



Canal &
River Trust

PRESS RELEASE

Underwater video, 360 degree photo and other images available – links below

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WHAT'S HIDING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CANALS?

A blow-up doll, golf buggies, pogo stick, flat screen TV and opened safes recovered from Britain's canals and rivers as charity aims to highlight effect of dumped rubbish on nation's waterways

At an annual cost of £1 million to clean up after litter-happy Britons – from blow up dolls to shopping trolleys - the Canal & River Trust is saying enough is enough.

This winter the Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales, has uncovered some very unusual items from the bottom of its canals and rivers, from an adult blow-up doll and golf buggies, to a pogo stick, a pair of walkie talkies and a garden fork. Empty safes, motorbikes, countless shopping trolleys, tyres and mobile phones were also part of the winter haul and the charity removes thousands of cans, bottles, wrappers and plastic bags every year.

In a recent survey, commissioned by the Canal & River Trust, 96 per cent of people said that they didn't think it was acceptable to drop litter, but 66 per cent still admitted to doing it. Most of the discarded rubbish on the waterways sinks to the bottom of the canal or river bed, causing an invisible hazard to the environment and boats. Tyres and other rubbish contain pollutants which leak into the water and poison fish and other wildlife. Often rubbish acts as a choking hazard and wildlife can become trapped in it.

When asked, 80 per cent of people said that they were concerned about the amount of litter in their local area and the issue could leave a dirty legacy for generations to come. Every year thousands of plastic bags (which take up to 20 years to break down) and drink cans (which can take up to 200 years) are thrown into the waterways. (1)

Peter Birch, National Environment Manager for the Canal & River Trust, said: "Rubbish being thrown into our canals and rivers is a problem that is not going away. We are asking members of the public to join the fight against litter. We should be protecting these special places not damaging them. Our excellent army of volunteers help us to clear rubbish but the funds that we have to allocate to it could be better spent."

Anyone interested in supporting the work of the Canal & River Trust should visit the website for more information www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Join our volunteers and come and make a difference in your local area. For more information and to find out what opportunities are available in your area visit <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer/opportunities>

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For more information or interviews contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- **Images available at:**
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wlzcqp1yp7dqsqv/AABaGuVrJZVaASnhwPUiT2LAa?dl=0>
- **Underwater video content available at:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkTuGmigJZM>
- **360 degree photo of a drained lock full of litter available at:**
<https://theta360.com/s/oAoFPKGGxEyl6BW5DZ4BnNypE>
- **CCTV video of fly tipper throwing rubbish into the canal available at:**
<https://youtu.be/G6uDSMJHibU>
- **The Canal & River Trust commissioned a survey of 500 respondents with Gorkana in March 2017. Raw data available on request.**

(1) How long does it take for things to biodegrade?

Rubbish	Years to biodegrade
Glass bottles	Up to 1 million years
Monofilament fishing line	600 years
Plastic bottles	450 years
Aluminium cans	80 to 200 years
Batteries	100 years
Plastic bags	10 to 20 years
Cigarette butts	1 to 5 years
Styrofoam	Does not biodegrade

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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