



13 May 2005

FOXTON LOCKS COTTAGE AWARDED IN TOP REGIONAL BUILDING CONSERVATION AWARDS

A former lock keepers cottage at one of Leicestershire's most popular tourist attractions, Foxton Locks, has received a prestigious award in recognition of the Grade II listed building's restoration to its former glory.

After years of deterioration, the building has been sensitively restored to how it looked in the early 1900s by British Waterways, with financial assistance from *emda*.

Top Lock Cottage, which stands at the top of Foxton Lock's staircase of ten locks and is an important feature of the site, took the Silver Award in the 'building conservation' category of the RICS Awards 2005 Regional Awards for the East Midlands.

The award winners were announced last night (Thursday 12th May) by awards host, Judith Chalmers OBE, at a ceremony at the Leicester Space Centre.

The building, whose restoration was completed in Easter 2004, has already been well used as an educational resource and interpretation centre.

It forms part of a wider canal-related experience that includes the remains of the Foxton Inclined Plane, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The cottage will now play a key role at this major tourist destination as a refreshment and interpretation point for visitors.

James Clifton, British Waterways Project Manager for the Foxton Locks site, said:

"British Waterways is absolutely delighted that our work to restore Top Lock Cottage has been recognised and rewarded by the RICS Awards.

"With generous help from *emda*, we have been able to take a building of great importance to our national heritage and sympathetically restore it, combining traditional materials with the best in modern techniques.

Media Enquiries

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“As custodians of over 2,000 miles of our country’s canals, preserving the heritage of our waterways is an important part of British Waterways’ remit.”

Funding from *emda* in January 2004 meant proper and thorough restoration of the building could commence.

In recommending Top Lock Cottage for the Silver Award, the RICS judges said: “Great care was taken to use traditional materials and techniques to ensure a sympathetic and historically accurate restoration of both the cottage and adjacent stable.”

The use of historically sympathetic materials and environmentally friendly finishes were a key aspect of the restoration. Traditional building techniques were used for the joinery, leadwork, plastering and brickwork repairs, to produce a building that truly reflects its past heritage.

James Clifton continued: “The building is set to become a refreshment and information centre that will be a key part of the Foxton Locks visitor experience, securing its long term future and ensuring its appreciation by the public.”

This new role for Top Lock Cottage will form a key part of a three-year, jointly funded, £2.8 million project to enhance the Foxton Locks site.

Ends

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Notes to editors

- **Images attached:** Two digital images are attached, suggested captions: (1) “Top Lock Cottage as it looked before restoration work began”, (2) “Top Lock Cottage following sensitive restoration to its former glory”. Please note these images are for single use only, please credit “British Waterways Photolibrary”. If you require a higher resolution image, email louise.mccarthy@britishwaterways.co.uk.
- **British Waterways** is the public corporation responsible for the care and enhancement of the nation’s 2,000-mile two centuries old network of canals and rivers, working in partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations to develop and improve the waterways in a sustainable manner. British Waterways’ navigations are visited over 400 million times each year accounting for £1.5 billion annual visitor spend. For more information, visit www.britishwaterways.co.uk.
- **The East Midlands Development Agency (emda)** was set up in 1999 to bring more jobs and skills to the region and to make the East Midlands a better place to live and work. By 2010 emda wants the East Midlands to be one of the top 20 regions in Europe. The latest figures from Eurostat show the East Midlands is already well on its way, moving from 35th to 28th place out of the 71 European regions.

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- **RICS** (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) is the leading source of land, property, construction and related environmental knowledge. For more information on RICS and the RICS Awards 2005, visit www.rics.org.

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