

AINA CASE STUDY

TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Froghall Basin, Caldon Canal



Boats moored in the restored basin at Froghall, marking the start of the old Uttoxeter Canal

Restoring an old canal terminus with enthusiastic volunteer support

Volunteers from the Caldon & Uttoxeter Canals Trust, the Waterway Recovery Group and the Inland Waterways Association began restoring the Uttoxeter Canal at Froghall in February 2003. The volunteers worked in partnership with British Waterways on an £800,000 rural regeneration project called 'Destination Froghall', based around the attractive landscapes in the heart of the Churnet Valley, to improve opportunities for both visitors and boaters

The Caldon Canal terminates at its former junction with the now derelict Uttoxeter Canal, close to much industrial archaeology and steep wooded valleys of scenic value. Dramatic old limekilns have been preserved around the terminus, close to old canal stables and a warehouse, to show where limestone was once transhipped by tramways from the Cauldon limestone quarries to waiting narrowboats and rail wagons on the North Staffordshire Railway (now preserved in close proximity to the canal as the Churnet Valley Railway).

The volunteer work resulted in the restoration and reopening of the first lock and basin of the Uttoxeter Canal to provide permanent and floating moorings for visiting boats, footpaths for easy access around the site, seating and appropriate landscape work. Habitat improvements were also carried out including pond creation and marshland work.

Construction work respected the historic environment and new stone masonry was used for lock chamber repairs, copings, quoins, cills and retaining walls. The completed scheme includes a fully restored operational lock, new paddles, operating gear and a new timber footbridge. An overflow weir was also built.

'Destination Froghall' was funded through a combination of European grant aid and an SRB Rural Regeneration programme for North East Staffordshire. Additional financial help came from the Inland Waterways Association, who also undertook research with conservation specialists in order to source a suitable pink gritstone from a nearby quarry.

The Inland Waterways Association said: "Our volunteers, working in partnership with British Waterways, have provided greater opportunities for boaters and visitors to extend their journeys and time spent on this delightful waterway."