



PRESS RELEASE

Issued: 9 June 2017

DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR CANAL VOLUNTEERS IN CHESHIRE, SHROPSHIRE AND NORTH WALES

“Amazing volunteers” who help to improve the canals in Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales celebrated a double achievement at a party hosted by the Canal & River Trust this month.

Members of the Small Task Team Volunteers (STTV), formed in March 2012, have just completed their 100th work party. And this coincides with their founder and coordinator Paul Mills being presented with the coveted “National Volunteer of the Year” award by leading waterway newspaper, *Towpath Talk*.

To mark these achievements, the Canal & River Trust, the charity that looks after the nation’s waterways, organised a ‘thank you’ party at its National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port, attended by chief executive Richard Parry.

For the past five years STTV has been working alongside the Canal & River Trust to improve the Shropshire Union Canal, Llangollen Canal and River Weaver Navigation for the enjoyment of walkers, boaters, anglers and cyclists.

In addition to the usual canal maintenance tasks, they have built up expertise in small construction tasks and can now regularly be seen installing picnic benches, carrying out improvements to locks and towpaths, and enhancing moorings and water points for boaters.

The Canal & River Trust works closely with the group to provide materials and tools and to agree the works which help to make the waterways such great places to visit.

Richard Parry said: “We are very grateful to these amazing volunteers, particularly Paul Mills, who have worked so hard alongside us to improve the region’s waterways.

“This group is an excellent example of the difference we can all make by working together. STTV has set a high bar for others to aspire to and demonstrates the complex tasks that can be achieved by volunteers.”

Paul Mills spent 20 years as a fundraising and project officer for the Shropshire Union Canal and five years ago continued to make a difference when he formed the Small Task Team Volunteers.

Sadly ill health meant he was unable to attend the Ellesmere Port celebration but he was represented at the event by his wife Irene and son David. And a couple of weeks earlier, he was delighted to pick up his Towpath Talk award in person from editor Janet Richardson at Alvechurch Marina. The prize included a £100 cheque for his voluntary group, plus a £1500 boating holiday courtesy of sponsor ABC Leisure.

Paul, who lives on the Wirral, said: "It's fantastic to have been named winner. But while I might be the one collecting the prize, the recognition is for the whole team and not just myself. I'm so pleased for everyone, they fully deserve it."

To find out more about volunteering or donating to the Canal & River Trust, please check out the website: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk, email enquiries.northwalesborders@canalrivertrust.org.uk or telephone 0303 040 4040.

ENDS

For further media requests please contact:

Lynn Pegler on 07783 686246

Lynn.pegler@canalrivertrust.org.uk

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.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms