



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Shropshire Canal reels in national angling championship**

Hundreds of the nation's top anglers are set to descend on the Shropshire Union Canal this August for the Angling Trust Division One National Championship.

The Canal & River Trust charity, which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways, will be working alongside the Angling Trust and Hodnet Angling Club to host this major championship along "the Shroppie" in Market Drayton on Saturday 19 August – the largest single one day event in the angling calendar.

Up to 500 of the UK's best anglers will be congregating along a 15 mile stretch of towpath, hoping to hook success from the hidden depths of the beautiful rural waterway. It is the first time the competition has been hosted entirely on the Shropshire Union Canal and with some 50 teams, each fielding ten anglers, plus a number of advance practice matches, the contest promises to give a major boost to the local economy.

Dozens of volunteers and angling club officials will be helping to marshal and organise the competition. The winning team will be the club with the greatest number of points at the end of the contest. Prizes include coveted trophies and medals for the top three teams and most successful individual with the highest weight.

The national championship has a long and distinguished history dating back to the first All England angling contest in 1906. The National Federation of Anglers was established in 1903 and the sport grew hugely in popularity. However it wasn't until 1937 that a canal was selected as the venue for the national competition and then for a second time in 1963. Since then a total of 66 national angling championships have taken place on canals, hosting matches in six different divisions.

This August will be the pinnacle of the fishing year for Canal & River Trust national angling and fisheries manager John Ellis and his small team. Their work involves managing £40 million of fish stocks across the canal network, organising agreements with over 250 angling clubs and encouraging more people, especially youngsters, to take up the sport.

He said: "This 2017 competition promises to be a fantastic event both for the anglers and for Shropshire. There will be about a dozen practice events before the big day. If you

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factor in the money spent on accommodation, food, drink and fishing tackle, the payback for the county is considerable.

“Our canals are brimming with wildlife, even in urban areas. They are home to more than 20 native species of fish including pike, perch, roach, bream and dace. Fishing is a really fun sport and it’s cheap to get into. You don’t need much to get going - just a rod, some bait, angling licence, permit and a nice spot to fish. It’s a great way to spend a day.

“Once you get the angling bug, there are dozens of competitions up and down the country where you can test out your skills. This 102<sup>nd</sup> championship is the pinnacle of that competition world, with the nation’s best anglers pitting their wits to be crowned national champions. We are all looking forward to a spirited and closely-fought competition.”

Andre Grandjean, Chairman of the Angling Trust’s Coarse Competition Committee, added: “We are extremely excited to be working with Canal & River Trust and Hodnet AC for our blue riband event of the year. The ‘Shroppie’ is in very good form at the moment and we are looking forward to a very competitive match.”

For more information about the National Angling Championship, practice matches or getting started in fishing along a canal, visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/fishing) or join the discussion on Facebook [www.facebook.com/Canalrivertrustangling](http://www.facebook.com/Canalrivertrustangling)

## **ENDS**

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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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