



PRESS RELEASE

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PRESTIGIOUS GREEN FLAGS AWARDED TO FIVE CANALS – AND ENGLAND’S HIGHEST AQUEDUCT

The Canal & River Trust charity is celebrating after achieving Keep Britain Tidy’s coveted Green Flag Award status for five canals – and Marple Aqueduct, England’s highest aqueduct.

The good news comes in the same month as the Trust celebrates its fifth anniversary of taking over responsibility for the nation’s 2,000-mile network of canals and navigable rivers from British Waterways. This accolade cements a record-breaking year for the Trust, with more community involvement, more volunteers and increased donations to its vital work.

Proudly flying a Green Flag are the River Lee Navigation in London (4 miles), Chesterfield Canal in East Midlands (14 miles of the SSSI section, Stockwith to Retford), Shropshire Union Canal Middlewich Branch in Cheshire (22 miles, Barbridge Jct to Audlem), Peak Forest Canal in the Peak District (12 miles) and the Macclesfield Canal in Cheshire (26 miles) - all judged to be ‘quality green spaces’.

Marple’s spectacular aqueduct, which carries the Peak Forest Canal over the River Goyt, near Stockport, and the impressive flight of 16 locks, Marple Lock Flight, one of the steepest sections in the country, have also been recognised for the first time with a Green Heritage Award.

These six special waterway sites are among 1,797 parks and green spaces across the UK judged to be some of the best green spaces in the country. For the third year running canals join a range of parks, cemeteries, universities and community gardens which have met the high standard needed to receive the Green Flag, Heritage or Community Award, in what is another record-breaking year for the award scheme.

This international award, now into its third decade, is a sign to the public that the space boasts the highest possible environmental standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities.

Ian Rogers, Canal & River Trust customer services and operations director, said: “We are delighted to have been awarded Green Flag status at six of our waterways. The award is a great boost for visitors, signalling that these canals are high quality public

places for people to use and enjoy - and a fitting recognition of all the hard work by our staff and volunteers.

“The Green Flag awards help to demonstrate the high standards we set across our canal network, with more volunteers helping us to care for them than ever before.”

International Green Flag Award scheme manager Paul Todd said: “We are delighted to be celebrating another record-breaking year for the Green Flag Award scheme.

“Each flag is a celebration of the thousands of staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to maintain the high standards demanded by the Green Flag Award. The success of the scheme, especially in these challenging times, demonstrates just how much parks and waterways matter to people.”

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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. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk / @CanalRiverTrust / @crtcomms

Marple Aqueduct and Marple Locks (16 lock flight)

Marple Aqueduct is the highest aqueduct in England. It carries the Peak Forest Canal 90 feet (27.4m) above the River Goyt (formerly the River Mersey). Its impressive stonework measures 105 yards (96 m) long and 8 feet (2.4m) wide, and features three graceful arches.

Designed and constructed by canal engineers Benjamin Outram and Thomas Brown, the aqueduct took five years to build and was opened to boat traffic in 1800. Two hundred years ago it was described as a ‘wonder of its age’. Over the years, it has suffered from serious structural problems at least twice but each time it has been rescued and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade One Listed structure.

The aqueduct has been transformed in the last couple of years thanks to a £2.3 million project called ‘Revealing Oldknow’s Legacy’ – a joint venture with the Mellor Archaeological Trust. A £1.5 million HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) grant and public donations have revived the legacy of leading cotton industrialist, Samuel Oldknow, by opening up three important historic sites including Marple Aqueduct. The project has involved major work to clear away unwanted vegetation from the aqueduct and the country park beneath it –revealing stunning views of the aqueduct once more.

A short distance along the Peak Forest Canal is the impressive 16 lock flight, Marple Locks, which raises the canal by 209 feet (64 m) over the course of about a mile (1.6 km).

A full list of Green Flag Award and Green Flag Community Award winners is [available here](#).

The Green Flag Awards Scheme (<http://greenflagaward.org/>) is run by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, under licence from the Department of Communities and Local Government, in

partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful, Keep Wales Tidy and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and the National Housing Federation.

Keep Britain Tidy is a leading environmental charity that cares for the environment on your doorstep. We work to eliminate littering, reduce waste and improve public space. We run programmes including Eco-Schools, the Green Flag Award for parks and green spaces and the Blue Flag/Seaside Awards for beaches. To find out more about Keep Britain Tidy, our programmes and campaigns visit www.keepbritaintidy.org.

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Keep Britain Tidy has ISDN radio facilities for interviews ISDN: 01942 322178. Please contact the press office in advance to make arrangements