



PRESS RELEASE

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MANCHESTER CITY CENTRE CANAL IMPROVED FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BOATERS

The Rochdale Canal in Manchester's city centre has been improved for both pedestrians and boaters with the installation of new and refurbished lock gates, and a large scale waterway clean up.

Over the winter, the Canal & River Trust charity, which cares for 2,000 miles of the nation's waterways, has been able to upgrade a key section of the city centre canal known as the Piccadilly Undercroft, which flows underneath the main A6 Piccadilly road, near the Malmaison Hotel and Ducie Street.

A worn-out set of oak gates at Lock 84 have been replaced and at Lock 85, the charity has refurbished the chamber walls and existing lock gates. At the same time Canal & River Trust volunteers have given the whole area a lick of paint and staff have removed over 40 tonnes of rubbish from the canal bed.

Local Canal & River Trust manager David Baldacchino said: "These improvements to the Rochdale Canal mean it is a much nicer place to boat and walk through. It's a peaceful, traffic-free route through the busy city centre which can be used freely by everyone. The water quality is now so good that fish like perch and pike are thriving in the canal. The floating garden that we have put in is great, and more and more local people are getting involved in joining us to look after the canal.

"It's a great shame that some people still use it as a rubbish dump. During the recent work our staff removed fencing panels, traffic cones, concrete posts, car bumpers, road signs and hundreds of glasses and bottles. It costs us thousands and stops us doing more for the canal in the area.

"Keeping the beautiful waterway pristine is always going to be a struggle in a city centre location next to pubs and bars. It's a challenge we're up for though and appeal to everyone to take care of the canal – think twice about how you get rid of your rubbish and use the proper ways – don't just tip it in the water. The more people who walk, jog, cycle and boat along the canal, the less opportunity there will be for anti-social activity."

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

This winter the Canal & River Trust has been able to replace or restore more than 160 lock gates across the nation's canal network, at a cost of over £45million. This is in addition to carrying out vital repairs to aqueducts, reservoirs and tunnels. The hand-crafted lock gates only have a working lifespan of two or three decades and need to be regularly replaced to keep the canal system in good working order. A single lock gate can take up to 20 days to make and in order for it to be watertight, it needs to be built very precisely, fitting tightly to the masonry of the lock walls and any other gate.

To find out more about the Trust's restoration work including how to donate or volunteer, go to www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

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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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