

Heritage Newsletter

2011/ issue 1

In this issue

- Soda used to clear graffiti
- NVQ update
- Rare cast iron gates
- Non-compliant works
- Award for community garden
- Bath bridges restoration on the way
- Golden rule

BW in numbers this season...

- Over 100 lock gates replaced and refurbished
- £50m spent on maintenance
- 11 Stoppage Open Days attracting over 1000 visitors

Line managers: please cascade this newsletter through team talks and post on local notice boards.



Have you, and all members of your team had a 'Heritage Awareness training' or would you like a refresher?

Your local heritage adviser will organise this for you.



A few of our visitors enjoying a 'behind the scene' tour at Lune Aqueduct, one of our 11 Stoppage Open Days.

Taking a closer 'lock' at our waterways

This winter stoppage season BW has showcased our work to members of the public across the country. From lock stoppages to our lock gate workshops well over 1000 people have had first hand experience of all what goes into looking after our 200 year old canal.

Thanks to everyone who took part in the Stoppage Open Days!



The first Yorkshire 'Red Wheel' unveiled at Bingley Five Rise.

The Transport Trust chose Bingley Five Rise as one of its most significant sites of transport heritage by erecting a plaque in recognition of 'the steepest lock staircase in Britain'. The Red Wheel programme commemorates Britain's rich and globally important legacy in the development of transport.



A very warm welcomed to Audrey O'Connor who recently began volunteering as a Heritage Assistant . Working from Cambrian House in Birmingham, Audrey has an MSc in Historic Conservation and is supporting Lizzy Thomson, Heritage Adviser for the West Midlands and Central Shires waterways.

GOLDEN RULE

NO drilling into historic stonework, brickwork or concrete, especially copings!

Having a 'blast' on the Grand Union

Dennis Maney, heritage adviser in the SE has recently organised a demonstration by 'Soda Blast' to remove masonry paint from an external wall of the listed Stockers Lock Cottage in Hertfordshire. Removal of the paint is important as it is detrimental to the masonry. The stripping process was particularly effective, as unlike other alternatives the system didn't damage the underlying brickwork. The local authority conservation Officers as well as BW's in-house environment team were happy with the results. Portable as well as van based systems are available. Compared to other systems, run off is minimised because very small amounts of water is required to dampen the dust. Speak to Dennis if you want to find out more.



Heritage Skills NVQ moves on

Over 30 members of bank staff have recently enrolled as Heritage Champions on the NVQ in Heritage Skills thanks to external funding made available from 'Train to Gain'. On average, each applicant is benefitting from about £1,200 in external grant towards the assessment, with BW's costs capped at £300. Once they have completed the programme the staff will have gained a new qualification that recognises their experience of working on historic structures and will have a heritage-endorsed CSCS card. In addition to brickwork and joinery, a new level has been introduced for supervisors.



Non-compliant works

Following a recent incident of non-compliance where a member of staff drilled holes in historic lock copings, it is worth reiterating that the drilling or damaging of historic stonework, brickwork, and concrete, especially copings, is not permitted. It is BW policy to protect all of the heritage in our care, regardless of whether or not it is legally designated.

A further recent incident of non-compliance occurred where contractors carried out illegal works on a scheduled monument and a listed building. It is important that all contractors and BW staff are made aware of legal designations and their implications, and that BW's heritage standards and processes are complied with. Please notify your local heritage adviser of any unauthorised works and accidental or malicious damage and contact them if heritage awareness training is required.



Rare cast iron re-gating

A rare set of Victorian cast iron lock gates have returned to the historic Oxford Canal near Rugby, on the Hillmorton Lock Flight after nearly a three month absence and a £40,000 refurbishment.

The gates are one of only a handful of surviving sets of iron gates across Britain's canals and rivers. They were originally installed in 1840 and were removed in November 2010 after a routine inspection showed they were in need of extensive repairs and refurbishment. The gates were carefully craned out of the lock and sent to a specialist ironwork company, Dorothea Restorations in Bristol. Now that the Grade II listed gates have been restored it is hoped they will last at least another century before they need another loving overhaul.



Award for tunnel-top community garden

Thornhill Bridge Community Gardeners have successfully fundraised for and constructed a food growing space along the top of the grade II listed Islington Tunnel on the Regents Canal in London. The gardeners worked with BW on an agreement and their plans were approved by the waterway engineer and heritage adviser. The volunteer garden group also worked alongside BTCV and was supported by the local authority. Thornhill Bridge Community Gardeners have received an RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' award, getting 'Thriving' (Level 4).



Iron bridges getting a make over

Repairs have started on two historic iron bridges over the K&A on the Bath Flight. Constructed in 1815 by the local firm of Stotherts, later Stothert & Pitt suppliers of cranes to canals and railways all over Britain. The bridges are both listed Grade II and are part of an important series of historic canal structures that lie within the Bath World Heritage Site.

