



**INLAND
WATERWAYS**
ASSOCIATION

OUR UNIQUE HERITAGE

Case studies: Lost & saved



CONTENTS



PARTNERSHIP	6
Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour Association	6
Birmingham Roundhouse	7
BIODIVERSITY	8
Aston Nature Reserve, Montgomery Canal	8-9
CLIMATE CHANGE	10
Aberdulais Aqueduct, Tennant Canal, Wales	10-11
PLANNING PROTECTION	12
Crown Wharf, Trent & Mersey Canal, Stone	12-13
Conservation Area Review, Stoke-on-Trent	14
Tipton Gauging Station, BCN	15
COMMUNITY	16
The Peterborough Arms, Dauntsey, Wilts & Berks Canal	16
Wolverhampton Urban Moorings, Wyrley & Essington Canal	17
HEALTH & SAFETY	18
Marple Aqueduct Railings, Peak Forest Canal	18-19
INFRASTRUCTURE DETAIL	20
Split bridges, various locations	20-21
HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING	22
Shipshape Network	22
Tooley's Boatyard, Banbury, Oxford Canal	23
HERITAGE CRAFT	24
National Waterways Museums' Boat Collections	24-25
WATERWAYS CULTURE	26
Alarum Theatre's Shows/We Dig Canals	26-27
SUPPORT FROM IWA	28
WORKING TOGETHER	30

FOREWORD



I was lucky enough to grow up close to the industrial waterways of the North, which provided not just a fascination with the past that would go on to shape my career choices (and my personal ones – my wedding reception was in the middle of the Rochdale Canal), but a deeper understanding of place and local identity.

This year, local has mattered like never before. More people than ever have ventured out into what was previously unfamiliar territory, and canal towpaths have become outdoor gyms and allowed us to get closer to nature. The waterways were originally engineered to solve logistical problems and to make money in a time of great upheaval in society, economy and culture. Today they provide breathing space for everyone facing new revolutionary changes to their patterns of living, learning and working.

It was local causes which helped form IWA in its early days – volunteers worked tirelessly to turn derelict and unloved stretches of canal into spaces we couldn't imagine being without today. Theirs was the perfect story of a grassroots movement maturing into a national organisation.

Today that work continues in partnership with charities and businesses so that more of us can enjoy the waterways and do our part to preserve and develop it in positive ways.

In times when funding is scarce, people on the ground can still make a huge difference. Whether through membership, volunteering, promoting and fundraising, sharing ideas or being part of a boaters' forum, real people continue to provide a legacy for those who come after.

Continuing to collaborate to find new and sustainable ways to use landscapes and buildings, and to preserve and develop skills, will help to make the places where we live and work cleaner, safer, more connected and better able to face the challenges ahead.

- Liz McIvor
Historian, author and presenter of
Canals, the Making of a Nation





INNOVATIVE WAYS TO PROTECT HERITAGE

Part 1 of IWA's Heritage Report (published in 2020) was essentially a position statement on waterways heritage. We highlighted its uniqueness, why it is so important, the threats facing it and how we define it.

Our broad definition included, alongside built heritage and infrastructure, the boats, skills and culture that are equally vital to our understanding of how the waterways developed.

And there was more. We wanted to emphasise how our system of navigable canals and rivers is not a museum but functional, living heritage, sustaining livelihoods and providing immense pleasure to the many people who work and play on it to this day. For the communities living alongside waterways, the benefits are equally tangible, from improving health and wellbeing to boosting the local economy.

In the second part of our Heritage Report our focus shifts from the macro to more specific examples. Case studies, grouped around key themes, offer tantalising glimpses of what can be achieved, with tips on best practice and lessons learned. Together, they form an invaluable resource and we hope that they will inspire navigation authorities, councils, planning authorities, developers and builders to work together with heritage organisations and local communities to find innovative ways to protect waterways heritage, in all its forms.

PARTNERSHIP

Collaborating with other organisations can offer better opportunities to protect heritage than working alone, including easier access to funding and innovative ideas.

MALDON AND HEYBRIDGE HERITAGE HARBOUR ASSOCIATION



Who was involved?

Local Authorities, Developers, Heritage Organisations, Navigation Authority



Related themes:

Skills, Community



A joint initiative by the Maritime Heritage Trust and National Historic Ships aims to give 'Heritage Harbour' status to historic inland ports and harbours across the UK.

Often located in urban areas, the initiative has potential to breathe new life into historic buildings, moorings, maintenance facilities and wasteland, as well as connect with the local community and help develop training opportunities for young people.

Maldon and Heybridge was one of the first Heritage Harbours in the UK. The area is a haven for historic and traditional vessels, in particular Thames sailing barges and East Coast fishing smacks. Many of these boats are still active, taking people out into the Blackwater Estuary and beyond. Several boatyards also remain, carrying out maintenance and restoration.

The aim of the Heritage Harbour Association is to work with Maldon District and Town Councils, Heybridge Parish Council and

other recognised groups to help current and future stakeholders to preserve the working and historic maritime heritage of the area, which includes the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation run by IWA through its subsidiary, Essex Waterways Ltd.

Projects include setting up heritage trails for walking and cycling, and establishing a Heritage Centre on the Hythe in Maldon. There is also a focus on promoting work experience, training and apprenticeships at the Heritage Marine Foundation (a charity based in one of the Maldon boatyards) and other shipyards.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Developers, local authorities and heritage organisations could form a forum to facilitate dialogue
- Consider the heritage of a harbour or port as a whole, rather than a series of unconnected buildings or space



BIRMINGHAM ROUNDHOUSE



Who was involved?

Navigation Authority,
National Trust, National
Lottery Heritage Fund



Related themes:

Waterway Culture, Community

The Roundhouse was built in 1874, and is situated next to the canal in the centre of Birmingham. It was designed as stables and stores, serving as the base for the city's lamplighters and the horses of the Public Works department.

In 1976, the building was given Grade II* listing due to its historic importance. It was used by the City of Birmingham Engineers Department until the 1980s when it became redundant, and the site was subdivided and sold. By the early 2000s, it had begun to fall into disrepair.

