



Canal Cultural Heritage

End of project report 2017 – 2020

20
YEARS



Keep Scotland
Beautiful



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Keep Scotland Beautiful

We seek to inspire, inform, engage and educate people about the natural, built and cultural environment. We promote awareness of the ways in which our environment is at risk and how we can all act to minimise this.

We work to make use of the opportunities presented by the natural, built and cultural environment, and associated heritage, to create opportunities to advance education, promote health, provide recreation, and further citizenship and community development.

Canal Cultural Heritage was an ambitious community engagement project launched in 2017 to connect people with their local canal and support them to conserve these historic waterways. The project was initially delivered under the auspices of Scottish Waterways Trust and moved to Keep Scotland Beautiful in May 2019 for its final year. The project was funded by Historic Environment Scotland and supported by Scottish Canals, the public body responsible for managing Scotland's canal network.

All of Scotland's canals are designated as Scheduled Monuments, meaning they are recognised amongst the most significant of Scotland's historic sites and need to be preserved for future generations.

The project was delivered through three strands:

Canal Work

Canal Life

Canal School



Outcomes at a glance

Canal Work

People and communities are encouraged to enjoy the historic environment through volunteering sessions and training in heritage skills. This will maintain the historic assets within the canal environment, safeguarding the rich heritage and environments of Scotland's canals for future generations.

Indicator	Target	Achieved
Number of historic features enhanced	12	13 (108%)
Number of volunteers engaged	200	204 (102%)
Number of people trained in heritage skills	60	61 (102%)
Number of Explorer Heritage Hero Awards achieved	25	26 (104%)

"It's just really nice to be out here working on the canal. I've lived here my whole life and never knew anything about it."

Volunteer, August 2019.



All three strands of work have exceeded targets.



Outcomes at a glance

Canal Life

Opportunities for people to interact with the canal environment and understand its historic value are increased, encouraging people to make greater use of the canals.

Indicator	Target	Achieved
Number of walks, talks and events	75	75 (100%)
Number of participants	1,000	1,187 (119%)
Number of walk leaders trained	5	7 (140%)

“So much interesting information, not just about the canal but of the role it played in Scottish history. This has given me the enthusiasm to find out more.”

Talk participant, March 2019.



1,187
participants in
our Canal Life
work.



Outcomes at a glance

Canal School

School children will have a greater understanding of the history and heritage of the canals, inspiring a new generation of young people to become positively engaged in protecting and celebrating the historic environment.

Indicator	Target	Achieved
Number of schools and youth organisations engaged	30	34 (113%)
Number of young people engaged	900	997 (111%)
Number of Discovery Heritage Hero Awards achieved	100	223 (223%)

“It’s great that the young people are being consulted about the bridge. It is their area and I think this will help empower them to care about what happens to it in the future.”

Primary teacher, Stockingfield consultation.



997
young people
engaged.



Collaboration

Collaborative working across the sector will be enhanced through strengthening existing partnerships and seeking new ones.

This project built upon a long-standing existing partnership with Scottish Canals to engage communities with the historic canal network in Scotland.

**Scottish
Canals**

Scottish Canals

1,037.5

volunteer hours across all three strands.

New partnerships for collaborative working were developed throughout the project with other community organisations including:

- National Mining Museum
- Canalside Community Action Group
- Under the Trees
- Impact Arts
- Steering group for Camelon Arts
- National Network for Outdoor Learning
- Community & Environment Working Group for the John Muir Way
- Heritage Education Forum.



"The project has made a significant contribution to the heritage and history of these nationally important Scheduled Monuments. The project encouraged groups, communities and individuals to be involved in the conservation of the canals as well as equipping the project participants with new skills and opportunities to learn about their own heritage, and fulfils Scottish Canals vision for the conservation and celebration of the canals."

Chris O'Connell, Heritage Manager at Scottish Canals.



Evaluation sources

Progress was monitored using a range of quantitative and qualitative data sources. We established recording systems to monitor activity against project indicators and milestones. The data gathered was reported both internally and to Historic Environment Scotland on a quarterly basis. These reports were used to inform and improve project delivery.

Due to the wide-reaching nature of this project information gathered to compile this evaluation has come from many different sources, including:



Regular reports to funders



Feedback gathered from participants at events



Feedback gathered from school children at school workshops



Outputs created by school children during educational projects



Discussion with teachers



Documentary photographs and videos



Websites and social media



Press articles



Canal Work

We have worked closely with the Volunteer Coordinators and Heritage Manager at Scottish Canals to offer a range of volunteering and training sessions. Their support has been invaluable throughout this project from providing access to the historic monument, advising us on consents and methodologies to providing materials and expertise.

