

North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust press release March 26 2018

Norfolk's canal included in national boating challenge

Restoration of a unique Norfolk canal has been so successful that it has been included in a national challenge for boat users.

Enthusiasts from all over England and Wales are set to navigate the upper section of the North Walsham and Dilham Canal in a bid to gain a new [Inland Waterways Association](#) (IWA) award.

The IWA, a charity which works to protect and restore the country's 6,500 miles of canals and rivers, has included a one-mile section, from Ebridge Mill pond to Bacton Wood lock, in its [Silver Propellor challenge](#), aimed at encouraging members to explore some of the country's lesser-known waterways.

The 19th-century canal is one of 20 destinations around the country suitable for portable craft - such as canoes, kayaks and paddleboards - which those taking part in the challenge must prove they have tackled in order to gain the Silver Propellor medal.

Ivan Cane, chairman of the [North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust](#), hopes the challenge will help promote the canal beyond Norfolk.

"The biggest reward for all our volunteers' work in opening up this section of the North Walsham and Dilham Canal is to see boats using it, We are thrilled that our local Norfolk canal has been included in this national scheme," said Mr Cane.

Trust volunteers have been working to restore the upper canal with Laurie Ashton's Old Canal Company, which owns the waterway between Ebridge lock and Swafield. In January a successful trial re-watering was carried out on a stretch between Pigneys Wood and Bacton Wood lock which had been dry for at least half a century.

Background information:

- The North Walsham and Dilham Canal was originally nearly nine miles long. The North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust, formed in 2008, is hoping to restore about 7.5 miles and four of the original six locks.
- The canal stretches from Antingham ponds, north west of North Walsham, to Wayford Bridge, north west of Stalham.
- The waterway is Norfolk's only sailing canal with locks.
- 100 navvies from Bedfordshire started building work on the canal in 1825 and it opened the following year, 1826.
- It was used by wherries to transport cargo to and from mills and communities along its route.
- The last wherry, Ella, sailed the canal in 1934.
- Today, one family and three companies own different sections of the canal.
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