In 2013, a pioneering partnership between the Canal & River Trust and the National Trust was formed to bring the Roundhouse back to life through a mix of sensitive heritage restoration and enterprise. Thanks to £2.5m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and £196k from Historic England, the restoration work celebrates the building's history while connecting it with the waterways and local communities.

As much as possible of the original fabric and significance of the building has been conserved, with the minimum of intervention. The entire building from roof to cobbles is being restored, so it can continue to tell the history of Birmingham and its canals.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Work with other organisations that have common goals
- Find new uses for heritage buildings, involving local businesses and the local community
- Conserve as much of the original fabric as possible

BIODIVERSITY

Restoring waterways and protecting heritage need not be at odds with safeguarding natural habitats, providing the project is carried out sensitively. Working towards Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is one way to achieve this. Instead of just mitigating environmental impacts, developers should leave the habitat in a measurably better state (at least 10% net gain) than before.

IWA has formed a BNG Working Group to help canal restorations and navigation authorities prepare for when BNG becomes mandatory across the UK planning system.

ASTON NATURE RESERVE, MONTGOMERY CANAL



Who was involved?
Navigation Authority,
Voluntary Groups, IWA (WRG)



Related themes:
Climate Change, Planning
Protection (SSSI)



After the Montgomery Canal was abandoned it became a haven for flora and fauna. So much so, in fact, that in 1986 one area at Aston Locks was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of the rare species found there.

When work began to bring the canal back into use as a navigation, it was important to ensure these habitats were protected. Consequently, IWA's Waterway Recovery Group created offline nature reserves to offset the value of the canal's SSSI and allow restoration of the main route to go ahead. In 2018, two large new ponds were added to

the existing reserves thanks to support from the National Lottery. They ensure an overall net gain in habitat for rare species, and enabled excavation of the canal itself into a navigation again.

The Canal & River Trust hopes to implement a clearer Biodiversity Net Gain approach in future phases of the restoration – one that is not limited to aquatic habitats.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

- **Follow BNG principles so that existing habitats are protected and enhanced alongside heritage**



CLIMATE CHANGE

The effects of a changing climate, with hotter, drier summers, wetter winters and more frequent extreme weather events, are increasingly impacting the heritage sector. Buildings and infrastructure designed for the climate of 200 years ago may need to be adapted in order to cope today.

More positively, a restored waterway can provide flood relief or a conduit for water transfer in drought, for example.

ABERDULAIS AQUEDUCT, TENNANT CANAL, WALES (ONGOING)



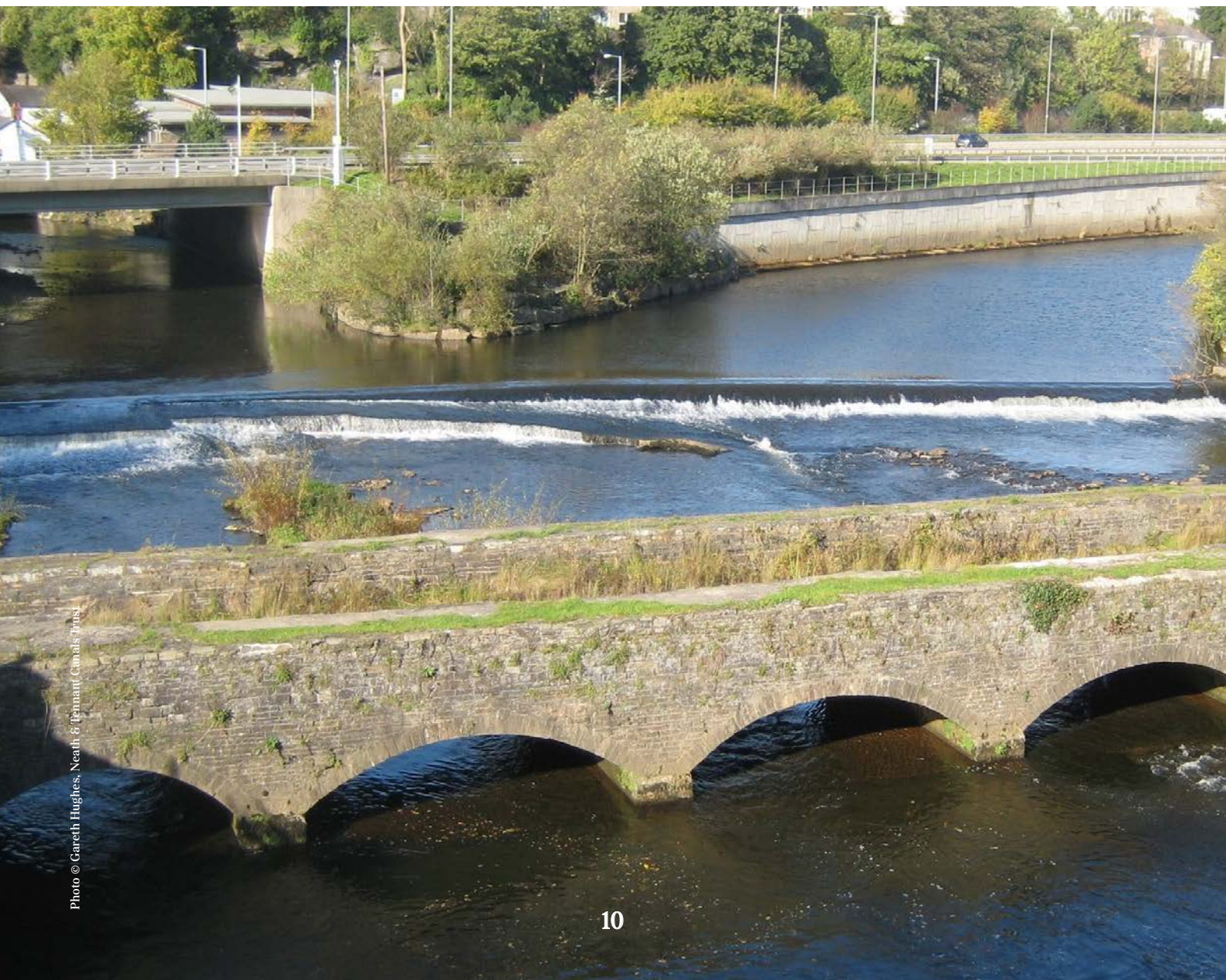
Who was involved?

