

Living waterways transform places and enrich lives

Better towpaths on the Grand Union Canal from West Drayton to Paddington

The Canal & River Trust is here so you have a place to escape. A place where you can step off the pavement, onto the towpath and breathe.

We are a charity, and we are entrusted to care for 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales.

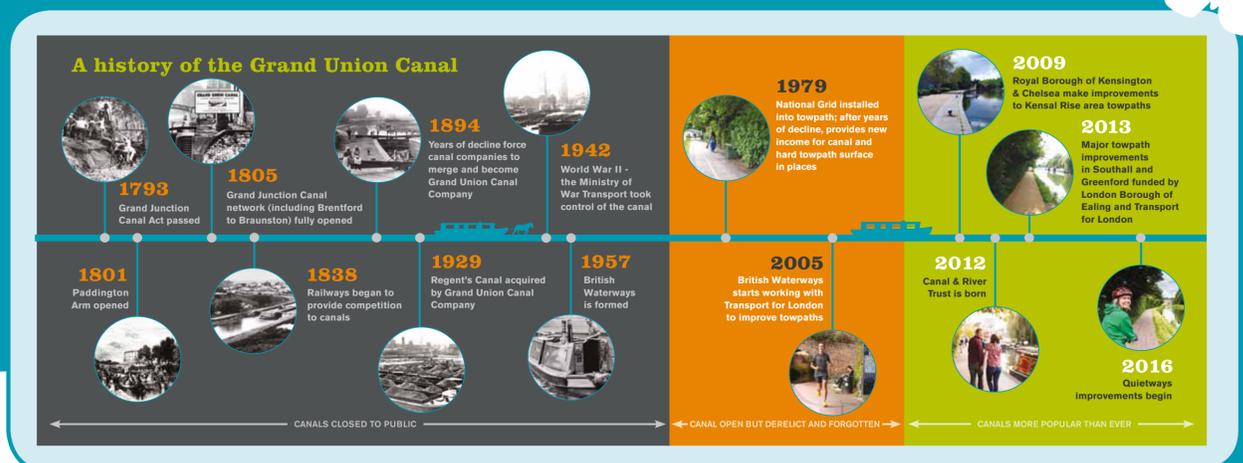
We all live in an increasingly fast-paced and crowded world. Our historic waterways are the antidote to this. They provide an unfenced, 'no turnstiles' opportunity to interact with history and nature next to soothing water.

On top of maintaining 2,000 miles of canals and rivers, which are often over 200 years old, we are responsible for an enormous network of bridges, embankments, towpaths, aqueducts, docks and reservoirs and more.

From improving towpaths for cyclists and creating new wildlife habitats to maintaining our distinctive

infrastructure, we are constantly working to make our canals and rivers the very best they can be.

Our waterway network is a national treasure. It makes people's lives better. We're here to ensure that it is protected forever.



Canal & River Trust

What's Happening on the Grand Union Canal

What's happening?

Canal & River Trust's London towpaths are more popular and being enjoyed more than ever before.

We are transforming over 16 miles of towpath between Paddington and West Drayton working in partnership with Transport for London under the Quietways programme.

Building on previous improvements between Paddington and West Drayton, we will be providing:

- better quality surfaces
- wider paths
- improved access points
- new signs

bringing huge benefits to everyone visiting and enjoying West London canals.



BEFORE



AFTER

When is it happening?

The work will be undertaken from the end of 2016 through to 2018 in phases, starting between Ladbroke Grove and Old Oak Lane and finishing at West Drayton.

Trimming hedges and trees has started along the route to clear the way for surfacing improvements.



Quietways

The Transport for London Quietways programme aims to enable more people to cycle, more safely, more often.

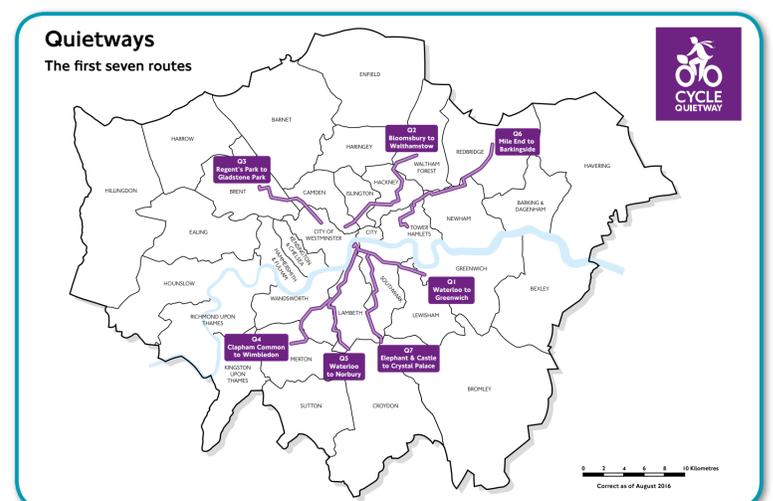
- Quietways will be a network of high quality, well signed cycle routes, guiding cyclists along less-busy backstreets, parks, along waterways or tree lined streets
- The routes will link key destinations and are designed to appeal to new and existing cyclists who want to use quieter, low-traffic routes, complementing other cycling initiatives in London, such as the Cycle Superhighways

Quietways are being delivered and funded by Transport for London, The London Boroughs, Canal & River Trust and The Royal Parks.

