

Wey & Arun Canal News

June 2013

A review of recent events on the Wey & Arun Canal

CANAL'S LINK TO NATIONAL NETWORK PROGRESSES

At the northern end of the route, the Trust has been hard at work improving Gun's Mouth Island in Shalford, Surrey, which is leased to the Canal Trust by the National Trust. The island is roughly triangular; the water on one side of the island is shallow and the channel has become overgrown. With the help of visiting forestry volunteers from the Waterway Recovery Group, the Trust has been working to remove dead trees and carry out work as recommended by a professional tree specialist, preparing for dredging to make this channel fully navigable. The Trust hopes to start the dredging work later in the year.

Nearby, after a long period of planning, the Trust is preparing for physical work to establish the "Hunt Park" between Shalford and Bramley for the benefit of the local community. This results from a bequest left by Ed and Doris Hunt for environmental improvements. In undertaking this work, the Trust hopes that the park will eventually accommodate a new section of canal, to bypass the section which is no longer available to use at this point.



This year's Annual Meeting of the Canal Trust took place in Shalford. Before the meeting, members were offered short boat trips in the Gun's Mouth Island area on one of two narrowboats. In this picture, the island is in the background.

AWARDS SUCCESS FOR CANAL CENTRE

The Loxwood Canal Centre, opened in 2012, won two commendations in the finals of the Waterways Renaissance Awards 2013, in both the Recreation & Tourism and Design & Construction categories. The Renaissance Awards are organised by the Canal & River Trust and considered as the 'Oscars' of the inland waterways. Successful entries have to be innovative and inspirational and enrich the use and enjoyment of waterways. The Canal Trust is delighted to receive this recognition for the ambitious Canal Centre project.



The Loxwood Canal Centre seen during special Easter boat trips.

Now entering its second year of operation, the Canal Centre acts as a welcoming focal point for visitors to the showpiece Loxwood section, providing information not only about the canal but the whole local area, and selling boat trip tickets, guides and souvenirs. The Centre is open throughout the year, although with reduced hours during the months between November and March when "turn up and go" boat trips do not run.

The Canal Trust chose a very "green" design for the Centre, using sustainably sourced materials and with low running costs. The green roof, planted with attractively coloured sedum, contributes to the building's insulation and is growing well.

PLANS DEVELOPED FOR SURREY BRIDGE

On the Summit section of the canal, successful boat trip trials took place in 2012 near the Three Compasses Inn at Alfold, Surrey. There was once a bridge over the canal here (Compasses Bridge), but, probably during the rapid construction of Dunsfold airfield in 1942, the bridge became a concrete causeway that now blocks the canal. This causeway is now on one of the two roads into the Dunsfold Park site and carries heavy lorry traffic.

The Trust is working with Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council and the owners of Dunsfold Park to examine options for removing the causeway and constructing a new bridge, while not creating major problems for road traffic. The Trust's current preferred option is to build the new bridge directly alongside the existing causeway, then to slew the road across to the new route. Local consultation on the plans began in May 2013.

With the new bridge in place, the way will be open to regular boat trips on an attractive wooded section of canal about 2km long, with the possibility of further extensions in the longer term. The Trust's outline timescale envisages the new bridge being complete and the causeway demolished by 2016, but this is dependent on planning permission, detailed design work and fundraising. Coincidentally, the official opening ceremony for the Wey & Arun Canal took place at the Three Compasses in September 1816, so if all goes to plan there could be another celebration here to mark the 200th anniversary.



Compasses Bridge - in the next few years boats will be able to go underneath the road again.

BRIDGE ENGINEER JOINS BOARD

The Canal Trust is pleased to announce that Tony Ford, a Chartered Civil Engineer with long experience in designing roads and bridges, has become a Director. Tony's current focus is on the Alfold/Dunsfold area, where he is working hard on plans for rebuilding Compasses Bridge.



Tony Ford

CANAL EXTENDS NORTHWARDS IN SUSSEX

With rebuilding work approaching completion on Southland Lock, near Loxwood and Ifold, Sussex, the Trust is planning the next restoration work in this area. Just north of Southland, the canal route is blocked by a private road crossing; the Canal Trust has submitted an application to Chichester District Council for permission to install a swing bridge here. Further north, at Gennets Bridge, the Trust has launched an appeal for funds to start rebuilding the lock during the drier Summer weather (at the time of writing the appeal had reached about £65,000). Also during the Summer, the Trust hopes to restore the section of canal between Devil's Hole Lock (reopened in 2010) and Southland Lock to fully navigable condition.



Southland Lock should see its first boats this year.

STAYING UP TO DATE

Restoring the canal's 19th century heritage needs traditional and 21st century techniques. It is always worth checking our website for the latest progress. You can also join us on Facebook or use your smartphone to scan the QR codes that have now appeared at our Canal Centre, in our publications and on information posts along the canal route.

Website: www.weyandarun.co.uk

Facebook: [weyandaruncanal](https://www.facebook.com/weyandaruncanal)



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