Local Authority, Voluntary Groups, Heritage Organisations, IWA (Local Branch and Restoration Hub)



Related themes:

Partnership,
Planning Protection



The aqueduct, completed in 1824 to join the Neath and Tennant canals, is a Grade II* listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is a vital link in the proposed Swansea Bay Inland Waterway, which would join up with the Swansea Canal to form a 30-mile route.

To that end, and in light of the structure's susceptibility to flood damage, the Neath and Tennant Canals Trust is actively lobbying for the restoration of the aqueduct and lock. A feasibility report was carried out in 2012 by Neath Port Talbot Council, but no further action was taken.



In early 2020, Storm Dennis caused further damage to the aqueduct and the low arches were overwhelmed by floodwaters. Debris built up and some masonry was swept away.

Flooding also affected local residents, some of whom see the aqueduct's removal as the solution.

With climate change likely to bring further damaging storms and exacerbate flooding issues, IWA South Wales Branch, with support from IWA's Restoration Hub, is lobbying local politicians for a heritage partnership agreement. This would bring together the owners of the aqueduct (Port Tennant Company), CADW, the local authority and Natural Resources Wales to create a long-term management plan for the aqueduct. This should cover an agreed programme of works to stabilise the structure and a longer-term flood management strategy for the area.

Additionally, IWA is commissioning a structural survey to assess the aqueduct and prioritise recommendations for repair.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Recognise the value of protecting significant heritage structures, whether they are part of an operational waterway, a waterway under restoration, or important in their own right
- Engage all stakeholders with the aim of securing a heritage partnership agreement offering long-term protection and restoration

PLANNING PROTECTION

IWA supports proactive engagement with planning authorities. While the current UK system aims to protect heritage (see Guidance Notes for Waterways Heritage Protection), there is a gap in the law which sometimes affects waterside buildings: although permission is needed to alter or demolish a listed building, there is no duty to ensure it doesn't fall down through neglect.

Local authorities have a number of powers to actively prevent deterioration and loss of heritage assets. Conservation Areas are often the most useful tool. Where waterways are designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments, as is the case for the majority of canals in Scotland, a robust agreement on operational works is needed to allow alterations to be carried out.

CROWN WHARF, TRENT & MERSEY CANAL, STONE



Who was involved?

Local Authority, Navigation Authority, IWA (Local Branch), Private Developer



Related themes:

Community

Crown Wharf, one of the few sites left along the Trent & Mersey Canal in Stone that had not been sold for private residential development, was first put up for sale by British Waterways in the early 2000s. IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch worked with Stone Town Council on ideas for the site and lobbied for a development that was sensitive both to the heritage of the canal as well as to the needs of the local community.



In 2013 the Branch opposed a planning application at the site due to the lack of community access and because the development didn't take into account the adjacent historic boatyard. The application was refused by the local authority and the developers withdrew their interest.

Into the frame stepped Joule's, a name long-associated with brewing in Stone. Working with the town council, the company submitted a bid for a flagship pub, heritage centre and theatre that would enable people to enjoy the canal and its history.

In 2017 Joule's was successful in acquiring the site from the Canal & River Trust. The Trust was involved in the design evolution of the scheme, offering guidance on appropriate scale, height and density to complement and enhance the visual setting of the canal corridor and respect structures and features of historic value.

The proposals were supported by the local community and IWA Branch, and approved by the borough planning committee. Works are currently ongoing with an official opening expected in 2021.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Engage with the local community to find new uses for historic canalside sites, and allow as many users as possible to understand and enjoy waterways heritage**
- **Local councils, navigation authorities, developers and the community can work together to ensure appropriate development and design principles informed by heritage assessment**



CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW, STOKE-ON-TRENT



Who was involved?

Local Authority, IWA (Local Branch)



Related themes: Partnership

The Caldon and Trent & Mersey canals have been Conservation Areas in Stoke since the 1990s. In 2010, the then Lord Mayor (himself a boater) invited a number of councillors and officers on a cruise through the city to better understand local waterways. It led to the creation of a City Canals Partnership who agreed that a review of local Conservation Areas was needed.

Over a few months a group (including officers from the city council's planning department and IWA representatives) walked and cycled the waterways of the city, then met up for discussions after each section.

The review concluded that the Burslem Branch Canal should be included in the Trent & Mersey Canal Conservation Area, as well as all former wharves.

A Canal Management Strategy was also developed, which again involved site visits, this time looking at ways the planning process could steer development in the canal corridor.

All of this pushed the canals well up the agenda in the city and the canal corridor picked up investment of over £1m for signage, towpath improvements and better facilities, informed by a Canal Opportunities Study. The local IWA branch was again involved with developing this, alongside external consultants.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Seeing things from the water can give a new perspective on the waterways in your area
- Review existing Conservation Areas to ensure they cover all the waterways heritage, especially if there are restorations or derelict waterways which may not previously have been included



TIPTON GAUGING STATION, BCN



Who was involved?

Navigation Authority, Local Authority, Voluntary Groups, Private Developers

Tipton Gauging Station is Grade II listed and was built in 1873 for the Birmingham Canal Navigations Co. who sought a new system of toll charging. It is the only remaining gauging station on the BCN and unique in having two docks sized to take the larger 'Ampton' boats (built to work solely on the Wolverhampton Level).

It was last used as a gauging dock in 1961, after which the site was contaminated by a new business use, and the building itself poorly maintained.

