

Swingbridge News

Winter and spring 2008/09

News from the Surrey Care Trust

Swingbridge2's afloat



Swingbridge double act

The Surrey Care Trust's second boat, Swingbridge2, was officially launched by Charlie Dimmock at an informal ceremony at the National Trust's Dapdune Wharf in Guildford in July 2008.

Charlie agreed to do the honours after filming for her River Walks television series with some of our Swingbridge volunteers and a team from Guildford Borough Council.

The Swingbridge volunteers have established a reputation for their valuable environmental work, often carried out with offenders doing unpaid work in the community.

They clear skiploads of rubbish and litter, cut back over-growing vegetation, tidy up towpaths and adjacent land. Then there are bankside repairs, work on boardwalks and fencing and refurbishing lock gates.

As well as the satisfaction of preserving the waterside environment as attractive public open space and preserving its value as a wildlife habitat, our workers also gain practical skills.

The £30,000 cost of building Swingbridge2 has been raised from three £10,000 donations from Thames Water, Woking Borough Council and the Thames Heritage Trust, while a £50,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund is meeting a proportion of the costs including training, tools and equipment, for two years.

Surrey
Care Trust
our Swingbridge
Community Boats
benefit people and
the environment

Swingbridge works
in partnership with
the National Trust

Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

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Thames
Water

WOKING
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THAMES
HERITAGE
TRUST
for love of the river

01483 426990

www.surreycaretrust.org.uk

Registered charity number:285543

Contact the Swingbridge Community Boat on 01252 622229 or 07973 282239, margaret.reeder@surreycaretrust.org.uk

At work, winter spring summer and autumn

Our original Swingbridge boat has had a busy summer, giving trips to hundreds of people who are elderly, or frail or have limited mobility.

During the winter, the boat now provides educational trips for young people, skills training, team building sessions and corporate days.



Volunteers Bob Ward, Judith Wilson and Stephen Lafuente carrying out 'spiling', the traditional art of repairing riverbanks with strips of hazel.

If you would be interested in using the boat, or would like to join our volunteer crews, please contact Swingbridge Manager Margaret Reeder on 07973 282239.

Phil joins the team

Welcome to our new environmental trainer Phil Hayes who is working on Swingbridge2.

He replaces Neil Crooks who has taken up a lecturing post. Phil had a background in engineering but his interest in the environment led him to a change of career and taking an environmental sciences degree as a mature student at Surrey University. He has extensive experience of conservation work and previously worked as a countryside ranger for Hampshire County Council.



Phil Hayes is now part of the team.

Swingbridge2 is now our base for all-year-round environmental work by the banks of Surrey's waterways. It spent its first three months working with Guildford Borough Council's Trees and Countryside Department.

Then it was off to the Basingstoke Canal to work on the Woodham flight of locks, cleaning, sanding down and painting the lock beams, bollards and footbridges, and also cleaning the stepping stones around the locks.

That was followed by a spell in Woking town centre, clearing litter and cutting back Japanese knotweed and removing large mats of the highly invasive weed, Hydrocotyle (floating pennywort).

The boat has now moved to the River Thames, where volunteers and offenders will be working until February with the Thames Landscape Strategy at Hurst Park, Molesey, and in the grounds of the YMCA's Hawker Centre.

They will be undertaking a range of work including coppicing, pollarding, crown-lifting, small tree-felling, removing dead wood and scrub-clearing litter, pruning and hedge-planting.

On board for learning new skills

Swingbridge offers lots of opportunities to learn new skills and gain qualifications in crewing, boat management and conservation work.

- Most of our volunteers take the **Competent Crew Certificate (CCC)**, with six more achieving it this summer and five more working towards it this year.
- We already have 14 volunteers qualified as skippers after gaining the **Certificate in Community Boat Management (CCBM)** and we always have at least one CCBM holder on the boat for each trip.
- We are rolling out a programme giving offenders and volunteers working with Swingbridge the chance to achieve certificates in the various aspects of our environmental work counting towards a first level **Open College Network** qualification.
- Fifteen more crew members have qualified this year as **First Aiders**.



Volunteer Henry McFarlane working alongside offenders

Thank you

Many individuals and organisations have supported Swingbridge, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Woking Borough Council, Thames Water, Thames Heritage Trust and the Peter Harrison Foundation.

Petrofac Engineering & Construction Ltd, Woking, a company which provides a range of project services to the global oil and gas industry, made a donation to the running costs of Swingbridge2, as part of its Planet Petrofac environment month in November 2008.

The Swingbridge boats could not operate without our volunteers and they make an enormous contribution.

We also value working in partnership with the National Trust who kindly allow us use of Dapdune Wharf, the Basingstoke Canal Authority, the Wey Navigation, Guildford Borough Council and the Surrey Probation Area.

Thank you to all those who have helped with fundraising, who have donated funds or equipment and to Shepperton Marina for their hospitality when Swingbridge2 was delivered just after Easter. Volunteers worked furiously over one weekend applying two coats of paint before the boat was craned into the Thames and moved to Guildford.

Thank you