

Wey & Arun Canal News

November 2012

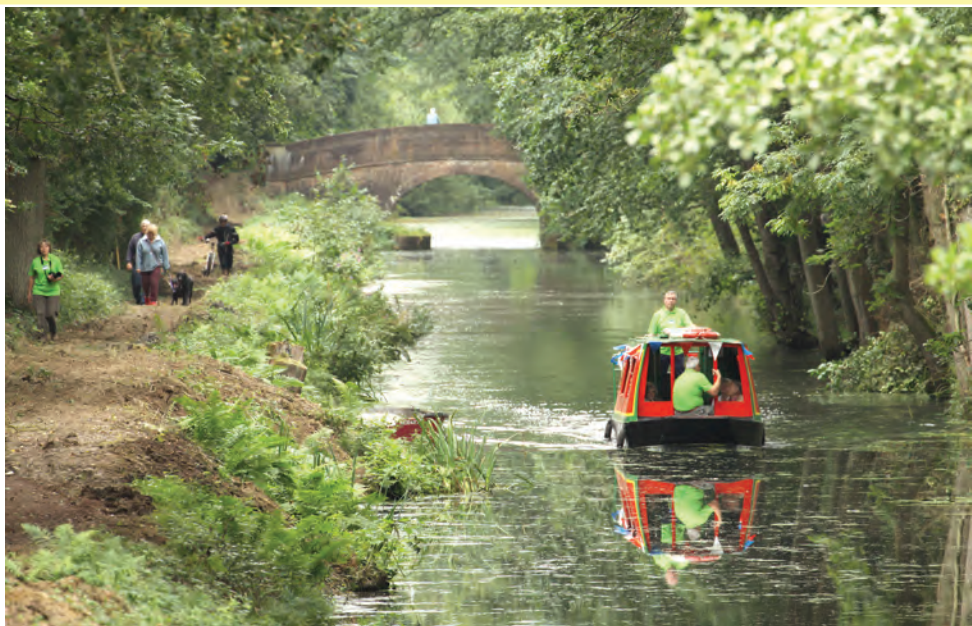
A review of recent events on the Wey & Arun Canal

FIRST PUBLIC BOAT TRIPS ON SURREY SECTION

In late August, the Wey & Arun Canal Trust transferred its 12-seater tripboat *John Smallpeice* from Loxwood, West Sussex, to the canal section next to Dunsfold Park, in Alfold, Surrey. Over the weekend of 1st/2nd September, the boat provided very successful public trips between Compasses and Farnhurst bridges. It was the first time that a passenger-carrying craft had run on the canal in Surrey for more than 140 years.

The boat trips were possible thanks to many months of hard work by volunteers, including a week-long visiting work camp. The team constructed a new landing stage and improved the access to the canal near the Three Compasses Inn. They also repaired the towpath and installed a silt trap to deal with mud being washed into the canal, a problem that had led to a complete blockage at one point.

The Canal Trust is now developing plans to restore another nearby section of canal to navigation, between Compasses Bridge and Tickner's Heath. To link these two sections, a new Compasses Bridge will be needed, since the current road crossing is a causeway that does not allow for navigation. Once this bridge is built, an attractive 2-kilometre section of Surrey canal could see regular boat traffic once again.



A public boat trip in Alfold, Surrey - Farnhurst Bridge is in the background

GATES FITTED ON SUSSEX LOCK

The project to rebuild Southland Lock (lock no. 7), near Ifold and Loxwood, West Sussex, reached an important milestone in September when new lock gates weighing a total of 5 tonnes were installed. Southland Lock had to be rebuilt as almost nothing remained of the original structure. However, we know from old records and photographs that it was built using locally-made bricks. The locks further south on the canal used stone from a quarry near Pulborough. The Canal Trust wanted to retain the original appearance of Southland Lock; the new lock is built in concrete and faced with bricks from Rudgwick, West Sussex, laid by Canal Trust volunteers. A team that sometimes numbers more than 20 has been working at the site, on a variety of jobs, for more than a year.

