

Wey & Arun Canal News

November 2009

A review of recent events on the Wey & Arun Canal

Prepared by Brian Andrews

NEW ELECTRIC BOAT SPARKS EXCELLENT SEASON

This year has seen the Wey & Arun Canal Trust's most successful boating season ever. By the first week in September, some 6,800 passengers had been carried, with 143 private charters, in addition to the public trips every weekend.

The electric boat *Wiggonholt* can carry 55 passengers and is the new flagship of the fleet. The quiet and spacious new boat has proved highly popular and its extra capacity has been extremely useful during a busy Summer season.

The access lift on board *Wiggonholt* has enabled many less able passengers to enjoy the canal from the water. The lift needed additional funding, which was generously contributed by Trust members, the charity Sussex4Sussex and the Southern Co-operative Association. The Trust is very grateful for these donations which have resulted in a really worthwhile improvement to the boat trip operation.



Thanks to the access lift, passengers with mobility difficulties can easily board *Wiggonholt* and enjoy canal trips



Canal landscaping ideas were on display at Shalford

TRUST CONSULTS SHALFORD RESIDENTS

Over the weekend of 26th and 27th September, a very successful public consultation was held in Shalford village hall. Over 300 visitors attended, and over 90% of those who completed a short questionnaire said that they were in favour in principle of restoring the Wey & Arun Canal. Also on display were several examples of the work of Kingston University students, who have been conducting a special project on the Wey & Arun Canal to show what could be possible with a restored waterway.

The Trust is now fully analysing the questionnaire responses and will report the results back to Guildford Borough Council, Shalford Parish Council and all other interested parties.

AND ANOTHER BOAT ARRIVES



Josias Jessop seen during initial trials on the Wey & Arun Canal

While the trip boat *John Smallpeice* was undergoing refurbishment earlier in the year, another small craft arrived on the canal. Formerly in use on the River Thames, this boat will be named *Josias Jessop* and will operate in place of the *John Smallpeice*, which will now be kept in reserve. The boat will carry up to 12 passengers. Josias Jessop was the engineer who originally surveyed the Wey & Arun Junction Canal and was the son of the more famous William Jessop. A programme of minor modifications during the Winter will make the boat ready for service in early 2010.

LOXWOOD WORK CONTINUES

With the Loxwood bridge and lock complete, attention has now turned to other nearby parts of the canal. The next lock above Loxwood is Devil's Hole Lock (affectionately known as DHL). The Canadian Army blew a hole in the side of this lock as an exercise in the last war. The lock itself had been restored already, minus the gates, but the decision was made to extend its length, in line with other recently completed locks, to enable a full-length narrowboat to pass. The section of canal between Loxwood Lock and DHL is also being sealed and a boat turning place established in readiness for a formal reopening in Spring 2010.



Lengthening work in progress at Devil's Hole Lock

In the meantime, Scottish & Southern Energy have erected a post to provide power for both DHL and the next lock above, Southland Lock. Preparatory work has also started on this lock which must be completely rebuilt as the majority of the brickwork was reused for building houses in the 1920s. As at all other restored locks on the Wey & Arun Canal, water that is used in operating the lock will be conserved by pumping it back to the higher level for reuse.

WEY & ARUN CANAL TRUST STRENGTHENS ITS TEAM

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust has recently announced some key appointments. John Talbot, a geotechnical engineer with long and deep professional experience of water-based projects, has become Chief Engineer. John will lead an Engineering Group that will provide valuable guidance to the Trust's project managers. Testifying to the Trust's commitment to respecting and enhancing the natural environment, Ian Burton has been appointed to the important post of Conservation Advisor. Ian's broad professional experience most recently included a spell as Director of Outdoor Business with Mid-Sussex District Council. In this position, he had responsibility for woodland, farmland and parks. The Trust also has a new Press Officer: Bill Thomson. Bill has worked in journalism for over 20 years, mostly with maritime and boating magazines, and is currently editor of the international maritime trade magazine 'The Motorship'. The former Press Officer, Sally Schupke, is now the Trust's Chairman.

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

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



Telephone: 01403 752403
Email: office@weyandarun.co.uk