



**Canal &
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Making life better by water



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Explorers

Soulbury Three Locks Trail

On the Grand Union Canal



Soulbury Three Locks Trail

● Start outside the Pumphouse

Soulbury Three Locks and Pumping Station

Just above where the Grand Union Canal and the River Ouzel meet, east of the village of Soulbury, there is a 'flight' of three locks, a road bridge, a historic cottage, a pub and a restored pumping station ('pumphouse') built in 1838.

Barges and boats coming from London to the south have to go down a hill to reach Fenny Stratford and Milton Keynes.

Lock gates control the water levels here, like a set of steps. Only two barges travelling side by side can go up or down slowly. Water can be pumped back up the hill to keep water levels high enough for the boats.



Activity



Can you spot:

- A date on the middle lock gates? Write it here
- The places where the lock keeper pushes open the gates?

The lock keeper

Living right next to the canal, a lock keeper's job was to keep everything working: opening and closing lock gates, fixing the pumping station and sometimes keeping the peace when people lost their patience waiting to go through!

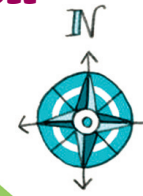
Tick the tools that you think people used on the canals:



Map of Soulbury Three Locks

Activity

If you spot the wildlife, tick them off...



Canal and River Trust Explorers:
canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers

Always go to a canal or river with an adult and remember to stay

SAFE

Stay Away From the Edge



Soulbury Pumphouse

- Now have a closer look at the pumphouse building opposite the cottage.

This is one of only a few purpose-built structures left from the early days of the canals in the 1800s. Below ground level in part of the upper building, water is still recycled using a pump to keep the canal open. Restored between 2016 and 2019, it houses a workshop and lock keepers' facilities, as well as displays to tell its history.

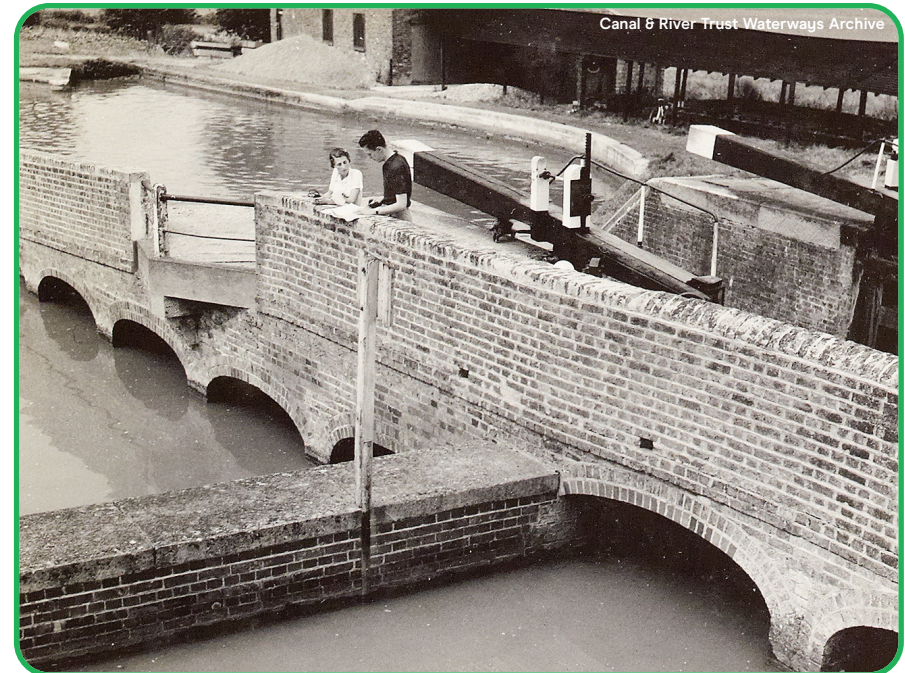


Activity

Draw the shape of the pumphouse windows here:

Activity

Look at this old picture from around 1950.



What are the two people doing?

.....

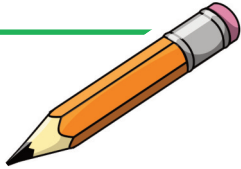
How many arches are on the bridge?

The Three Locks

- Walk carefully back over the road bridge and down to the canalside by the pub.

Activity

Look out for and tick:



- Go up the hill next to the canal, towards the road bridge.

Have a go at this mini-quiz:

1. What is the date on the bridge?
2. Write down the number of each lock here:
.....
3. What is the date on the lock-keeper's cottage?

Working on the Grand Union Canal

Canal workers such as the lock keepers and their families lived in the small cottage, but there were many thousands of people who worked and lived on the boats.



The pub is there because boaters used to buy fresh food and give the horses a rest while their boat went through the locks – and it was thirsty work for the bargemen and women working outside all day.

Living and working on the canal

... in the 1900s

This Victorian girl is leading a horse to pull the boat along.



Do you think a young girl would be allowed to do that job nowadays?



Activity

Now help her family to tidy up! Draw lines to match each item on the left to a place on the barge where it is used:



The River Ouzel

- Walk down the hill by the canal to the area near the pub garden. Stop by the lowest lock gates.

Looking across the canal and down the hill you can just see the River Ouzel. It is used to top up the water in the canal, or the river can take water from the canal if it is starting to flood. This is called water management.

Activity - Stop and listen!



List three **natural** sounds here:

1.
2.
3.

List three **man made** sounds here:

1.
2.
3.

On busy days, the boats have to queue here below the locks while they wait.

How many boats can you see today?

You can explore further!

If you like to make the most of your leisure time:

1. Take a gentle walk, run or cycle further towards Fenny Stratford along this towpath. Download the MKTrails App onto your mobile phone or tablet (www.mktrails.org) and follow the route from here to Fenny Stratford with historical and environmental information at your finger-tips.
2. Stroll past the pub and uphill alongside the locks towards Leighton Buzzard.
3. Have a look at the displays about the restoration of the Pumphouse.
4. Play our 'Build a Canal' game and other fun games: canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers/games
5. Explore the Canal and River Trust online archive and museums: canalrivertrust.org.uk/places-to-visit/national-waterways-museum/the-waterways-archive



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