The volunteering has mainly been focussed on the Forth & Clyde Canal around Glasgow and Auchinstarry, and the Calders area on the Union Canal.



Canal Work

857.5

total volunteer hours.

“Volunteers play a vital role in the conservation of Scotland’s canals. This project has contributed in a meaningful way to ensure that canals are attractive and safe places to visit.”

Carol Bell, Volunteer Coordinator at Scottish Canals.



Canal Work

Maryhill

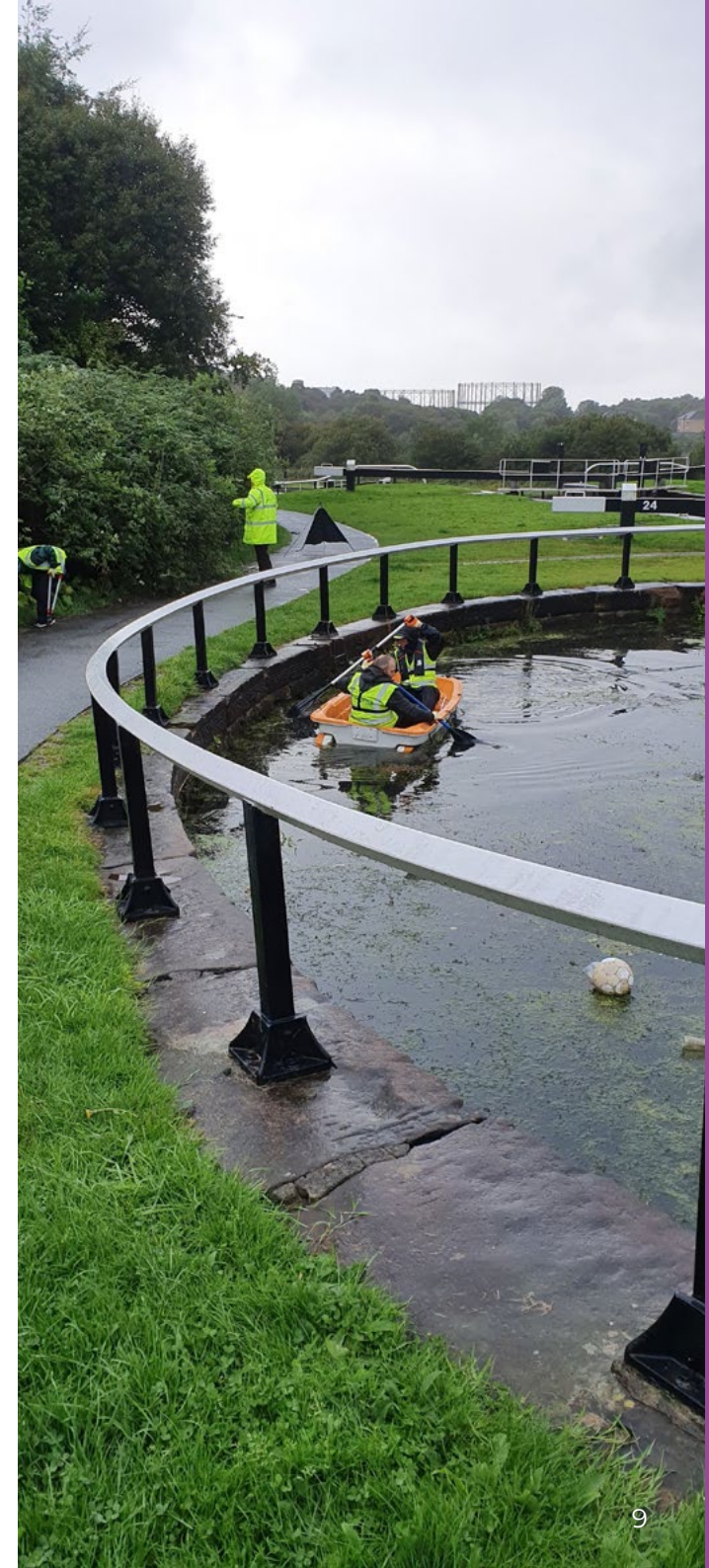
The area around the Maryhill Locks is popular with local people and visitors alike. The network of paths offers a quick commute or a gentle stroll along the Scheduled Monument.