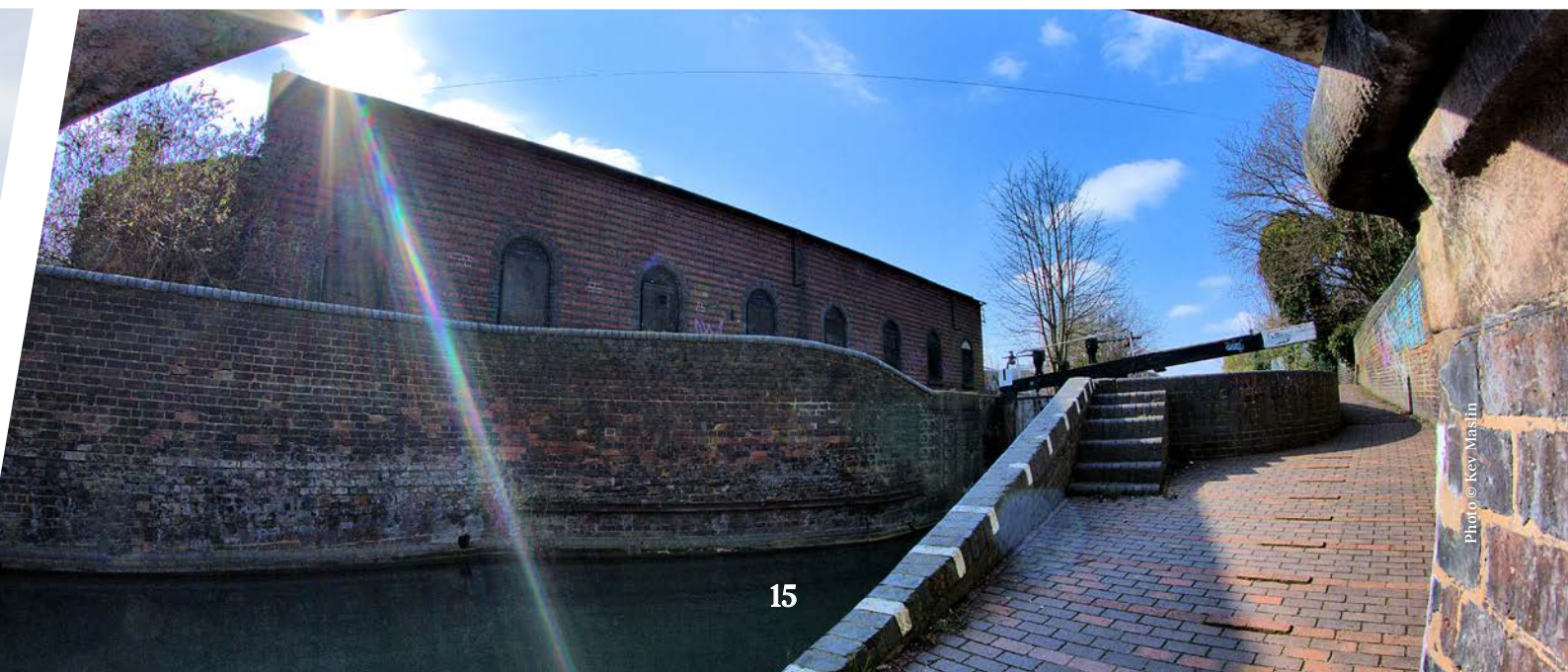
British Waterways disposed of the building in 2007, but despite its listed status not all relevant heritage organisations were consulted. Dudley Canal Society had been keen to take it on but found out too late.

Instead it passed to a private development company which, in 2015, proposed a scheme that excluded the gauging station, contrary to the terms of its lease. The Canal & River Trust intervened and the development did not progress.

Subsequently, the local planning authority granted Listed Building Consent and planning permission for residential conversion of the site, in the interests of returning it to beneficial use. However, the gauging station remains unoccupied and is falling into disrepair. A requirement to restore the building has stalled progress on the entire development and a satisfactory solution looks unlikely at the moment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Understand that listing a heritage building does not guarantee it will be protected when owners dispose of it
- Encourage sellers to find an appropriate purchaser/lessee who will make every effort to maintain the heritage integrity of the building





Community projects can build links between our waterways and the people who live near them, bringing heritage alive for local people. They can offer opportunities for local businesses, supporting the economy, and add to a sense of place and identity.

THE PETERBOROUGH ARMS, DAUNTSEY, WILTS & BERKS CANAL



Who was involved?

Voluntary group, Parish Council, Private developer



Related themes:

Planning Protection

The Peterborough Arms, originally a canalside farmhouse and stables, became a pub in 1920, just a few years after the adjacent canal was closed.

When the pub stopped trading in 2013 its owner, a commercial brewer, sought permission to turn it into residential property. Villagers were unhappy as the pub was very much the centre of the community. As a result, with the support of the parish council, the building was registered as an Asset of Community Value, giving locals six months to find £225,000 to purchase it.

The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust had an interest in protecting the use of the building, given its proximity to the canal. As such, it decided to back the initiative. Being an established charity meant that it had a committed group of volunteers and trustees who could offer their time and skills to support the fundraising activities.

Within six months over 300 people had provided loans to WBCT, enabling it to reach the £225,000 target and buy the pub in 2014. It took some time longer to raise another £75,000 for refurbishment. During that period the building served as a community hub, and also provided WBCT with office and meeting space. Meanwhile, around 40 volunteers worked for over two years to refurbish the building inside and out, using traditional lime mortar to repoint the old walls.

The pub opened in 2018 and has been a great success. It is, once again, a thriving community hub and part of the heritage of the Wilts & Berks Canal, which will be restored to run beside it again in the future.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

- **Registering a heritage building as an Asset of Community Value helps communities to find ways to protect it from being sold or developed inappropriately, and may add weight to campaigns to apply for other protection**



Photo © Urban Moorings

WOLVERHAMPTON URBAN MOORINGS, WYRLEY & ESSINGTON CANAL



Who was involved?
Voluntary group, Navigation Authority, Local Authority



Related themes:
Planning Protection, Partnership

The Urban Moorings group was previously based at Minerva Works, Digbeth, where it used its volunteer experience with the Canal & River Trust to create the Friends of Warwick Bar canal adoption scheme, regenerating a run down and underused section of canal.