The route between Paddington and West Drayton will be signed as a Quietway route with improved towpath surfaces, wider paths, better accesses and improved signs benefitting all our visitors.



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Better Towpaths for everyone

In 2014 we asked people about how towpaths across England & Wales should be improved and received a huge response.

Three priorities emerged:

- **Better infrastructure** (such as improved towpaths and access to them)
- **Better signs**
- **Better behaviours from everyone**



We're already delivering better signs across all 2,000 miles of towpaths and our "Share the Space, Drop Your Pace" behaviour campaign is now established nationally as a way to encourage good behaviour and respect for all when enjoying the waterways.



Our Towpath Code

Share the space – towpaths are popular places to be enjoyed by everyone. Please be mindful of others, keep dogs under control, and clean up after them.

Drop your pace – pedestrians have priority on our towpaths so cyclists need to be ready to slow down; if you're in a hurry, consider using an alternative route for your journey.

It's a special place – our waterways are living history, with boats, working locks and low bridges so please give way to waterway users and be extra careful where visibility is limited.

**share the space
drop your pace[®]**
on Canal & River Trust towpaths



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Better Infrastructure

Towpath improvements

Between Ladbroke Grove and Old Oak Lane, the North Circular Road and Greenford, and Southall (Beaconsfield Road) through to West Drayton we will be bringing:

- Path widths increased to 1.8m - 2m
- Durable non-slip surfaces (tar-spray and chip) to make it easier to get along the towpath
- Smoothing out bumps, potholes and cobbles
- Improving surface drainage
- Improved visibility along the path by clearing vegetation and improving the field of view



An example of the worn towpath at Kensal Rise which will be given a new lease of life

This is what a better towpath looks like

Front verge maintained

Creates the "traditional towpath" look and improves biodiversity. They're also great places to fish, provide drainage for rain water and create a tactile safety feature for the waters edge too.

Wide towpaths

It's not possible everywhere but we aim for these proportions for a new towpath.

New towpath surface

Once all the potholes have been filled the new tarmac base is dressed in a sandy coloured grit to a natural worn look. It's nonslip and tactile so it encourages those on bikes to take it easy.

Trimmed hedges and trees

Overhanging vegetation makes it hard for people to pass each other and to see along the towpath, but it also stops the grass from growing and creepy crawlies thriving too. We aim for a neat but natural finish.

0.5m

1.8m - 2m

0.5m

Access improvements

We are improving access to the towpath by

- Formalising new access points
- Providing new or improved ramped access instead of or along-side steps
- Removing access barriers making it easier for cycles and buggies to get onto the towpath
- Introducing new bike-wheeling channels on steps



Signs

New signs will be installed to help people find their way along the towpath and be aware of what is nearby the canal, such as local transport connections, local facilities and key points of interest.

The signs will be the same style as the Legible London map signs and finger posts you might already be familiar with on pavements around London.



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Get Involved



Love your canal and it will love you back

Talk to us about your local canal area. You might be part of a community group looking for some space to do something new or just want to volunteer a bit of space time.

Towpath adoptions

You could adopt a canal or build a “towpath garden” – it would make a huge difference to your local community. Is there a stretch of towpath which could do with a spot of tender loving care? If so, we’ve got loads of great opportunities to do just that.



Ways to volunteer

There are many ways to volunteer with us, from full-time roles to occasional days out on the towpath. People volunteer for all sorts of reasons, from gaining work experience to meeting new friends.

- In the great outdoors or in the office
- Professionally skilled volunteer roles e.g. explorers education volunteers
- Public-facing volunteer roles e.g. towpath rangers, lock keepers

Towpath Taskforce

Would you like to meet new people, get your hands dirty and make a difference to your local canal? Towpath Taskforce teams could be just the thing you’re looking for! You can come along whenever you’re free, whether that’s once a month or more regularly. And you’ll be helping us to really make a difference.

Donate or become a Friend of the Trust

We need your help to ensure that your canals and rivers become and remain vital local havens for people and nature. By supporting us you can help your wonderful waterways to thrive today and ensure they’re protected for future generations to enjoy.

Case Study: The Hanover School Community Garden

In 2010 we meet with the people of Islington to talk about anti-social behaviour Regent’s Canal and we met the deputy head of Hanover Primary School. He told us that they had run out of space for their garden project, so we agreed to help them build a community garden on the towpath.



Thanks to public donations and grants from the Mayor of London’s Pocket Parks Scheme, this stretch of canal has now become the perfect place for those looking to escape the London’s busy streets. It’s also an outdoor classroom for the children, a boon for biodiversity in the area and cited as major factor in the decrease in anti-social behaviour around the lock and towpath.

Maybe **YOUR** piece of the canal could be next?



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