The riparian woodland and canal make an ideal habitat for all kinds of wildlife. Due to the number of people using the area some basic maintenance was needed to ensure that it remained a pleasant place to visit and to conserve some original and modern features of canal.

Maintenance work was carried out at Lock Basins 24 and 25, Lock 22 bridge and throughout the area. This involved the preparation and painting of all metalwork including railings, picnic benches and lock furniture. All woodwork was sanded and given several coats of protective oil. Graffiti was removed from the towpath, benches and walls, and litter was collected during each session.

The work in this area took place over 14 weeks in the summers of 2018 and 2019. We engaged with a range of volunteers from SEPA, graduates of the Scottish Waterways Trust (later Keep Scotland Beautiful) Canal College project, Scottish Waterways Trust Love Your Canal project volunteers and the general public.

One of the most impressive monuments in this area is the Kelvin Aqueduct. Designed by Robert Whitworth and opened in 1787 this spectacular structure carries the canal high above the River Kelvin valley. It is constructed in sandstone with rustic arches and polished ashlar scalloped walls. At some time in the past this original monument had been mortared with cement which was causing damage to the sandstone. During this project a large section of this cement mortar was removed and replaced with traditional lime mortar. Members of previous project 'Love Your Canal' got involved and became mentors to the group as they were already experienced in the technique.



Canal Work

Ruchill

The Ruchill Mural was originally designed by local school children in 1996 with the theme of 'Our Canal, Our Future'.

Since then it had become faded and obscured by overgrown vegetation. We worked in collaboration with Impact Arts, Canal College and the local community to reinvigorate the mural. Canal College participants began by removing the vegetation from the mural site then continued by painting railings, barriers, benches and mooring rings. Impact Arts undertook community consultation and design sessions with the local neighbourhood group 'North United Communities'. We commissioned local artist Sharon Scotland to pull together the communities' ideas to create a brand-new mural and to conserve some original and modern features of the canal.

Shirva to Craigmarloch Stables

In partnership with North Lanarkshire Council we created a programme of volunteering experiences for women in the Criminal Justice system serving Community Payback Orders.

Within this programme we worked around the Forth & Clyde Canal in the North Lanarkshire area on a variety of tasks including painting, litter picks, vegetation removal and gardening. The work was mainly focussed around the Shirva Pend and Craigmarloch Stables.

These historic stables, now ruinous, were opened in the 1830s and used to provide relays of horses for the swift boats. These were the fast passenger services that ran between Glasgow and Camelon in Falkirk. The stables could house up to eight horses at a time with the stable keeper living in the adjoining house. The stables quickly degraded after they closed and projects like this aim to keep them visible to the canal users as an important part of the canal's history.





Canal journey

Cycling along the canal Sheila noticed a poster for Love Your Canal, a lock keeping programme in Maryhill. Having recently retired she signed up and began her canal journey with us.



She has worked with the Canal Cultural Heritage Officer for two years helping to improve the appearance and conserve this part of the Forth & Clyde Canal. This has included painting, litter picks and carrying out basic stonemasonry work on the locks and the Kelvin Aqueduct. She went on to become a volunteer mentor at Canal College Bowling and with the RVS at Monklands Hospital.

“What I really enjoy most is the interaction with the people I have met when volunteering, you feel like you are part of a community. Whether young or old it’s lovely meeting up to hear and discuss varied topics. Even when it’s pouring rain and I’m freezing it keeps me enthusiastic helping me mentally as well as physically. I feel I gain as much, if not more, than I give.

“Thumbs up for volunteering.”

Canal Life

Through this project we have offered a wide range of activities to engage people with the history of Scotland's canals and to encourage people to make better use of the canal environment.

We delivered nine talks to housing associations, Probus Clubs, Heritage and History Societies, libraries and the National Network for Outdoor Learning. The illustrated talks focussed on the social histories of the Forth & Clyde, Union and Monkland Canals and were delivered to 271 people.



Canal Life

1,187

people took part though this programme of events in total.

"I discovered a hidden railway station just 10 mins from where I have lived for 20 years, I had no idea it was there!"

Walk participant, September 2019.



Canal Life

We offered 37 guided walks through a variety of wider projects such as the B-Hive at Bowling Harbour, Glasgow and Edinburgh Doors Open Days. We also supported other organisations including NHS, Forth Valley Recovery and Re-Union Canal Boats. In total 443 people attended these walks based around the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals.

We participated in events across the canal network from festivals to fun days, offering a range of engaging activities including boat trips, stalls and children's games. We organised training events in outdoor learning, stone carving and walk leader training.