When this site was sold, the group secured a long-term lease for a community mooring at a disused wharf in Wolverhampton. In 2016 they set to work transforming it into a community centre and garden for boaters and local land-dwellers alike, with a focus on sustainability and the arts.

With help from volunteers and support from the local council, the waterways heritage of this site has been given a new lease of life and is being protected for the future.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Local authorities and community groups can work with navigation authorities to identify areas of disused canalside land where waterways heritage is being lost**
- **Recycle and reuse material on the site to build new community centres and gardens**

HEALTH & SAFETY

Integrating modern health and safety standards into heritage buildings and infrastructure poses a considerable challenge, especially as the public's perception of safety and how it should be managed often conflicts with the sensitive maintenance of heritage sites.

MARPLE AQUEDUCT RAILINGS, PEAK FOREST CANAL



Who was involved?

Voluntary group, Parish Council, Private developer

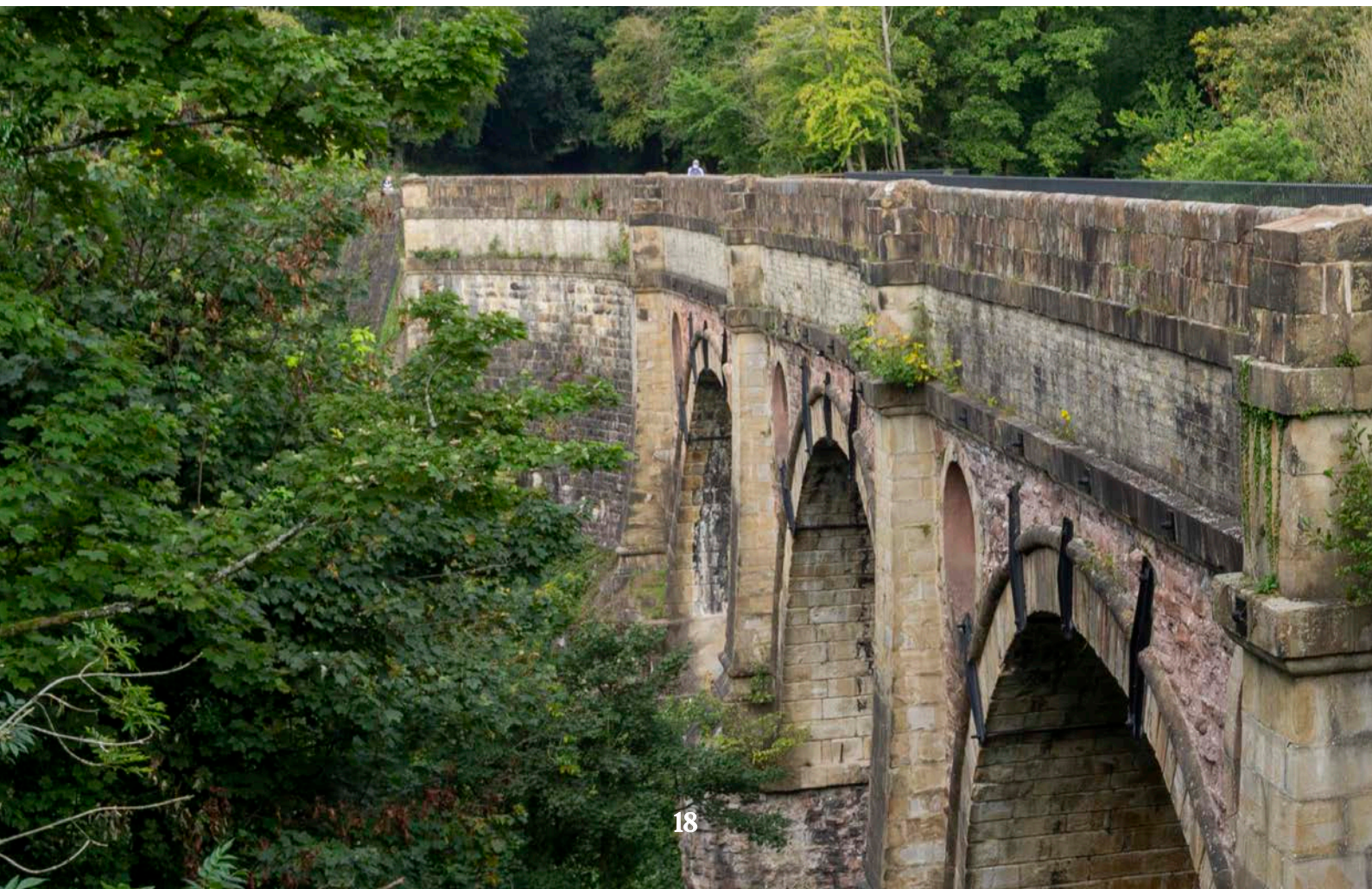


Related themes:

Planning Protection

Marple Aqueduct, carrying the Peak Forest Canal some 90ft above the River Goyt, was completed in 1800. The offside parapet is only accessible on foot with difficulty and has not historically had a rail along its length. Signs were installed warning people to keep away, but these were sometimes ignored and there were a number of tragic incidents.

