

A3 Hindhead - Major improvement works Hindhead News issue 9 - July 2007

Welcome to issue 9 of the Hindhead News. We are now seven months into the scheme with completion still on time and within budget, despite the recent bad weather which has delayed some operations by 3 weeks.

So what have we achieved? All of you that travel along the A3 will be aware of the amount of work being carried out both north and south of Hindhead crossroads.

Once the dormice woke up we removed the stumps of the trees where they were hibernating and cleared the rest of the vegetation from the site so that we could move reptiles out of the way.

The construction site compound at the north end of the works is nearly complete.

We have constructed an important temporary haul road to the north tunnel entrance in Boundless Valley and have started earthworks.

The earthworks for the Boundless-Thursley link road, part of which will be used as a temporary diversion for the A3, are complete.

The new water, electricity and telephone supplies have been laid along BOAT 500



Key activities for the rest of the year are:

July – December: construct the Hindhead Hill and Greensand Way Underpasses

August – December: divert traffic temporarily onto part of the Boundless –Thursley link road to help us construct the underpasses quickly and efficiently.

July – October: carry out earthworks operations in Boundless Valley for the Blackhanger Underpass and the north portal.

July 2007- July 2008: construct the Canadian Memorial Underpass

Canadian Memorial Underpass

Before starting work on the Canadian Memorial underpass we relocated three memorial maple trees and removed the memorial plaque to St Mary's Church, Bramshott, for safe storage during the construction work. We plan to complete construction and return the plaque in time for Canada day 2008.

Re-discovering local history

After clearing the site of trees and scrub our archaeologists have an opportunity to search for items of interest. Finds so far include two limekilns. Both kilns are on the route of the Boundless to Thursley Link Road. Because they were in the way the kilns and the surrounding area were excavated so that a detailed archaeological record could be taken. This type of kiln would have been common in the area in the 18th and 19th centuries although little evidence has survived to the present day.

The kilns would probably have been fed with limestone or chalk from the nearest available sources (such as Petersfield, 25km to the southwest) and fuelled with coppiced wood, likely to have been sourced from the adjacent Boundless Copse. The lime produced by these kilns would have had a wide range of domestic and agricultural uses, but the

main use would have been as an alkali soil conditioner to counteract the acidic nature of the arable land fringing the heathland in the area.

Woodland Clearance and Dormice

Where we are in dormouse territory we use methods to clear the trees and bushes which encourage the dormice to move into areas of similar habit nearby.

In the winter we cleared dormouse habitat in no more than 50 metre wide strips which represents half the usual dormice foraging distance. We also installed 7 temporary dormice bridges to help them escape from isolated areas of trees left on the site.

During the winter dormice hibernate in hollows at the base of trees. To avoid disturbing them we fell the trees so as to leave a good stump.

In areas where the ground had to be disturbed before June we carried out hand searches for dormice.

Where we found hibernating dormice they were taken (by a licensed handler) straight to an adjacent area of similar habitat and to a similar hibernating place. We moved five dormice in this way.

Once the dormice had come out of hibernation in June and moved into nearby woodland we removed the remaining tree stumps.

New dormouse nest boxes have been placed in nearby areas of suitable woodland habitat. Fifty dormouse boxes have been put up in Boundless valley and fifty in Tyndalls Wood. A survey of these boxes was undertaken towards the end of May. Dormice were found in nine boxes.

The next stage of tree felling will be undertaken in September and October 2007 after this year's young dormice have left the nest and become independent, but before hibernation begins.

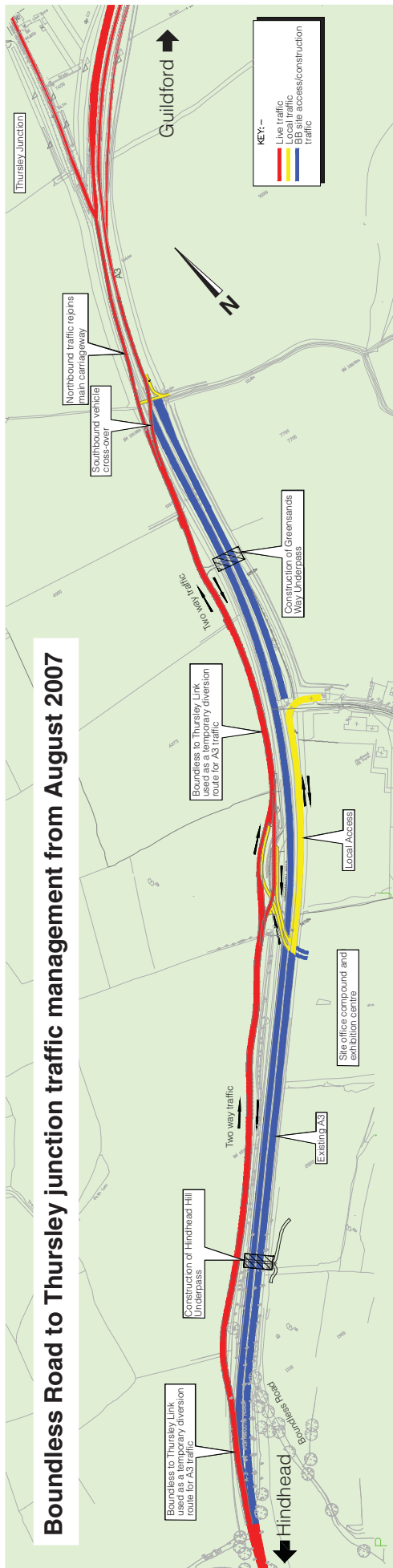
Reptiles

Four species of reptile have been found in Boundless valley; the Common lizard, Adder, Grass Snake and Slow-worm. Three areas within the Copse have been fenced off, vegetation strimmed and the reptiles found moved to National Trust land at Highcombe Edge or in the case of the Grass snakes to Hurthill Copse within Forest Enterprise

land, which has more suitable prey for this species. Strimming of vegetation within the rest of Boundless Valley has been carried out to ensure the reptiles move out of the area to be cleared for the construction works and into adjacent habitat.

While we were installing services along BOAT 500 we found that adders were dropping into the trench overnight. We laid wooden planks in the trenches to help them escape but it was necessary to move them by hand at the start of each day.

Adders are venomous as well as being a protected species, and so only trained personnel could handle them. Although adders can be a Health and Safety Risk, if they sense human activity they tend to move away. An adder's venom should pose little danger to a healthy adult human, but the bite is very painful and requires urgent medical attention.



We regularly monitor the traffic flows through the road works and have confirmed that although you will join the queue earlier your journey time is not significantly increased. Journey times continue to be controlled by the volume of traffic and the traffic lights at the Hindhead crossroads. We will soon have live journey time information displayed and available on our website

Visit by the Secretary of State for Transport

On 21 May Douglas Alexander visited the works and met representatives of the South East of England Regional Assembly and Hindhead Together. He was given a short presentation on the proposed work of Hindhead Together which we featured in our previous newsletter. He was impressed with what he saw on site and the way in which working in partnership had helped deliver a project which all will gain some benefit from.

Viewing progress

Our exhibition centre will open in September in the site compound. We are creating a viewing platform overlooking the north portal just off Footpath 95. It will be signposted from the NT café and Gibbet Hill

Keeping you informed

Ian Whyte, who works for Balfour Beatty Civil Engineering, is the Community Relations Manager and is ready to answer any questions you may have. His details are as follows:

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Safe driving at roadworks

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.



During 2006 two workers were killed and 19 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads.

For the safety of all road users and roadworkers, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.