£2million overhaul for wonder of the waterways

20/01/2011

Nearly 250 years since the birth of famous canal engineer John Rennie who revolutionised canal engineering and created the singular best piece of his work, the Lune Aqueduct is set for a 21st Century makeover.

The Lune Aqueduct has been awarded a grant of £1million by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to transform the 200 year old Grade I listed structure. British Waterways will match fund the project with £1million funding to renovate this remarkable engineering structure which carries the picturesque Lancaster Canal over the River Lune

British Waterways submitted detailed plans to the HLF in September following two years of studies and surveys to develop a plan to restore the iconic aqueduct to its former glory.

The proposed programme of works include restoring the historic masonry and brickwork and improving access between the aqueduct and the River Lune, and also large scale landscaping works which will increase the prominence of the aqueduct against the landscape. There are also plans for a sympathetic lighting scheme for this magnificent structure. The funding will provide for the employment of a full-time project officer on site to oversee the works.

The scheme will be completed with an interpretation plan tied to the canal heritage and environment which will include a teaching resource aimed at the local schools. The plans will make the Grade I listed aqueduct more accessible and visually appealing to visitors, in addition to underpinning the structural integrity of the historic aqueduct for decades to come.

Works are due to commence in January 2011 with the physical construction which will include relining the canal channel, carrying out leakage repairs and structural embankment works. The access and improvements works will be completed over the next two years.

Julie Sharman, Head of Regeneration North, British Waterways, said: “We are delighted to be awarded this significant amount of money from the Heritage Lottery Fund to rejuvenate this fantastic piece of English waterway heritage. The planned works will refurbish the aqueduct’s historic masonry and stonework and visually and physically open up this magnificent structure to the local and visiting public.”

Sara Hilton, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North West, said: “The Lune Aqueduct is a masterpiece of engineering, and a striking example of the impact the industrial revolution had both on the local landscape and the development of the region. This award from HLF will mean that the historic features of the aqueduct will be conserved, and public access improved so that more people will be able to explore and enjoy this heritage treasure, whilst ensuring it is preserved for future generations.”

British Waterways will be hosting a stoppage open day on 9 February where members of the public are invited to experience a ‘behind the scenes’ tour of repairs to the Lune Aqueduct on the Lancaster Canal. Find out more.

Notes to editors

The UK canal system was key to the industrial revolution, with the Lancaster Canal being the main conduit for the

economic development of Cumbria and Lancashire for over 100 years.

The Canal was built during the 1790s with John Rennie being appointed as its Chief Engineer. Built between 1794-97, and possibly the singular best piece of Rennie's work, the Lune Aqueduct is the most impressive feature of the whole canal, carrying the canal 50 feet above the River Lune of over 600ft.

British Waterways cares for the nation's 200-year old network of canals, rivers and docks, which attract over 13 million people each year for walking, cycling, angling, boating or simply the peace and quiet. The Government has backed British Waterways' plans in England and Wales for its canals and rivers to leave state control to become a 'national trust' for the waterways. This exciting new charity, which is targeted to be up and running by April 2012, will attract new investment and give local people a greater role in how their waterways are run.

British Waterways is the third largest owner of listed buildings in the country. It maintains:

- 1,650 locks
- 55 tunnels
- 3,095 bridges
- 413 aqueducts
- 97 reservoirs

www.britishwaterways.co.uk

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK, including over £500million to the North West alone.

Further information

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