

Wey & Arun Canal News

December 2015

A review of recent events on the Wey & Arun Canal

New canal bridge takes shape in Surrey



The structure of the new Compasses Bridge is nearing completion in mid-November 2015.

Contractors working for the Wey & Arun Canal Trust have virtually finished the construction of the new Compasses Bridge in Alford, at the south entrance to Dunsfold Park. The new bridge will replace the existing causeway that blocks the canal route. The next stage of the project, planned to be completed in 2016, is to divert traffic to the new bridge and demolish the causeway. Trust volunteers will complete the new bridge with a facing of locally made bricks and landscape the whole area. The Trust is planning a celebration to mark the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Wey & Arun Junction Canal in September 1816; the original opening ceremony was at the nearby Compasses pub.

Canal stars in TV programme

Acting couple Timothy West and Prunella Scales found the Wey & Arun Canal looking at its summer best when they visited in early June for the filming of Channel 4's *Great Canal Journeys* (Series 3). The programme broadcast in October followed Tim & Pru's journey from Teddington on the River Thames to Littlehampton on the South Coast. The Wey & Arun Canal was a vital waterway link in this journey. Canal Trust Vice-Chairman Alan Johnson and Project Manager Philip Oliver were the welcoming party at The Gun's Mouth in Shalford, the junction of the canal and the River Wey.

The next stage of the journey was in the Trust's boat *Josias Jessop* along the whole restored section at Loxwood, now more than 3 miles long. The weather was excellent as Timothy West took the helm for a journey lasting more than half a day, thanks to the demands of filming. Inevitably viewers only saw a tiny fraction, but in the early evening light the area around Drungewick looked quite magical.

The Canal Trust was delighted to show off the canal to a national TV audience and demonstrate that in the gap between the Wey and Arun rivers 'London's Lost Route to the Sea' is coming to life again.



Stars and film crew on board *Josias Jessop* at Drungewick Lock, very close to the current southern limit of navigation on the Loxwood section.

Guildford MP opens viewing platform

A celebration on 24th October 2015 marked the inauguration of the viewing platform constructed by the Canal Trust as the centrepiece of the new Hunt Nature Park in Shalford, Surrey.



Guildford MP Anne Milton and Bramley Link Project Manager Philip Oliver formally put the final piece of the viewing platform into place.

Guildford MP Anne Milton declared the viewing platform open and unveiled a commemorative plaque in the centre of the unusual hexagonal decking. She praised the work of the Trust in establishing the park as part of its plan to restore the canal from Shalford to Pallingham. Explaining plans for bringing the canal back to life in the area, Project Manager Philip Oliver said the park demonstrated the Trust's commitment to creating a 'green corridor' along the length of the waterway. Future plans for the park included more walking routes and an information centre for visitors.

Trust Chairman Sally Schupke also stressed the intention of extending the linear park down towards Bramley. "It's great to be providing facilities which benefit the people of Guildford, Shalford, Bramley and the surrounding villages and the many people who come here on the Wey-South Path," she said.

Surrey slipway approved

Waverley Borough Council has granted planning permission for a slipway on the canal near Dunsfold and Alfold, not far from Compasses Bridge. Once the new bridge is complete and desilting work has taken place, a section about 1¼ miles long will be available for navigation. The slipway will make it far easier for small boats to enter and leave the canal. Volunteers have already done some preparation work on the slipway site; construction, again by volunteers, is scheduled for 2016. The slipway is being funded by a generous family donation in memory of a former member.

Wey & Arun Canal Trust
The Granary, Flitchfold Farm
Loxwood
Billingshurst RH14 0RH



Volunteers rebuild Sussex lock

In September 2015, contractors working for the Canal Trust completed the concrete shell of the new Gennets Bridge Lock, near Ifold and Loxwood in West Sussex. The Trust's volunteer team is now responsible for completing work on the site; this includes building a highway bridge across the lock for a bridleway and the Sussex Border Path and facing the concrete walls with brick. The finished lock will look similar to the original one that was built in about 1814 and had largely disappeared by the 1920s when the bricks were reclaimed for local housing. The 2015 workers did find substantial buried remains of the original



Canal Trust volunteers lay the first blocks inside the concrete shell of the new Gennets Bridge Lock, near Ifold and Loxwood.

lock. The estimated cost of having a new lock built entirely by contractors is in the region of £1 million; by using volunteers for all appropriate tasks the Canal Trust can reduce this cost by at least 60%.

Staying up to date

It is always worth checking our website for the latest progress. You can also 'like' us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter or use your smartphone to scan the QR codes at our Canal Centre, in our publications and on information posts along the canal route.

Website: www.weyandarun.co.uk

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