



Canal &
River Trust

PRESS RELEASE

18 October 2017

CHARITY SPENDS £38MILLION TO KEEP YOUR MUCH-LOVED WATERWAYS FLOWING

- **Step inside 200-year-old empty lock chambers to see canals behind the scenes**
 - **Talk to the charity's team of dedicated experts about the vital work being undertaken**
 - **Free events with activities on offer for all the family to enjoy**

This November will see the start of a five-month-long programme of repairs to England and Wales' waterways, as the charity, Canal & River Trust, spends £38million to restore some of the nation's best loved sites.

As part of this work the charity is organising 10 free public open days across the country, offering the chance to see a part of the nation's 'hidden history' and some of our most extraordinary waterway locations as you have never done before.

The Trust's team of skilled and passionate experts, from construction supervisors, civil engineers and volunteers, to heritage advisors and apprentices, will be on hand at the open days to explain about the varied work we do and why it's important to pass this knowledge and experience on to future generations.

Excitingly, visitors to the open days will be able to look around a pop-up museum which will showcase old items from the birth of the canals and some of the weird and wonderful finds from below the waterline. There will be 'virtual hubs' where people can plug in and watch virtual reality videos of some of our more unusual and awe-inspiring locations, and a display of historic images from each area will be on display.

Richard Parry, chief executive of the Canal & River Trust, says: "Our historic waterways are still working as they were designed to 200 years ago thanks to the Canal & River Trust. We work year-round to keep them open and safe for everyone to enjoy, which requires a huge amount of planning, investment and craftsmanship as well as a wide range of knowledge and expertise. Our apprenticeship programme helps us to preserve these skills and to offer local training and employment opportunities to the next generation so these skills can continue for another 200 years and beyond.

"By opening up our work to the public we can give them a glimpse into the waterways' original 18th Century design and explain the scale of the Canal & River Trust's work to care

for them now. We believe that whatever you do life is better by water so we want to inspire more people to support us to ensure we can continue to make our waterways great places to enjoy.”

As part of its maintenance programme, the Trust will be working on over 200 different sites across the country. The new lock gates are made in the Trust’s specialist workshops at Bradley in the West Midlands and Stanley Ferry in Yorkshire.

To find out more about the Open Day programme and the events happening near you visit <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/open-days>

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For media requests, interviews, images and footage please contact:

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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](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust) / [@crtcomms](https://twitter.com/crtcomms) / [#winteropendays](https://twitter.com/winteropendays)

The Canal & River Trust carries out a year-round programme of works to maintain and repair the 2,000 miles of canals and rivers in its care so they can be enjoyed by the 33,000 boats and 10 million towpath visitors each year. Many of the biggest projects are carried out during the winter months to minimise the impact on waterway users. This year, essential maintenance will include the replacement of worn-out lock gates and repairs to aqueducts, reservoirs and tunnels.

Lock gate making and fitting is a skilled and traditional trade and one that remains essential to the waterways. Lock gates are constructed with tremendous strength as they have to control huge water pressures, take the hard usage they get from the thousands of boats which use them each year and survive for a long time underwater and at the mercy of the elements. Each lock gate is hand-crafted by a skilled team of carpenters and made from sustainably-sourced British oak. A single lock gate weighs on average 3.6 tonnes, can take up to 20 days to make and has a working life of 25-30 years.

Locks have varying numbers of gates – at the ‘upstream’ end of locks some have two gates whilst others only have one, with the same applying at the ‘downstream’ end.

Event locations and dates:

OPEN DAY LOCATION	OPEN DAY DATE
Lock 29, Banbury Lock, Oxford Canal	18 th and 19 th November 2017
Lincomb Lock 9, River Severn <i>*Virtual open Day via Facebook*</i>	13 th November 2017 (to be confirmed)
Locks 90 and 91, Deansgate, Rochdale Canal	2 nd & 3 rd December 2017
Lock 1, Derwent Mouth Lock, Trent & Mersey Mainline	2 nd & 3 rd December 2017
Johnson's Hillock, Leeds & Liverpool Canal	27 th January 2018
Lock 31, Meaford Bottom Lock, Trent & Mersey Canal	3 rd & 4 th February 2018
Lock 1, Leeds, Aire & Calder Navigation	3 rd & 4 th February
Lock 8 – Lock 16, Foxton, Grand Union Leicester Line	10 th & 11 th February
Grindley Brook, Llangollen Canal	3 rd & 4 th March 2018
Lock 18, Seend Lock, Kennet & Avon Canal	10 th & 11 th March 2018
Lock 3, Parkhead Bottom Lock, Dudley Canal	11 th March 2018

*Please note the event marked TBC is yet to have a confirmed date. Please continue to check www.canalrivertrust.org.uk for updates.