



photo: Charlie David

In 1995 the local Bude Canal and Harbour Society asked the council to undertake a concerted effort to restore the canal before it became totally derelict. This was the beginning of a 13 year project which culminated in 2009 with the completion of a £5m Bude Canal Regeneration Project.

Substantially funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, European Objective 1, the South West Regional Development Agency and the North Cornwall District Council, now amalgamated into the Cornwall Council, the project implemented a range of works to ensure the future viability of the canal.

The Lower Wharf area has been landscaped into a pedestrianised area. Previously a car park the wharf had lost its historical context; now it is an area where people can be encouraged to saunter and enjoy the ambience of the area enhanced by the construction of workshops housing craft activities that people can observe.

The Lower Wharf harbour has been dredged and the quay walls strengthened. Nearby, as part of the Tourist Information Centre, there is a new Canal Visitor Centre and educational facility allowing people to discover more about the canal and how they can best explore it.

The towpath has been strengthened and levelled allowing access for all. The two sets of locks have been restored back to operational condition. The canal has been fully dredged, some 17,000 cubic metres of mud removed.

An underpass has been created under the A39 at the Helebridge end of the canal towpath;

previously crossing the busy road was a death defying task, but now it can be done safely.

In due course we hope to set up an electrically powered trip boat running between Bude and Helebridge. This would navigate its way up the canal, through the locks and stop at the landing stage constructed near to the A39 and close to the tea room at Whalesborough. The trip would allow people to enjoy the tranquillity of the canal and experience the locks in action.

A number of walking routes based on the old canal system have been developed which allow access from Bude well into the hinterland. Leaflets on these walks and a book about the canal can be obtained from the Bude, Boscastle and Tintagel Visitor Centres, details on page 23.

So all in all the canal has had a real makeover and has reclaimed its rightful place as one of Bude's major tourist assets.

above: Repointing Rodd's Bridge lock.

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