



## Restoring the Stroudwater Navigation and Thames & Severn Canal

**From the Trust Press Officer, for immediate use**

### British Waterways transfers ownership of the entrance of the Thames & Severn Canal to the Cotswold Canals Trust

The Cotswold Canals Trust is pleased to announce that British Waterways has gifted to them a package of land, along with the entrance and a section of the Thames & Severn Canal, to help enable the restoration of the canal by the Trust and its partners.

The length of canal, which is adjacent to Inglesham Roundhouse, the first of the five iconic roundhouses on the T&S Canal, includes the junction with the River Thames and the first lock.

BW originally acquired this part of the canal, together with the adjacent roundhouse and converted warehouse, in 2002 when it came up for sale. This was around the time when BW had completed a number of major canal restorations across the national network, and everyone hoped that the Cotswold Canals would be next. In February 2008, with mounting problems elsewhere on the canal network and cuts in Government funding, BW decided it had to pull out of the Cotswold Canals restoration.

Since then, Stroud District Council have taken over the role of lead partner for the six-mile Phase 1A project near Stroud, which has substantial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the South West Regional Development Agency. BW's land holdings at the western end of the Cotswold Canals have been transferred to a new body, the Stroud Valleys Canal Company, which is a registered charity. SVCC will be responsible for managing the western end of the canal when its restoration is complete.

At the same time, the Cotswold Canals Trust has been making progress in the Phase 2 length at the eastern end of the T&S Canal and elsewhere. During 2009, and with no further direct involvement in the Cotswold Canals project, BW decided to sell its remaining property interests at Inglesham.

BW contacted CCT and the two organisations worked closely together to find a way of safeguarding the future route of the canal whilst ensuring the nature and value of the residential property were retained.

Aiden Johnson-Hugill, BW's Development Manger, and Ken Burgin, CCT's Chief Executive then set about agreeing what land would be transferred and what rights would be needed by the Trust and the future owners of the Roundhouse over each other's land. The plan would need to deliver a practical working canal but also take into account the privacy and security of the residential property.

Skilled CCT volunteers carried out a detailed survey of the land (saving approximately £3,000) and onto this was superimposed agreed land boundaries, access rights and the route of the future towpath.

While details were being worked out and with the agreement of BW, CCT made it widely known that the Roundhouse would soon be coming on the market. The rationale behind this was that prospect of having a restored canal in close proximity would have little impact on the value of the property if prospective buyers were canal enthusiasts. The upside for the Trust would be having sympathetic neighbours during the critical restoration period and probably beyond. This process generated a number of good quality enquiries. Final negotiations were completed and the land changed hands just before Christmas.

Reflecting on the process, Aiden Johnson-Hugill said: “Through working in partnership and involving CCT from the beginning of the process, we have been able to protect the canal track and enable the sale of the Roundhouse. We estimate the total value of the land and rights granted as being in the region of £50,000.

“BW would particularly like to thank Ken Burgin for his pragmatic and reasonable attitude that will ensure the future owner of The Roundhouse, the public and boaters will all be able to enjoy this very special location.

“At the time of writing we have agreed terms to sell the house to a member of the CCT which is the perfect outcome.”

Ken Burgin said: “We are very grateful to BW for the way they handled the disposal of their land at Inglesham. With all the other issues they have, including underfunding due to government cut backs, it would have been all too easy just to sell the property and walk away. As it turns out, BW still have a very valuable property to sell but the entrance of the Thames & Severn Canal has been safeguarded.

“CCT now intends to develop proposals to restore Inglesham Lock and the entrance to the canal. The bridge and the Roundhouse are listed buildings, so whatever is done will need to be of high quality and carried out with care.”

12 January 2010.

## Editors' Notes

The Cotswold Canals Trust is restoring the [Stroudwater Navigation and Thames & Severn Canal](#) for the benefit of the public. This canal runs through Gloucestershire and part of Wiltshire, traversing the glorious Cotswold Hills.

[The Trust is the largest canal restoration society in the country with about 5,500 members who share the vision of seeing the 36-mile length of these historic waterways restored to their former glory.](#)

[The Cotswold Canals Trust is a member of the Cotswold Canals Partnership which comprises Stroud District Council, Cotswold District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Wiltshire Council, the Environment Agency, The Waterways Trust, the Inland Waterways Association and many other organisations that support the project. Further information can be found at \[www.cotswoldcanalsproject.org\]\(http://www.cotswoldcanalsproject.org\).](#)

[A major £25 million project is currently under way to restore what is perhaps the most difficult six miles of the waterway, centred around Stroud. This project is being led by Stroud District Council with major financial contributions from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the South West Regional Development Agency.](#)

The Trust has an active volunteer force working on [many](#) restoration projects [along the length of the canal](#), and publishes a quarterly newsletter, The Trow, which is sent to all Cotswold Canals members. New members are welcome. The Trust is a registered charity, No. 269721. [www.cotswoldcanals.com](http://www.cotswoldcanals.com)

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