

Restoring the **beauty** of the canal

# Shirley Towpath



# The Project In Numbers



## EXCESS OF 355 TONNES OF MATERIAL

- Excess of 135T of self binding stone and 220T of type 1 MOT stone



## EXCAVATOR & MOTORISED WHEELBARROWS

- Machinery involved



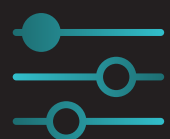
## 5 WEEKS

- Duration of project



## 8 OPERATIVES

- Members of staff required



## AVERAGE 33,000 STEPS A DAY

- The average steps each operative did per day



## 700 METERS

- Length of canal operation





# The Brief



Dovetail Group were hired to restore the towpath between Bridge 7, Solihull High Street and Bridge 8, Shirley Drawbridge. Due to a lack of funding to maintain the towpath overtime it deteriorated and lost it's grace, in addition to the extreme safety hazards that were increasing.

Dovetail's operatives were tasked with excavating the base layer of the path to apply a new stone that would be far more durable and the optimal foundation for a new path surface to be applied for the public to enjoy.







33,000 Steps / Day



# The Process

The process involved Dovetail excavating the existing path from one stretch of the canal to the other to make room for a new stone to then be laid. Opting with type 1 MOT, a far more durable and solid foundation for the towpath, Dovetail operatives used the motorised wheelbarrows to carry and then lay the stone across the canal. Then using self binding stone, the process was repeated for the final finish to be applied to the path and for the new surface to be laid.



People and  
operational excellence



# Challenges Posed

The project commenced on the 14th of February 2022 which meant Dovetail's team of operatives worked through both Storm Dudley and Storm Eunice, the aggressive storms that took place earlier in the year.

These conditions and the extensive labour were the only challenges Dovetail posed. Additional health and safety measures were taken by Project Manager Nathan Hayes during this period.

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With the aggressive winds from both storms, it was paramount that we took extra measures, ensuring all operatives were equipped with life jackets, we also had operatives working in pairs to reduce lone working problems we could have potentially faced.

**Nathan Hayes**

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The towpath improvements between bridge 7 & 8 on the North Stratford Canal were first discussed back in the summer of 2021.

This section of canal is heavily used by all our different users such as walkers, runners, cyclists, boaters, anglers, and dog walkers.

I'm thrilled we were able to deliver the improvements due to a successful safety fund application. What a transformation!

Seeing the before and after shots of the work and being able to liaise directly with our contractor, Dovetail onsite throughout the project has made this whole process a triumph.

Each time I visited site I heard positive feedback from the locals who were eagerly waiting for the works to be completed.

From start to finish the works were completed in just over 5 weeks and ready for the start of Spring.

**Gemma Hessey**

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Area Operations Manager  
Canal And River Trust

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excellence.







The Final Touches





As the project signed off on the 23rd of March, Dovetail Group applied the final finishes to the project including raking the path to ensure all rubble and debris was removed and the additional touch of installing a new path to the entrance of the canal with new turfing and added bird boxes to the trees along the canal.





# Project Completion

With the self binding stone laid and the final touches applied along with the renovation of the stairway entrance to the towpath at Solihull High Street, the towpath was complete.

A project Dovetail Group and their operatives have been proud to partner with The Canal And River Trust on.

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It's been fantastic to receive compliments on our work throughout the process of the towpath restoration as canal users can enjoy a better and safer experience. Makes all the hard work the team of operatives have done worth while with the team doing an average of 33,000 steps a day across the stretch of the canal.

**Nathan Hayes**

Project Manager

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