates on the Ash Aqueduct relining, which has been postponed until the winter this year, the ongoing painting of Heath Vale bridge throughout March, and other local sections of the canal.    **BCCC Committee** | | |

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Setting up the shuttle took its usual toll on time and with a bit of faffing at the beginning we were soon running 45 mins behind schedule, but not to worry, no tide times to commit to on this trip, and we were more or less ready to start with 2 cars and a trailer at the end and everyone at the beginning by 11:00. The first launch on the canal, under the bridge where Billesden Rd crosses the canal, set the scene, as the water levels were pretty high making it slightly awkward. Where’s a jetty when you need one? We were fairly quick up to the first lock, the question was, was this a flight or a single lock? On this occasion it was a flight of 2, next question shall we put wheels on? Yes, it’s a bit of a long carry. So, for the first time, out came a number of trolleys and we started to discover the nuances of putting them on. Not helped by magically disappearing split pins which hold the wheels on. I had at least learnt this lesson and usually have a spare tied to the trolly, but we were still one short giving the engineers amongst us the chance to show off their improvisation skills.    I took the lightweight touring Laance for this trip, hoping I could carry it, but it became rather unbalanced even with my relatively small load in the hatch. (yes, it was a small load, I had divided my usual emergency gear out across other kayaks which had room) but at least we were able to tie the Laance to another kayak on a trolley and manage to push the two relatively successfully.    Crossing the road at Brookwood proved to be fun but we managed without stopping the traffic or getting run over. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A canal with a bridge over it  Description automatically generated | |  |  | | --- | | A decent stretch through to St Johns just getting into a nice steady pace, when we were faced with a flight of 5 locks, definitely trolly time and quite a long walking stretch. Just as you turn a corner another lock comes into view and it's not worth unloading the trolleys, getting on the water and then back again, for such as short distance. A quick bite to eat and then back on the water to continue through Woking.  The canal still manages to feel like a relaxed place to be, but still not far from the urban jungle. A few more locks to do and we’re getting quicker at getting on and off the water, getting kayaks mounted on trolleys or just carrying them.    One of the issues on this trip was to try and move around the portage once, without anyone having to go back to help carry another kayak, a major pastime on other trips which is very time consuming. The last few locks seem to be just a bit further apart, so we were on and off the water quite a bit. Slightly worrying was that we arrived at the 2nd or 3rd lock from the end at the same time as schools were out for Fallbrook Senior School. Hundreds of youngsters taking over the tow path looking slight bemused at our kayaks and probably at us, but at least they behaved themselves. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A group of people standing next to kayaks  Description automatically generated | |  |  | | --- | | So I think most of us thought the day was worth it, but definitely tougher than our normal fayre of just a couple of locks and a bit more paddling in between. Still a pretty part of the canal to visit, but maybe in shorter sections. As always when the topic of portages comes around, I’m thinking of those doing the D/W with it’s77 portages and 125 miles paddling, Bless them.    **Rick Covell** |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Basingstoke Canal Society Needs You!** | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A green sign with white text  Description automatically generated | |  |  | | --- | | The Basingstoke Canal Society are looking to fill a variety of roles to help support their campaign ‘Keep your Canal Alive’. Some of the roles include managing, social media & Twitter [X], project management, marketing, fundraising and many more.    To find out more and volunteer your time and expertise, visit their [website.](https://u1099264.ct.sendgrid.net/ss/c/u001.J46GpDbKw9cKU-mDRUDe-lvnFBnevywTNyiQMfDNQs6aVu-GsUH_Vao4u72XM_z4ivp2yqRHtbWaMWzpeB77s5sIEccMb8qyZCDBC76VE7J9VrWCayWH-cLhyGjsG9NH/44f/89eCJCrVTKeV76awCrM59g/h2/h001.G6-PJ6BsnllySO8WDdOw8iTbvfmzq5hACZEvNAXs1xE) If not, spread the word with friends and family.    **BCCC Committee** |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | | **Putney to Tower Bridge becomes Itchenor and Chichester Harbour** | | |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A map of the world  Description automatically generated | |  |  | | --- | | After much agonising, thinking, visiting, asking, checking levels, researching, the answer appeared to be No, we can’t do this trip in these conditions, particularly when there is a great big red flag saying no unpowered craft.    I was very tempted when seeing school age crews of 8s heading out at Putney on Thursday afternoon, but it was that quiet time of the turn of the tide, I guess they had an hour or so before it became a raging torrent again. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Boats on the water with boats in the water  Description automatically generated | |  |  | | --- | | So it was a scratch heads of what would plan B look like. I really wanted to get the group to experience some slightly wilder moving water as, we have in general, been very lucky with some of our coastal trips, where the sea has been so very benign that it lulls you into a false sense of security. When we are thinking of the London trip, a couple of high-speed Ubers in opposite directions and the wash bouncing of the walled banks of the Thames can make for some “interesting” water, so where to go, that’s safe and Uber free? One spot that I know of, that can provide some entertainment, is the entrance to Chichester Harbour, usually to be avoided if there are anything like spring tides, but we were about half way between Springs and Neaps and it was an incoming tide with a reasonable wind, and yes it seemed to fit the bill. Over to our master planner to make sure it was a sane idea, and it came back with thumbs up and a launch time of 10:30am from Itchenor Harbour. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | People standing on a rocky beach with kayaks  Description automatically generated | |  |  | | --- | | Good news the Harbour Master takes Sundays off during the winter season, so no harbour fees! Shame the carpark would only take cash, bit of a scrabble for £1s and other coins to make £5.40 for the day.    What a beautiful day; blue skies, light breeze, moderately warm, but with a sea temperature of 8 degrees C, it was good to see everyone in dry suits or combos to ward of that cold water shock. Launching from Itchenor and heading out towards Hayling, there was very little other traffic about and we really couldn’t believe this was March.  Coming up to the corner of Hayling Island, we could see a few waves developing and yes, there was a wonderful mess on top of the sandbar that stretches to the south. With an invite to go and play, off everyone went. I’ve seldom seen such big smiles when we re grouped to see how the first visit went.    That was it, everyone wanted a little more and so, back into the fray for another 10 mins or so, when somebody had to go and capsize… darn it, it was me!!! I’d taken my eye off the water to watch out for everyone else and got taken by surprise or, was it I’d just begun a surfing run and the wave caught me out? Whichever, I was upside down! I got out quickly and found Dave by my kayak, but I surprised everyone by standing up as it was less than waist deep! This actually made it awkward, not quite a deep-water rescue, not quite able to get in any other way. So Jackie was in place to empty my boat and see me back in, hook and heel style, well done Jackie for a first live rescue. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A group of people kayaking in the ocean  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Close-up of a kayak in the water  Description automatically generated | |  |  | | --- | | Back to the beach on Hayling island for a quick check over and lunch, I was fine, still dry inside, but have to say heart rate was up a little, however that soon settled. | | |

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