PRESS RELEASE

6th March 2017

PUBLIC INVITED TO SEE THE STOURBRIDGE CANAL FROM A UNIQUE VIEWPOINT

- Open day on Sunday 12th March between 10am and 4pm
- Visitors will be able to walk down into the drained lock

Members of the public are being invited to step down into history this March while essential maintenance works take place at Lock 3 on the Stourbridge Canal.

On Sunday 12th March between 10am and 4pm, visitors will be able to walk down into the drained lock to see the canal from a very different viewpoint. People will be able to speak to the construction team about the skills needed to replace the three lock gates which were last replaced in 1990. Guided history walks from the charity’s heritage team will also be available from the lock to the Red House Glass Cone and visitors will be able to find out how they can get involved with the charity as a volunteer. Refreshments will available to visitors in the Samson and Lion Pub on Brierley Hill.

At Lock 3, both bottom end gates and the top end single gate have been replaced in this four-week project due to end on 17th March. The three gates, which were made at the charity's workshop in Bradley and cost a total of £23,000, arrived on site by boat where they were lifted into place by a crane. The lock chamber has also been drained of water to allow the team to fix any damaged bricks and stones in and around the lock.

In total, eight gates are being changed and brickwork is being inspected and repaired at locks 2, 3, 6 and 13 along the Stourbridge Canal. The canal was completed in 1779 and brought coal and other supplies to the world famous glass industry.

Bashir Ahmed, development & engagement manager for the West Midlands at the Canal & River Trust, says: “We’re delighted to be able to open up the lock for the community to come along and see just how much work goes into keeping their waterways flowing. Replacing and repairing these gates 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. It’s not just our skilled team who care for our 312 miles of canal in the West Midlands – we’re looking for volunteers to help us so we’ll be telling visitors all about the opportunities available at the Canal & River Trust.”

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The maintenance work at Locks 38 and Lock 37 are part of a £43million nationwide programme to repair and restore waterways across England and Wales between November 2016 and March 2017. The five-month programme will see nearly 200 different works take place across 2,000 miles of canals and rivers. Many of the biggest projects are carried out during the winter months to minimise the impact on waterway users.

The address for the open day is: Lock 3 Stourbridge Canal, Brierley Hill Road, Stourbridge DY5 3TY. Sturdy footwear is recommended for walking in the drained lock chamber, if footwear is deemed inappropriate entry will not be allowed.

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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For further media requests, interviews or images please contact:
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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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