PRESS RELEASE

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LOCK GATES CRANED OUT OF THE KENNET & AVON CANAL FOR REPAIRS

A project has begun to remove and replace four multi-tonne lock gates from the Kennet & Avon Canal near Reading.

The Canal & River Trust – the charity that cares for the waterway - is carrying out the work, which will see engineers drain the water from Southcote Lock before craning the gates out.

New made-to-measure gates will then be installed, each weighing three tonnes, with the project costing approximately £130,000. Work is due to be completed by the end of December.

Built in 1723 by famed Newbury engineer John Hore, Southcote Lock is an important landmark in Berkshire’s waterway history. After falling into disrepair, the lock was closed in 1952, before being lovingly restored along with the rest of the Kennet & Avon Canal by teams of volunteers throughout the 1970s.

This winter the Trust will be working on around 164 lock gates across the country, as well as carrying out repairs to aqueducts, reservoirs and tunnels. Over £45million is being spent to give the nation’s waterways some TLC at a time when more people than ever are visiting their local canal or river.

Mark Evans, waterway manager at the Canal & River Trust said: “We’re really pleased to be getting these gates replaced. Lock gates generally only last about 25 years, so they were due to be sorted, and will make a big difference to boaters coming on to the canal from the River Thames. The Kennet & Avon Canal is a beautiful waterway, and is more popular now than perhaps any time in living memory. This is a great example of the type of work that needs to be done to keep it in top condition so that everyone can continue to enjoy it.”

To find out more about the Trust’s Restoration & Repairs programme and open days happening across the country go to www.canalrivertrust.org.uk.
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For media enquiries please contact:
Maeve Thompson / 07557 256482 / maeve.thompson@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Notes to Editors

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation’s third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that living waterways transform places and enrich lives and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

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