



PRESS RELEASE

19 January 2005

FOXTON LOCKS: VISITOR ENJOYMENT UP AS RESTORATION WORK CONTINUES

More and more people are enjoying their visit to Foxton Locks, one of Leicestershire's most popular tourist destinations, according to the latest survey of visitor opinions carried out by British Waterways South East.

Last year was a busy period for Foxton Locks with the official opening of the refurbished Foxton Locks Inn, which out-performed all expectations in terms of popularity, and the new Coffee Stop refreshment centre in Foxton's Top Lock Cottage, following an award-winning restoration project.

It also saw the start of an exciting £2.8 million three-year project to improve access to and restore major elements of the site, following the news that the Heritage Lottery Fund had awarded £1.78 million to the project.

The works commenced in October and are being overseen by members of the Foxton Locks Partnership, many of whom are also contributing to the project. The first phase concentrated on improving the site's Bottom Basin, which once carried boats to and from Foxton's famous Inclined Plane Boat Lift.

The improvements have not gone un-noticed and visitors' enjoyment of Foxton Locks is on the up, according to detailed visitor surveys carried out by British Waterways in 2005.

96% of those visitors questioned in 2005 rated their overall enjoyment of Foxton Locks as 'good' or 'excellent', compared to 77% of visitors in 2004.

A programme of events at Foxton Locks, including the extremely popular 'Halloween Hoot' and 'Santa Cruise' boat trips, ensured visitors were entertained throughout the year.

More follows...

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Given the positive feedback, it's not surprising that Foxton Locks has recently been voted one of the 'Seven Man-made Wonders' of the East Midlands by members of the public as part of a BBC campaign.

Chris Stanley, Marketing & Communications Manager for British Waterways South East, said: "We are absolutely delighted with the feedback that we've received from our Foxton Locks visitor survey.

"Our long-term aim is to further improve visitors' enjoyment and understanding of what is a unique historic site on the Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal. This latest feedback shows that we are moving in the right direction, and with more exciting developments to come in 2006 and 2007, we will be closely monitoring visitor feedback."

Developments at Foxton Locks this year will include the opening of a new facilities building for boaters and visitors, followed by the start of major restoration work and the re-watering of the Upper Arm of the canal.

For more information on great days out at Foxton Locks, visit www.foxtonlocks.com. For details of more great events on the inland waterways in other parts of the UK, visit 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.

Foxton Locks: What do the visitors think?

The following visitor comments are a selection of those received by British Waterways South East in 2005:

"As visitors of many years we were very impressed with the recent renovations. Congratulations to all concerned." – Mr & Mrs Bentley, Leicester

"Wonderful improvements to the canal environment including well sited seats along the canal path and updated facilities at shops and pub/restaurant makes this a most enjoyable place to spend a day out." – Mr Rout, Melton Mowbray

"Amazed at the excellent condition of the locks even though work in progress." – Susan, Gwynedd

"Market Harborough to Foxton, the towpath is superb for cycling. Well done." – Mr Woodhead, Sheffield

"Foxton Locks Inn staff very attentive, food good, welcoming atmosphere, good selection of beers." – Mr & Mrs Allen, Solihull

Notes to editors

- A digital image to accompany this news release is attached. Suggested caption: *“Visitors soak up the waterside views at the Foxton Locks Inn.”*
- The **Foxton Locks Partnership** was established in 1996. The Partnership is chaired by British Waterways and includes: The Waterways Trust; the Foxton Inclined Plane Trust; The Inland Waterways Association; Harborough District Council; Foxton Parish Council; Leicestershire County Council; English Heritage; East Midlands Development Agency and the Old Union Canals Society. The Partnership meets regularly to plan development at Foxton Locks and raise funds.
- **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.
- **Waterscape.com** provides information on ALL of Britain’s waterways, and guides visitors through the complete waterside experience in an easy to use, fully comprehensive online resource.