A public consultation was held in 2014/15 to review the situation. IWA argued that fencing the edge could have the effect of legitimising access, as well as compromising the heritage of this Grade I listed structure, which is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

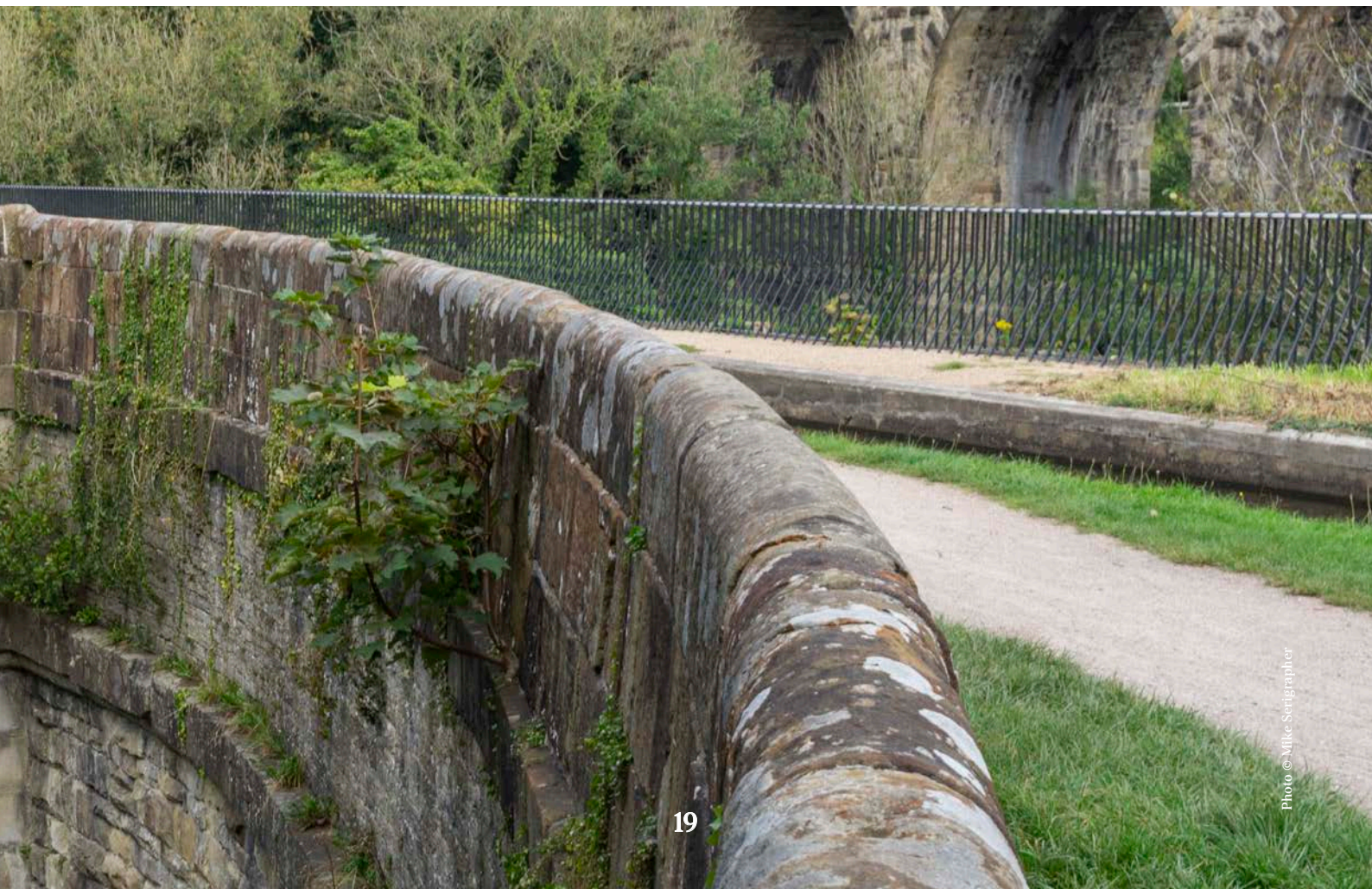


However, the consultation found that additional safety measures were needed and bespoke railings were designed in a collaboration between the Canal & River Trust and Knight Architects. The railings gained Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England and planning permission from Stockport Council in 2017, and were installed in 2018.

However, in light of a further tragedy at Marple Aqueduct in January 2021, a stakeholder group has been convened to reconsider health and safety concerns at this site.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **If safety measures are deemed necessary, comprehensive consultation should be carried out and all options explored**
- **Design solutions should be sensitive to the heritage environment, interfere as little as possible with the existing structure, and should consider alternatives to railings, such as tactile paving that discourages pedestrians**
- **The installation of health and safety measures at certain sites should not be taken as a requirement to install them at others – each site needs to be individually assessed, taking into account the additional hazards that can be introduced by changing a system that has worked for hundreds of years**



INFRASTRUCTURE DETAIL

The details of waterways infrastructure are as vital to canal and river heritage as the larger buildings. They allow traditional skills to continue and tell the story of how the system was used and, later, restored.

SPLIT BRIDGES, VARIOUS LOCATIONS



Who was involved?
Navigation
Authority



Related themes:
Planning Protection,
Waterways Culture

Split bridges were designed to allow a towing line to pass through them – originally used by horse-boats as well as motor-boats towing butties. Alongside traditional uses, however, single-handed boaters who prefer not to use lock ladders still find the splits in bridges invaluable when pulling boats into a lock.

When these bridges are replaced, the crucial split is not always retained. Without them, the rope used to tow a boat must somehow find its way to the other side of the bridge, either by attaching a weight and throwing it under the bridge, or by the boater lying down on the bridge and passing the rope from one hand to the other, which is quicker but more risky.

A lock tail bridge at Hazelhurst on the Caldon Canal offers a good example of how infrastructure can be upgraded without losing the heritage details. The wrought iron elements of this split bridge were due for replacement as part of overall works to Lock 12, which is a listed structure and in a Conservation Area. The new castings for the bridge were made by blacksmiths at the Canal & River Trust's Ellesmere Yard, ensuring that the split was retained.

Restoration efforts are part of our more recent waterways heritage and IWA's history is bound up in the decline and regeneration of certain navigations.

Infrastructure details, for example at locks, tell the story of this enormous effort. When IWA and local restoration groups were fighting to get canals back into use in the 1970s, they sometimes compromised on replacing like-for-like with quicker or cheaper materials. This is why a number of lock gates are made of metal, not wood, and some have hydraulic rather than traditional paddle gear, or details made from modern steel sections.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Understand that infrastructure details are not just an interesting reminder of waterways heritage, but that some are still in use today
- Retain at least some recent heritage details to tell the story of how our canals were saved



HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING

Photo © National Historic Ships

Heritage skills in building, maintaining and operating craft are a vital part of protecting waterways traditions, and boatyards offer great opportunities to continue this. Supporting them is vital; they operate on small profit margins, but provide a hugely valuable link to the past.

