Canal trip: it was a sell out!

On 17 April, MVR held its first social event of 2024, a combination of walks and a boat trip on the Wey and Arun Canal from Loxwood. Was it the magic lure of a cream tea on the boat that led to a sell out of all 40 places in less than 24 hours of us posting the event on Eventbrite? We have never had such an instant success for a social event! Our appetites had been whetted by having a speaker from the Wey and Arun Canal Trust at our AGM the previous October. Thank you to Nick C for managing the bookings and the day.



One of our members, Tim W, kindly wrote this article about his reflections of the day.

Walking is fun - wherever it is enjoyed. But in particular, I like walking with a friendly welcoming group of people - and smile even more if it involves a canal! I know, but I do enjoy glimpses I get into a bygone time, with thought provoking scenery and exercise at the same time: hard to beat.

I suppose it could be made even better if it involved a cream tea and a trip along a canal in a narrowboat. Luckily for me Mole Valley Ramblers had arranged a walk away from our usual haunts that involved a walk in the morning followed after lunch by a trip in a narrowboat and cream tea!

The appointed day arrived and was a typical spring day - very welcome after the incessant rain we had had for days on end. 40 walkers met up, split into two groups and enjoyed a five or six miles walk of wonderful West Sussex countryside including on both walks a walk along the towpath of the Wey and Arun Navigation.

We were able to see the strides forward that the Wey and Arun Navigation volunteers have made in reconstructing and opening up a section of the navigable canal - including 4 locks and the whole working operation base (shop and volunteer headquarters) at Loxwood by The Onslow Arms.



The group I walked with began walking eastwards along the towpath by locks and through woodland eventually parting from the canal passing through lovely countryside as we walked a loop ending up again at the shop and headquarters building. So lucky it was right beside a source of good food.



One of the things I love about Rambling is never knowing who I will meet! On this walk we were joined by Chris a visitor from a neighbouring Ramblers group. Just before we left the towpath on our looped walk Chris sat on a bench, pausing and quietly thinking. As the group gathered by the bench it was very moving as Chris began to quietly let us know that the bench had been installed in remembrance of her husband who had been one of the keenest volunteers helping bring the Navigation up to the high standard it is today.

Both Chris and her husband had enjoyed many happy hours on the canal renovation. You just never know who you may meet on a Ramble and what knowledge and history will be imparted to

you. In the case of Chris, such a lot of knowledge it was very moving to share.



The afternoon was spent aboard a boat called Wigginholt talking, watching the countryside go by at walking pace or slower and enjoying a cream tea. Having walked the same bit of towpath, it was good to see it again but from a different perspective and closer to the birdlife of the canal, including an escorting heron. And where did we turn? Near to the bench Chris sat on and told us some of the history if the Navigation. A good reminder of times well spent with loved ones on the Canal and walking.



Thanks to the Mole Valley Ramblers team for organising both the walks and the canal trip. It was a delightful day in great company.