



PRESS RELEASE

27th February 2017

BRUTE STRENGTH TO TRANSPORT TWO TONNE LOCK GATES TO NEW HOME

- ‘People Power’ to deliver £20,000 new lock gates to the Chesterfield Canal
 - Special free open day planned for 11th and 12th March

A set of new oak lock gates, the equivalent weight of two shire horses, will travel the last 1.5 kilometres of the journey to their new home at Turnerwood’s Feeder Lock 38 by being pulled by just two eager volunteers.

The rundown old gates are being replaced as part of Canal & River Trust’s annual £43 million maintenance programme. The charity, which cares for 240 miles of waterways in the East Midlands, carries out an annual programme of restoration and repairs to the nation’s waterways during the winter to minimise the inconvenience of navigation closures to boaters during the busy summer season.

The new gates will be loaded on the Chesterfield Canal Trust’s boat ‘Dawn Rose’ and pulled by just two people along the one and a half kilometre stretch of historic canal from Shireoaks Marina. The two new gates, expertly crafted and made by hand at the Canal & River Trust’s workshop in Wakefield, will then be lifted into place in the lock by a crane.

Both of Lock 38’s double bottom end gates, called mitre gates, are being replaced having been working hard for boaters for over 20 years. The top gates at Feeder Lock 38 and bottom gates at the next lock up, Lock 37, will be replanked to stop them leaking. The frame of the lock gates are fine, so by replanking them the charity can extend the life of the gates by at least five years. The works are running for three weeks from 27th February.

Lock 38 is one of 59 narrow locks on the 46-mile canal, which officially opened in 1777 and saw cargo such as coal, agricultural goods, iron, pottery and ale pass through its gates. The Chesterfield Canal Trust’s 70ft boat ‘Dawn Rose’ is the first new Cuckoo boat, a type of horse drawn cargo boat unique to the Chesterfield Canal, since the 1930s.

Julian Rasen, construction supervisor for the works, says: “Replacing and repairing the gates at these locks on the Chesterfield Canal is part of the essential maintenance needed to enable the local

canal network to be used and enjoyed by thousands of boaters, cyclists, anglers and walkers every year. As the gates can't be delivered straight to the lock by road, we're delighted to be able to work with the Chesterfield Canal Trust in getting these hand crafted gates to the site by boat as they would have been in years past. It's certainly a way to mark the occasion and celebrate the 240-year-old canal."

Robin Stonebridge, chair of the Chesterfield Canal Trust, says: "Our volunteers know all about the hard work that goes into keeping our canal history alive having spent nearly four years making the 'Dawn Rose' using only traditional hand tools. Although traditionally a horse drawn boat, our volunteers are stepping in as our horse is still being trained! It's wonderful that we can support the Canal & River Trust as they care for our much loved Chesterfield Canal."

On Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th March between 10am and 4pm, people will have the rare opportunity to walk down into Lock 38 to see the canal from a very different angle during a free public open event. Visitors will be able to learn more about the history of the canal and see the new gates in place. Then for one night only, on Saturday 11th March between 6:30 and 9pm, the Turnerwood flight of locks will be transformed by hundreds of giant candles, ingenious engineered fiery sculptures, and come alive with music, dance and spoken word performances in a unique event to celebrate the Chesterfield Canal.

Richard Parry, chief executive of the Canal & River Trust, says: "We care for a remarkable network of historic waterways which are still working just as they were designed to 200 years ago. Keeping them open and safe requires a huge amount of planning, investment and craftsmanship and involves a wide range of experts, from civil engineers and hydrologists to heritage experts and ecologists.

"By showcasing this work to the public, and giving them a different perspective at the evening showcase, we can give people a glimpse into the craftsmanship of the waterways' original 18th Century design but also show how the charity is giving them a new lease of life by using the space for arts and cultural events which bring communities together. We hope this will inspire more people to support us in unlocking the potential of every stretch of our canal and river."

The free public open weekend is on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th March, 10am to 4pm both days. Turnerwood Flight Night-time Transformation is a free event and runs from 6:30pm-9pm on Saturday 11th March.

Shireoaks Row, S81 8LW. Shireoaks is approx 0.6 miles walk from Turnerwood feeder Lock. Shireoaks train station is right next to the canal. Sturdy footwear is recommended for walking in the drained lock chamber, if footwear is deemed inappropriate entry will not be allowed. Please wear warm clothing and footwear and bring a torch to the evening of arts.

To find out more about the Restoration & Repairs programme and the open days happening across the country go to <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/open-days>

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Notes to editors:

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of canals, rivers and docks 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.

Locks have varying numbers of gates – at the ‘upstream’ end of locks some have two gates whilst others only have one, with the same applying at the ‘downstream’ end.

The new lock gates are hand-crafted using traditional methods in the Trust’s specialist workshops at Bradley in the West Midlands and Stanley Ferry in Yorkshire. A single lock gate can take up to 20 days to make and has a working life of between 25 and 30 years. In order to be watertight they need to be built very precisely, fitting tightly to the masonry of the lock walls and to each other.

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