SHIPSHAPE NETWORK



Who was involved?

National Historic Ships,
National Lottery Heritage Fund,
Boatyards, Museums,
Training centre



Related themes:

Waterways
culture

In 2014 National Historic Ships UK, working with a range of traditional boat operators, launched the Shipshape Heritage Training Partnership.

The aim of this project, funded by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, was to arrest the decline in traditional seamanship skills. The scheme provided ten 12-month training placements at five partner sites. Trainees also benefited from a tailored

course in historic vessel maintenance at the International Boatbuilding Training College and an interpretation placement at the Scottish Fisheries Museum.

Over the course of the two-year training scheme, a skills-mapping exercise identified specific areas in which trainees needed to develop to operate and maintain historic vessels. In 2018, NHS-UK received a further grant for the second SHTP training programme. This has allowed for a further 16 training placements of 12-month duration across eight partner sites. The project, due to end Autumn 2021, focuses on both the traditional seamanship skills necessary to operate and maintain historic vessels, and the practical skills required by museum shipkeepers in charge of vessel collections.

Unfortunately, the project has had no inland partners looking to safeguard the future of canal maintenance yards. Although these sites are no longer required for general operational purposes, their expertise restoring old craft could support similar heritage skills training programmes.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

- **Work with partners to identify the practical skills most needed to safeguard our inland waterways heritage**

TOOLEY'S BOATYARD, BANBURY, OXFORD CANAL



Who was involved?

Charitable trust, Navigation Authority, Local Authority



Related themes:

Planning Protection, Waterways culture, community

Having opened in 1778, Tooley's is believed to be the oldest continually working boatyard on the canal network. It's where Tom Rolt had his boat Cressy fitted out before setting off on the voyage immortalised in *Narrow Boat*, the book that inspired the canal restoration movement and the founding of IWA.

Today it is tightly hemmed in by modern commercial development, but protected from destruction by Scheduled Ancient Monument status.

Recently a charitable trust was formed to seek funding to open up the site to more visitors. It has negotiated a 150-year lease from the local authority and the Canal & River Trust, commissioned a 500-page viability report and obtained a £30,000 grant from Historic England for much-needed repairs to the old forge.

The trust also hopes to open up the towpath alongside the dry dock to the general public. This will enable it to tell the stories of Rolt and Cressy, of the Oxford Canal, and of the Tooley family to passers-by.

Longer term there are plans to replace the existing dry dock building (put up 20 years ago but unfit for purpose even then) with a two-storey visitor centre linked to the neighbouring Banbury Museum.

The iconic boatyard is a living heritage asset, continuing the 240-year traditions of narrowboat maintenance and building. It runs traditional forge courses and boat handling, with plans to expand to wooden boat-building skills in the future.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **Scheduled Ancient Monument status can protect a boatyard when the area around it is redeveloped**
- **Boatyards can be tourist destinations to help to ensure their long-term survival**



HERITAGE CRAFT

The boats designed to use our waterways are a key part of its heritage, yet there has been no formal framework in place to protect them, resulting in many being lost or significantly altered.

While there is scope for a diverse range of uses for heritage craft in private hands, it's important for those in museum collections to more carefully consider their future.

NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUMS' BOAT COLLECTIONS



Who was involved?
Navigation Authority,
Museum, Arts Council



Related themes:
Waterways
Culture

British Waterways, and subsequently the Canal & River Trust, had faced long-standing challenges in caring for their boat collections.

A successful application to the Esmée Fairburn Collections Fund provided money for a feasibility study into options for the future of the collection. In 2018 the National Waterways Museums were able to put plans into action for each boat in the collection, in line with Arts Council England Designation conservation best practice and guidance from National Historic Ships.

Key to this was deciding whether to preserve a boat's original fabric (potentially removing its working capacity) or to conserve it for operational use (in which you inevitably lose original materials, but keep the boat 'alive' to promote the skills that come with maintenance and use).

Those boats which fell under the first category are undergoing careful professional recording of their original fabric in a dry storage unit. Behind-the-scenes tours of this site allow visitors to still see them, as well as the museum's floating exhibits.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

- **Strike a balance between preserving original fabric, and conservation for operational use – both approaches are valuable but need to be considered on a case-by-case basis**



WATERWAYS CULTURE

Intangible aspects of waterways heritage, such as the culture and stories of people who lived and worked afloat, are extremely important and easily lost. The arts offer a way to protect and celebrate them.

ALARUM THEATRE'S SHOWS



Who was involved?
Theatre Company, National Lottery Heritage Fund



Related themes:
Community

Alarum Theatre was set up in 2016 by Kate Saffin and Heather Wastie to tell the stories of women of the waterways through theatre, poetry and songs.

Their work is thoroughly researched, including first-hand accounts alongside archive material. Their first show, *Idle Women*, focused on the female volunteers who took on the arduous work of cargo-carrying during WWII. It toured to well over 100 small venues around the country, bringing this important aspect of waterways history to life for new audiences.

Their next project, *I Dig Canals*, focused on the women involved in the restoration of the waterways, particularly in the Black Country. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, they trained volunteers to carry out oral history recordings and documentary research, and produced a book and series of podcasts, including the story of the founding of IWA from the perspective of the women involved.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Thorough research brings authenticity to a cultural heritage project
- Encourage people with interesting stories to tell to come forward and have them recorded and shared



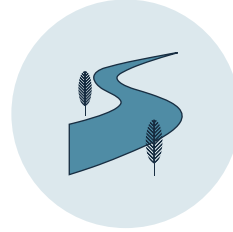
SUPPORT FROM IWA

TO PROTECT WATERWAYS HERITAGE,
IWA INTENDS TO:



**Provide
guidance**

IWA will help IWA branches and other groups to identify developments that pose a heritage risk and engage with local authorities to find solutions, working alongside others in the local community. We realise that more training is needed and would like to encourage a greater number of professional volunteers to get involved.



