

AINA CASE STUDY

FAIRER, STRONGER AND MORE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Waterways in Wales: Equal shares for all



Using canals to promote opportunities for employment and access to the countryside

Equal Shares for All was a project funded under the EU *Equal Programme*, led by the Innovate Trust, based in Cardiff. The project aimed to promote equal opportunities for people in Wales. The British Waterways component of the project related to access to the outdoors for people with disabilities, including access to employment opportunities. The project ran for 2.5 years from 2005 to 2007.

Activities undertaken by British Waterways through the project included:-

- An investigation of opportunities for employment creation for people with disabilities, through visitor services and undertaking work on canals;
- Development of a geographic information system-based methodology for auditing access provision on canals, from a disability perspective and securing photographic records of access conditions. Through this work a toolkit was produced to explain the methodology to outside organisations seeking to adopt a similar approach;
- A disabled access audit of all canals in Wales to determine works required to improve access and to promote good quality access to potential users. Improvement works identified were entered into British Waterways' internal management system for implementation;
- Promotional material to encourage disabled people to visit canals in Wales, using a mix of leaflets, DVD, open-day events and web-based information. The DVD was produced by *Equal Vision*, another partner in the *Equal Shares for All* consortium, as a part of their training programme for disabled people.

Since the project has finished, the audit work undertaken has provided a basis for on-going improvements to canals in Wales, such as towpath and access works delivered on the Montgomery Canal through the Powys Canal Tourism project.

Further details of the project and its findings, including the access audit toolkit, can be found at:- www.britishwaterways.co.uk/responsibilities/social_inclusion/equal_shares_project.html