In collaboration with Scottish Canals' B-Hive at Bowling Harbour we rolled out a programme of Community Paddle Pickups. These canoe-based litter picks gave communities a fun way to explore the canal and make a real difference to the local environment by clearing litter from the hard to reach offside of the canal. We cleared 62 bags of rubbish over four sessions from 2.5km of the Forth & Clyde Canal.

"When we finish at the end of the day it's great to see the difference that you've made"

Volunteer, June 2018.



Canal journey

Gordon first became interested in the Forth & Clyde Canal when he moved from Dunblane to Glasgow's West End. He quickly started using the canal as a route to walk or cycle all the way into the city centre.



He began his canal journey with us during the Maryhill canal work project and when this finished moved on to more volunteering opportunities with Scottish Canals.

He then attended a guided walk led by the Canal Cultural Heritage Officer Lisa as part of the Glasgow Doors Open Days Festival where he was given the opportunity to train as a walk leader with Lisa. On completion he offered his services to Refuweege, a community-led charity that welcomes people from across the world who have been forced to flee their homes.

Gordon enjoys volunteering, saying that it gives him a purpose and sees it as his way of doing something for others and engaging with his local community.

Canal School

School pupils engaged in a range of activities which included short self-contained sessions on the history of their local canal and STEM-based activities. Some schools were involved in longer term projects with a variety of partners to explore one aspect of the canal in more detail.



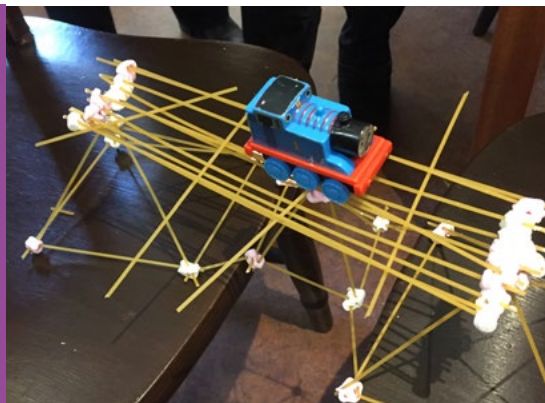
Canal School

223

discovery Heritage Hero Awards achieved.

"We are very proud of what the children have achieved, their knowledge about the canal is superb and the exhibition they created was very entertaining."

Class teacher.



Canal School

Animate!

In partnership with the National Mining Museum and Culture NL we delivered an animation project to Primary 6 pupils from St Augustine's Primary School in Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire.

Using the Monkland Canal and the coal mining history of the area we explored the link between industry and the visible remains of the canal. As part of their learning the pupils created a guided walk around Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life which they delivered to other pupils in the school and their parents. Their stop-motion animation was created over six weeks with Wilma from Mine Horse Pictures. A film premiere was held where the class presented their work and spoke about the process.

"The animation project was a most successful project that fully captured the interest and imagination of every single pupil. They learned so much about their local environment and were given an amazing platform to share their knowledge. It provided an excellent learning opportunity that enabled all pupils to work as part of a team, show initiative, develop leadership qualities and most importantly to be entirely creative. It was an outstanding project that the children loved."

Headteacher.

Bleezin – Creative Waterways Project

An interactive, multi-media performance and exhibition was created by a group of young people from Coatbridge.

These young people, for a variety of reasons, were unable to access full time education or employment. Working in association with Impact Arts and Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life, this 10-week programme used animation, photography, film-making, sculpture and painting to explore the natural and industrial heritage of the area. The work was shown during an interactive exhibition on site at Summerlee.

Canal Community Action Group

Since the start of this project the Canal Cultural Heritage Officer has contributed to the work of the Canal Community Action Group which organises the Edinburgh Canal Festival.

In preparation for the 2019 Edinburgh Canal Festival we worked with Longstone, Ratho and Tollcross primary schools located on the banks of the Union Canal. Whilst learning about the canal the pupils created exhibits for a pop-up museum and outdoor gallery which were on display during the festival.

Canal School

Scottish Canals

We have delivered a variety of youth engagement activities in collaboration with Scottish Canals.

This has included a consultation for the Stockingfield Bridge Project in Glasgow, STEM activities to inform young people about engineering works, support at canal festivals and staff training in walk leading. After the success of the community-based Paddle Pick-up this was delivered to a group of young people who were unable to access full time education. The programme was delivered over seven weeks with the young people achieving a John Muir Discovery Award, a Paddle Power Award and a Saltire Award for Volunteering. They collected 36 bags of rubbish over 7.5km of the Forth & Clyde Canal around the Falkirk area. This work was nominated for an RSPB Community and Innovation Award.

