



Lapal Canal Trust partner with Canal and River Trust to engage local communities

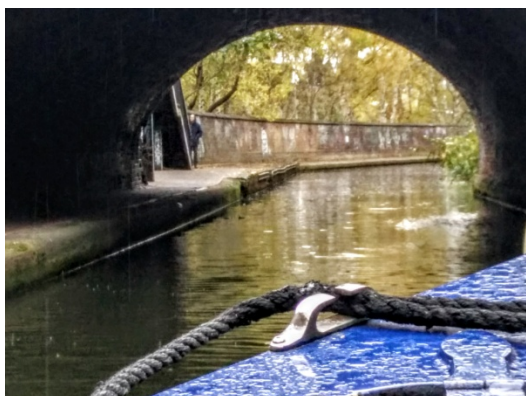


1Gas Street Mooring

The Lapal Canal Trust (LCT) was very pleased to receive a request from Nick Cleaver, Canal and River Trust (CRT) Community Engagement Coordinator for Birmingham for help in getting local people more involved with the canals. Lapal Canal Trust members have canal boats based around Birmingham so the Trust was only too pleased to arrange a boat trip. Both organisations are keen to encourage interest in canals and so a trip was arranged from Gas Street to Edgbaston and then around the Icknield Port Loop. The weather was far from perfect, but a nice cosy fire and cups of tea kept everyone warm.

The group was arranged by Legacy WM, a Birmingham charity which works to, amongst other things, engage and improve the health and well-being of local communities. The women were from Birmingham's Bangladeshi and Pakistani community and had never been on a canal boat.

Musurut Dar, one of the organisers from Legacy WM commented *“This is our very first experience of a trip on Birmingham canals. Whilst minority communities live in the inner-city, we are often not aware that behind our inner-city streets lies some beautiful canals, rich in history and wildlife. Making the canals accessible to all is so vital in creating a sense of joint heritage, ownership and responsibility. Despite the weather, there was something quite majestic, serene and inspiring about the experience we have had today, which we wish to share with others. We welcome further activities which seek to engage and involve inner city communities in the canals and are grateful to LCT and CRT for supporting community involvement”*.



Returning from Edgbaston



Once on board Nick gave a brief history of Birmingham Canals and explained how groups could get involved in volunteering with Canal and River Trust and a little about CRT's Canal adoption scheme. Hugh gave a presentation on the Lapal Canal restoration. Some of the ladies tried their hand at steering a narrowboat for the very first time. As a thank you the ladies had a collection and the gift will be a contribution to the Lapal Canal Post and Rail fund for the work currently being done in Harborne Wharf in Selly Oak.