The Canal Trust hopes to hold an official opening ceremony for Southland Lock in 2013, once the team has completed the lock and the section of canal southwards to Devil's Hole Lock (no. 6), has been restored to navigable condition. The volunteers will also turn their attention to the next lock northwards, Gennets Bridge (no. 8). Chichester District Council granted planning permission for rebuilding this lock in 2011.



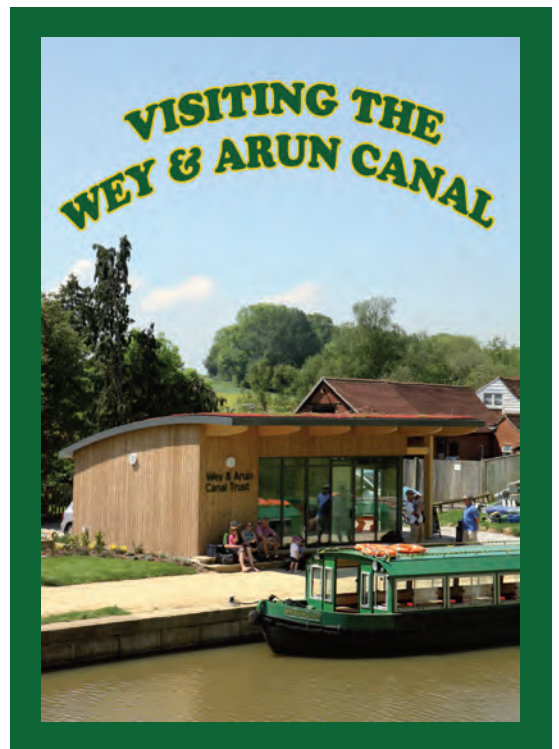
One of the new Southland Lock gates is lifted into position

NEW CANAL GUIDE PUBLISHED

A new publication by the Wey & Arun Canal Trust, *Visiting the Wey & Arun Canal*, encourages visitors to explore the whole length of the canal through the peaceful Sussex and Surrey countryside. Many visitors know about the Loxwood section in West Sussex but are totally unaware that it was once linked to Guildford and the south coast. The new full-colour guide highlights 14 sites of interest, all of which are accessible to the public, with maps and modern and historic photographs. *Visiting the Wey & Arun Canal* is the work of a volunteer team and all profits will naturally go towards restoration of the canal. The booklet is on sale from the Loxwood Canal Centre and by mail order via the Trust's website, priced at £5.00.

SUSSEX SECTION BACK IN USE

For the first year since its reopening in 2010, the section of canal northwards from the Onslow Arms in Loxwood to Devil's Hole Lock has seen regular use by the Canal Trust's tripboats throughout the Summer. This year, visitors have been able to choose between trips in either direction, as longer excursions have continued to go southwards to Drungewick Lock, a return journey of about 3 hours from the Onslow Arms.



NEW MANAGER FOR KEY SURREY SECTION

Philip Oliver, recently retired from a senior management role in the IT industry, has become a Director of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust and has taken overall charge of the Trust's projects in the Shalford and Bramley areas. Philip succeeds Christopher Harrison, to whom the Trust is indebted for nearly 10 years of patient planning and preparation work.

GUN'S MOUTH - WIDER CHANNEL PLANNED

Canal Trust members have responded generously to an appeal for funds to widen an existing channel alongside Gun's Mouth Island in Shalford, Surrey. The new channel will have sufficient depth and width for navigation by canal boats. It will form the northernmost section of the restored Wey & Arun Canal in Surrey. The Canal Trust hopes to carry out the work in early 2013.



Volunteers at Gun's Mouth Island

CANAL TRUST SETS UP SURREY BASE

The Canal Trust has established a new office in Shalford, near Guildford, Surrey, which will primarily support restoration operations on the northern section of the canal route. The new office is in addition to the existing base at Loxwood, West Sussex, which will now concentrate on promoting and supporting the Trust's boat trip operation and the Loxwood Canal Centre.

The Trust's newly appointed Administrator, former BT project manager David Daniels, is in charge of the Shalford office, initially on a part-time basis.

STAY UP TO DATE - VISIT OUR WEBSITE

If you would like to know more about the Wey & Arun Canal or keep up with our progress, our website is updated at least once a week so you will frequently find something new there.

www.weyandarun.co.uk

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