"I loved making the animation. It's really helped me to remember the story of the canal."

Pupil.



Greengairs

Working with Greengairs Community Council and local artists we developed a series of workshops for Greengairs Primary School to explore the coal mining heritage of the area and the future of energy production. These workshops led to the creation of a mural in the grounds of the Stanrigg Community Hall.

Under the Trees

A new partnership was developed with Under the Trees, an environmental education Community Interest Company that provides outdoor learning sessions throughout central Scotland. We developed and delivered a heritage programme based at The Falkirk Wheel which explored the industrial and ancient Roman history of the area.

Educator Training

Throughout the project educator training sessions were delivered. These covered a range of topics from basic outdoor learning and forest school activities to heritage skills and walk leader training. These sessions were delivered to teachers, education assistants and delegates attending Heritage Education Forum events and the National Network for Outdoor Learning.

Canal journey

Claire began her canal journey as a child: “I grew up near the Union Canal and it was a big part of my childhood.”

As a teacher she wanted to inspire the children in her class to learn about their local canal. She got in touch with the Canal Cultural Heritage Officer to discuss incorporating the Forth & Clyde Canal into her upcoming topics. She used an enquiry-based pedagogy following the Heritage Hero Award outline and referenced the Sustainable Development Goals.

The class visited the canal several times, asking questions about the area and setting about researching them. They did this using books, old maps and images, the internet, asking people and by inviting experts into the classroom. They shared their learning by constructing interactive displays and devising games for an open afternoon in the school that family and the local community were invited to.

“The class were really engaged with the canal project. They took initiative in their learning and took responsibility for the open afternoon suggesting exhibits and sourcing materials to pull it all together. Using the canal as a context led to interesting themes emerging such as water conservation, the industrial history of the area, how local people use the canal and the animals that live there.”

Claire McEachran, teacher, Dunard Primary School.



Feedback cards

Everyone who attended a volunteer session, walk, talk or event was given the opportunity to complete an evaluation card.

437

completed cards

96%

learned about canal heritage

87%

spent time with friends/ family/ in a group

82%

helped protect historic features

79%

learned about local history

77%

volunteered for a good cause

71%

learned new skills

64%

did something active/ outdoors

52%

met new people



Reflections

Ambitious targets for engagement were set for all three strands of this programme, all of which were met, and most were exceeded. The case studies and feedback cards show participants both enjoyed their involvement and learned through the experiences.

The successful delivery of the varied elements of this programme required a project officer with a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience. The Canal Cultural Heritage Officer has experience in teaching and community engagement projects so was able to utilise their skills in communication, public speaking, facilitation and research as well as a broad knowledge of heritage themes. They were supported by a wider staff team who assisted delivery by cultivating strategic relationships and developing project opportunities.

Central to the success of this project were the strong relationships that developed with both existing and new partners. All three strands of the programme were significantly enriched by working collaboratively which also helped us to engage with new audiences. For example, working with Falkirk Community Learning and Development we were able to work with young people who, due to a range of circumstances, were unable to access education or employment. Through North Lanarkshire Council, we worked alongside the Criminal Justice Service, offering a 10-week programme to women who were serving community payback orders.

Working with this range of audiences and partners poses challenges and lessons were learnt throughout the delivery of the programme:

- It is essential that each partner understands their role and that their responsibilities are clearly agreed at the outset.
- Programmes need to be flexible; many participants have chaotic lifestyles and can struggle to commit to weekly timeslots.
- Co-designing projects with the groups to give a sense of ownership can increase the participation and interest.
- During short term projects it can be difficult to achieve the intended learning due to absences and other disruptions.

Unfortunately, due to recent circumstances and restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, two projects with two new partners had to be cancelled. Despite this, all project targets were still met.

What's next?

Moving from Scottish Waterways Trust to Keep Scotland Beautiful offers the opportunity to expand the geographical range of communities and heritage themes we can engage with.

A place-based approach to heritage engagement would address some of the issues raised above. By co-designing projects with local groups and partners, the heritage that matters to them can be explored. By developing mid to long term projects, more can be achieved as individuals will have more opportunities to be involved.







We support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is the charity that provides advice and support to help create and maintain cleaner, safer and healthier local environments where people and communities can thrive. It's part of our work to make Scotland clean, green and sustainable.



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