



**7 September 2005**

## **IS FOXTON LOCKS ONE OF ENGLAND'S 'SEVEN WONDERS?'**

It's your last chance to vote for Leicestershire's historic Foxton Locks and Inclined Plane in a national BBC campaign to find England's 'Seven Wonders', which could see Foxton appear in a brand new TV series this autumn!

Foxton's famous staircase lock flight, owned and cared for by British Waterways, was built in 1810. A masterpiece of 19th century engineering, it raised boats a massive 75ft up the hill from Market Harborough and linked the north and south of England by canal. In 1900, the Foxton Inclined Plane Boat Lift, another great feat of engineering, was opened and it's remains can still be seen today.

Now one of the county's most popular visitor destinations, Foxton Locks and the Inclined Plane have been nominated for the prestigious title of one of the East Midlands' 'Seven Man Made Wonders', along with landmarks from neighbouring counties, including Nottingham's caves, Lincoln Cathedral and Derbyshire's Monsal Viaduct.

Chris Stanley, Marketing & Communications Manager, British Waterways South East, said: "Foxton Locks and the Inclined Plane undoubtedly deserve to win this title – nothing else in Leicestershire compares! When they were first built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the locks were lauded for their ingenuity, as they still are today. Their clever use of side ponds saved considerable amounts of water.

"Of course, at Foxton we have two great wonders, because we also have the remains of the pioneering Foxton Inclined Plane Boat Lift, which was opened in July 1900. Ascending the lift took only 12 minutes from start to finish, and it was also suitable for wide-beam vessels, which made the canal much more competitive."

British Waterways is encouraging Leicestershire residents to log on and vote for Foxton Locks on the BBC's 'Seven Wonders' website at [www.bbc.co.uk/sevenwonders](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sevenwonders), or by emailing [sevenwonders@bbc.co.uk](mailto:sevenwonders@bbc.co.uk). Nominations end in early September!

*More follows...*

### **Media Enquiries**

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If you want to find out more about Foxton's fascinating history, why not join one of the *Tales from Foxton* guided tours on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September? Stories from Foxton's wonderful watery past will be brought to life by some hysterical historical characters in a series of special guided walks for all the family. **Booking is essential** – call 01908 302500 for more information and to book.

For more information on great days out at Foxton Locks, visit [www.foxtonlocks.com](http://www.foxtonlocks.com). To request a copy of the full 'Foxton Locks Come Alive' activity programme leaflet, call 01908 302500.

For details of great days out on the inland waterways in other parts of the UK, visit [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com).

## Ends

**Press and media enquiries:** Contact Louise McCarthy, Media & Communications Executive, South East Waterways, on 01908 302560 or 07917 373116, email [louise.mccarthy@britishwaterways.co.uk](mailto:louise.mccarthy@britishwaterways.co.uk).

## FOXTON LOCKS - Did you know...?

- The locks are arranged in two 'staircases' of five locks each - within each staircase, the top gates of one lock are the bottom gates of the next.
- It can take boaters a grand total of 45 minutes to complete the passage through the locks!
- This was one reason why, in 1900, the Foxton Inclined Plane Boat Lift was opened – ascending the lift took boats only 12 minutes from start to finish.
- However, financial pressures led to the closure of this engineering feat and, in 1911, canal traffic returned to the historic lock flight. The Foxton Inclined Plane Trust ([www.fipt.org.uk](http://www.fipt.org.uk)) has campaigned for the restoration of the inclined plane, and works planned as a result of the £1.78 million Heritage Lottery Bid awarded to the Foxton Locks Partnership this year will help lay the groundwork for its restoration.
- When first built, the locks were lauded for their ingenuity, and the clever use of side ponds still saves considerable amounts of water today.
- A team of British Waterways lock-keepers man the Foxton flight in the peak boating season, between 8am and 7pm, seven days a week.
- You will see boats passing through Foxton Locks on almost any day of the year, and at summer weekends it gets very busy!

## Notes to editors

- A digital image to accompany this news release is attached.
- **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](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk).

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