

# Wey & Arun Canal News

## December 2014

A review of recent events on the Wey & Arun Canal

### PROGRESS ON CLEARING SURREY CANAL BLOCKAGE

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust has submitted an application to Waverley Borough Council for permission to replace the causeway that blocks the canal at Compasses, near Alfold in Surrey. The plan is to construct a new bridge alongside the causeway, with enough height to allow navigation, then demolish the causeway. In this way traffic on the busy road into Dunsfold Park will only be disrupted for a very short time.

The estimated cost of the project is £700,000, which makes this by far the most ambitious restoration so far on the Surrey section of the canal. Thanks to generous donations from members and supporters, and especially from the estate of a member who died earlier in the year, the Trust is optimistic of being able to fund the project, with completion pencilled in for 2016.



The concrete causeway at Compasses - scheduled to be removed soon.

### CANAL TRUST CELEBRATES SUSSEX LOCK OPENING

A celebration in June 2014 marked the official reopening of Southland Lock, near Loxwood and Ifold in Sussex. Rebuilt largely by volunteers over a period of nearly 3 years, the new lock looks similar to the original lock built in about 1814, which also used locally-made bricks. However, the 21st century lock has a concrete shell and an electric pump that conserves water by pumping it back to the higher level after the lock has been used. The Canal Trust hopes that from Spring 2015 public boat trips will regularly use the attractive section of canal between Southland Lock and the Canal Centre in Loxwood.



The Canal Trust's electric trip boat *Wiggonholt* is seen at Southland Lock on the day of the official opening.

### CANOE AGREEMENT BRINGS MORE BOATS

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust is pleased to announce a new agreement with Canoe England, allowing members of Canoe England to use their boats on the operational section of canal near Loxwood free of charge and with a minimum of formality. Members already enjoy access to most navigable rivers and to canals controlled by the Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways).

Canal Trust Chairman Sally Schupke commented "We have worked hard to restore and improve the canal. Our reward comes from seeing more people enjoy it, as walkers or as boaters. Canoeing is a healthy and very 'green' way to discover the countryside. Our visitors tell us that they are always pleased to see boats travelling along the canal. We are delighted to be able to welcome Canoe England members to our showpiece section of canal in Sussex."

# UNLOCKING SURREY CANAL HISTORY

To coincide with this year's national Heritage Open Days, a team of volunteers, supervised by a professional archaeologist, uncovered remains of an original Wey & Arun Canal lock between Shalford and Bramley in Surrey. The Canal Trust has carried out some conservation work on the nearby Tannery Lane Bridge and Gosden Aqueduct, but Tanyard Lock has disappeared under vegetation since the canal was abandoned and the lock materials were reused, probably for house building. As the Trust develops plans to restore the canal in this area, it is important to understand what still exists from the original construction.

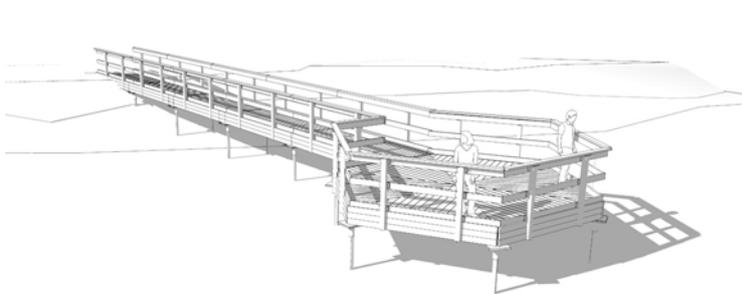
The excavation confirmed the position of the lock and revealed substantial parts of one corner at the southern end. The Canal Trust organised a series of guided walks to explore the canal route between Shalford and Bramley, including detailed explanations of the lock site from consultant archaeologist Martin Cook. Surrey Archaeological Society and Surrey Industrial History Group kindly provided grants towards the cost of the work.



The south-east corner of the lock is visible in the centre of the picture. In the background the soil colour shows the original canal bed.

## NATURE PARK VIEWING PLATFORM TAKES SHAPE

The Canal Trust has begun construction of a viewing platform on the Hunt Nature Park site in Shalford, Surrey. The park is along the banks of the Cranleigh Waters, close to the original route of the Wey & Arun Canal. From the platform, visitors will be able to look across the river to a group of veteran oak trees, one of which is estimated to be 550 years old. The Hunt Nature Park has been made possible by a generous gift from former local residents Edgar and Doris Hunt. The Canal Trust has already improved the riverside path so that it is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs and has carried out extensive planting on the site.



An artist's impression of the viewing platform.

## CANAL & RIVER TRUST MEETING

The directors of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust (WACT) are always keen to hear expert advice and accounts of experience from elsewhere in the 'waterways world'. The Canal & River Trust (CRT) took over from British Waterways in July 2012. CRT has expressed its support for canal restoration and has recently produced an attractive short video: *Water Adds Value*. In September 2014, a group of senior WACT representatives met the CRT Manager whose role includes liaison with waterway societies and trusts at CRT's Little Venice offices in London.

During a productive meeting, WACT briefed CRT on its fundraising strategies. To date, WACT has never had to delay planning for physical work because of lack of funds, thanks to its generous members and supporters. CRT is not in a position to fund WACT directly - it has enough challenges of its own - but CRT is willing to give help in kind, such as advising on technical and environmental/ecological concerns. CRT emphasised how important it is for canal restoration organisations to work in partnership with groups that embrace a range of local interests. Both parties agreed to follow up the initial meeting early in 2015.

## 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](http://www.weyandarun.co.uk)

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

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