**Improve protection
for our waterways**

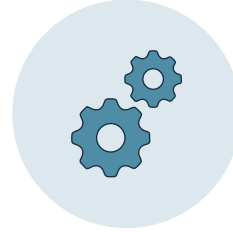
IWA will improve protection for our waterways and see more of them (including linked buildings and infrastructure) designated as Conservation Areas. In places that are already covered, IWA branches and other heritage groups can encourage local authorities to review whether additional navigations should be included. This will be the focus of a drive to recruit more people into planning/heritage officer roles.





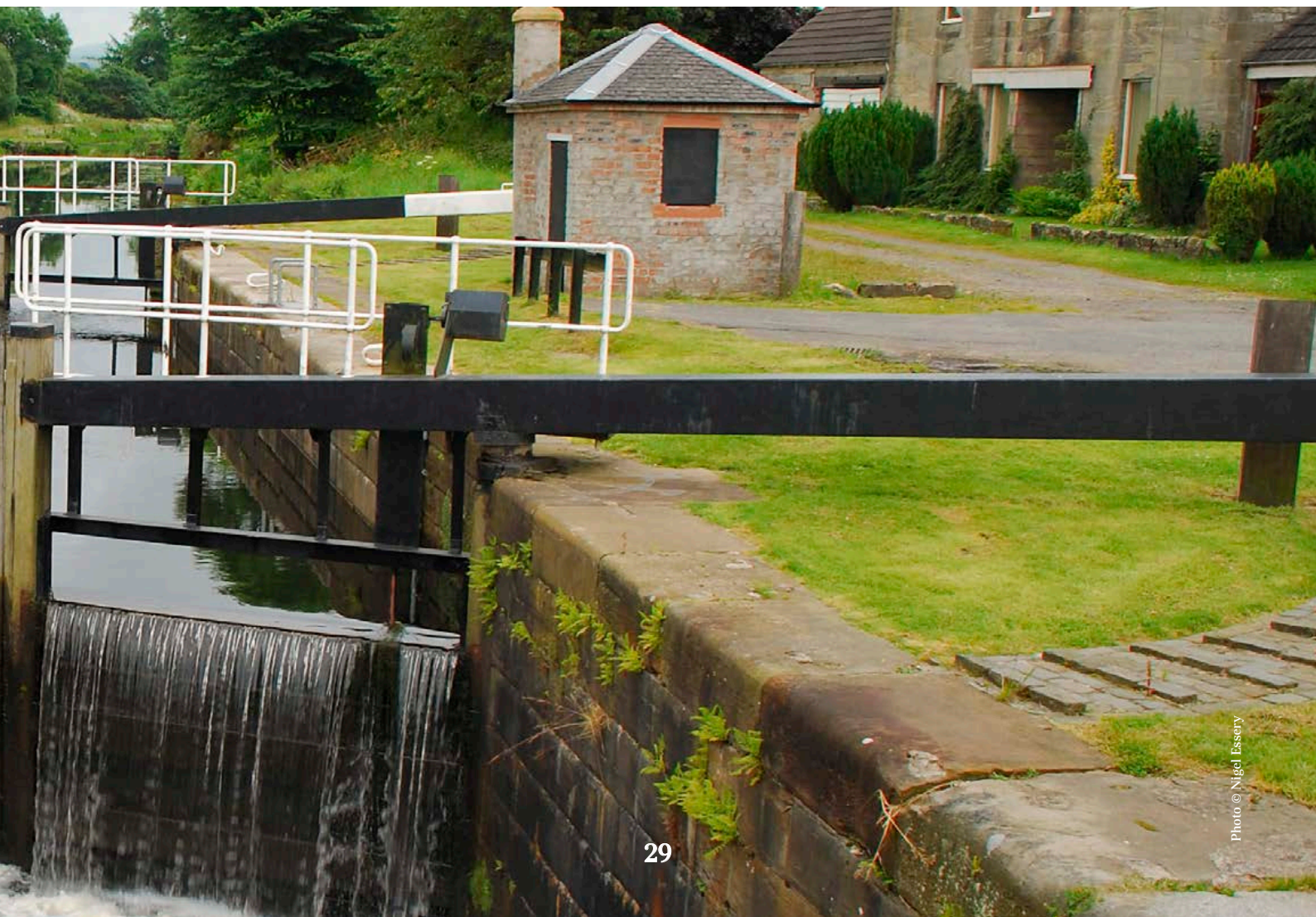
Engage with communities

IWA will engage with communities to promote the importance of heritage assets as part of their local history and encourage a sense of ownership over them. The future of Aberdulais Aqueduct, for example, might be more secure if local people understood its heritage value and saw how its long term protection and flood risk prevention can co-exist. If the Covid-19 pandemic has made more people appreciate their local waterways, we must capitalise on that.



Champion inland heritage skills

IWA will champion inland heritage skills by working with boatyards and craftspeople to develop training, in partnership with other organisations.



WORKING TOGETHER

The Inland Waterways Association is calling on Navigation Authorities, councils, planning authorities, developers and builders to think about heritage as they make plans for the future of our waterways and the features alongside them.

IWA asks them to consider the impact of seemingly small changes on the broader heritage we have been gifted and to speak to IWA and other heritage organisations when trying to understand the impacts and how any detrimental effects might be mitigated. We have a wealth of knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm which we invite them to draw upon.

We hope that the case studies detailed in this report will inspire them to work together with IWA, other heritage organisations and local communities to find innovative ways to protect waterways heritage for the future.

CONTACT US

✉ campaigns@waterways.org.uk

FIND OUT MORE

🌐 waterways.org.uk/heritage







**INLAND
WATERWAYS**
ASSOCIATION

Funded by:



Historic England

WATERWAYS.ORG.UK

The Inland Waterways Association is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee.
Company registration number 612245. Charity registration number 212342.
Registered office: Island House, Moor Road, Chesham HP5 1WA

Cover: Kingswood Junction, Grand Union & Stratford Canal
© Nigel Essery

