



# **BUDE CANAL REGENERATION**

## **Phase II**

## Bude Canal Regeneration Phase II and ‘The Way Forward’



Figs 1 to 4. The Lower Wharf after completion of Phase I – clear evidence of a successful project which was due to the strong partnership which was forged during the regeneration process.

The Bude Canal Regeneration Project (BCRP) was completed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 when the lead partner, North Cornwall District Council (NCDC) ceased to exist. The Bude Canal from the Sea Lock to Marhamchurch Inclined Plane, 2 miles of rejuvenated waterway, is now owned by Cornwall Council, the new Unitary Authority. Whilst this section of the Canal is a joy to behold and is available for use by residents and visitors alike, there are works that were NOT DONE in the Project. There are various reasons, including funding, why proposals were NOT carried out. The main works not done are:-

- Replacement of Rodds Bridge with a suitable bridge with sufficient clearance to allow navigation under the bridge. Ideally the headroom should be not less than 2.2m. (see fig 5)
- Provision of at least 1 slipway above Falcon Bridge to allow access to the canal for local and visiting trail-boats.
- Reconnection of Helebridge Basin to the canal at Helebridge, near Marhamchurch, Bude. (see fig 6)



Fig 5. Rodds Bridge - Any new bridge must have sufficient headroom for navigation



Fig 6. Helebridge  
Reconnection of canal to canal basin

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These unfortunate shortfalls were recognised by NCDC and BCRP and the idea of a Phase II is to achieve all of the above was agreed as the way forward in due course.

Added to the above elements should be other opportunities to be considered for implementation.

- The re-development of Higher Wharf as a Waterways Centre for use by Budehaven School (a Sports School) and the community, in particular local water-sports groups (see fig 7)



Fig 7. Higher Wharf - Waterfront edge



Fig 8. Higher Wharf - Existing buildings



Fig 9. Higher Wharf - Suitable location for slipway



Fig 10. Higher Wharf - Adjacent plot of land

The land at Higher Wharf is now owned by Cornwall Council. The buildings there are used by community groups, currently Bude Town Band and Bude Scouts and community use should continue (see fig 8). This site, with a redesign is the ideal location for a slipway as well as providing facilities as above (see fig 9).

Interestingly, this area was where Stapleton’s Shipyard operated in the 1800s to the early 1900s.

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Cornwall Council, who own the Bude Canal and adjacent land (see fig 10) are also the Education Authority, so with some inspiration a joint use facility could be created with benefits for the community. In school time this could be used by Budehaven School and other schools in conjunction with using the canal and in non-school time by community groups, including community based water-sport groups providing a base and facilities for their activities. Community users would obviously have to pay for such use to contribute to the running costs.

Cornwall Council has two departments which presumably would be the leaders of such a project i.e. Education Department and the Environment Department, who have control of the canal. It is possible that such a venture would attract funding from other sources, in a partnership with other community groups and users as in the Regeneration Project.

It is recognised that the current economic climate will not make any of these elements easier. These ideas can wait, but must NOT be forgotten or abandoned.

- During the development of BCRP, another Project was developed and mainly achieved. This was a walking route project funded by EU Interreg Fund. This Project has given access to sections of the Canal not previously easily accessed, being in private ownership. By using public paths, minor roads and access over sections of the canal, three walks of about 10 miles were achieved, being ‘The Planekeepers Path’, ‘The Aqueduct Trail’ and ‘Canal and Coast Walk’. There is an opportunity to make these three walks into a 20 mile circular walk subject to access to a short section of land to connect them. Additionally, a useful booklet ‘Bude Canal Trails – Bude Valley’ was also produced. This covers the valley from Bude to Helebridge, highlighting other walking routes off or after the valley. The Bude Valley has the potential to be a lateral country park defined by the canal, towpath, the local nature reserve, the cycle path and the walking routes through and leading off this lovely, basically unspoilt area. There is something for everyone to enjoy - a wonderful asset.
  
- The off road cycle route from Bude up the Bude Valley ends at Helebridge but meanwhile, Devon County Council and Torridge District Council are busily developing cycle and walking routes in Devon to boost tourism and local needs. One such route is to link Holsworthy with Bude by making use of the former railway line. Obviously, these councils can only take such an off road route to the Devon/Cornwall border which is about 5 miles from Bude. There would be then only 3 miles or so of cycle/walking route to be achieved from the border to Helebridge, to complete the whole route preferably using the off road former railway route. This would be a marvellous benefit, not only for this area, but for tourism and local needs. Cornwall Council are interested in achieving this final section. This cycle route is important for many reasons, including additional access to two important canal sites, Merrifield Wheelpit and Helebridge, thus adding to the overall understanding of our heritage and the concept of a Phase II and the opportunities that would come from such a plan. All of the former canal route including the Launceston Branch needs appropriate protection.

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Fig 11. The Bude Valley showing Whalesborough Lock and Upton in the background

If the expanded view was taken, when achieved there would be:

- A navigable canal
- A joint use community/water-sport centre and education facility
- The country park of the Bude Valley (see fig 11)
- A cycle route from Bude to Holsworthy and beyond
- A 20 mile circular walk

The completion of BCRP was not the end, just the end of the beginning, with better facilities and opportunities through the expanded Phase II of the project as described above all of which is within the remit of Cornwall Council in partnership with appropriate bodies.

For and on behalf of the Trustees of Bude Canal & Harbour Society  
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