

AINA CASE STUDY

FAIRER, STRONGER AND MORE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

South Wales: canal restoration through training and education



Waterway work brings benefits to local people and local communities

An historic stretch of waterway forming the Crumlin branch and main line of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals is to be reopened for the first time in 75 years as part of a strategic scheme to regenerate the whole waterway network linking Brecon, the City of Newport and Cwmcarn.

The project includes a canal and river link to the wider canal and river navigations of England through the development of marina within a City Gateway project, where retail and housing will form specially designed features around a new mooring development alongside the River Usk.

The first phase of restoration took place between 1999 and 2004, and since early 2008 this latest phase of work is taking place along the Malpas/Allt-yr-yn section of waterway. This will be enhanced by the restoration of four locks on the Cefn flight of fourteen locks (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, CADW, Newport Waste, the Inland Waterways Association and Newport City Council.

The 'Education through Restoration' project seeks to use the restoration of the locks and other canal structures as a catalyst to provide greater opportunities for unemployed people and volunteers to be engaged in heritage and landscape training. It is anticipated new skills will lead towards a pathway to employment, together with an understanding of, and involvement with, this key cultural heritage asset and the rest of the canal system.

The project has engaged with 96 community unemployed of whom 40% have since gained employment. An education officer is employed, and helps by engaging local school children in waterway heritage, cultural and environmental studies.

Since 2004, 33,786 hours have been invested in the restoration project by community and Canal Trust volunteers, supported by the Inland Waterway Association's Waterway Recovery Group.