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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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4<sup>th</sup> December

### **Festive party-goers targeted in national Don't Drink and Drown campaign**

- **Canal & River Trust support Royal Life Saving Society UK which hopes to save lives this festive season**

Festive revellers across the UK are being warned to take care near water during their night out, as part of the national *Don't Drink and Drown* campaign.

Canal & River Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways across England Wales, is supporting the Royal Life Saving Society's *Don't Drink and Drown* campaign which urges people not to walk home near water after they have been drinking.

Last year 20 per cent of all adult accidental drowning victims in the UK had alcohol in their bloodstream\*.

The charity will be putting up banners supporting the campaign around the cities and towns where a river or canal runs through it.

Tony Stammers, head of health and safety, said: "Having a few festive drinks in one of the great waterside bars and pubs along the waterside is a great way to celebrate Christmas cheer. But when you're on your way home in the cold and the dark, please take extra care. If you and your friends have had a few drinks, don't walk home by water, find another route home.

"In recent weeks the temperatures have plummeted and at this time of year during Christmas party season, the combination of alcohol and the freezing water temperatures could easily prove fatal should a someone fall into the water. The Canal & River Trust is really pleased to support RLSS UK with its Don't Drink and Drown campaign and its important message – look out for your friends at the end of the night and find another route home away from water."



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Di Steer, RLSS UK CEO, said: “People tragically die each year because they’ve entered the water with alcohol in their bloodstream, either deliberately or completely by accident. Drinking near or in water can be a dangerous and deadly cocktail. Alcohol can seriously impede your ability to survive in water.

“When walking home from a night out, avoid routes that are alongside water, particularly in the darkness, and always stay with and look out for your friends.”

“We want everyone to have a great time this Christmas and our Don’t Drink and Drown campaign gives essential advice to party-goers to make sure they know how to stay safe when they’re out celebrating.”

Stay Safe this Christmas:

- Don’t walk home near water, you might fall in
- Look out for your friends, make sure they get home safely
- Don’t get in the water if you have been drinking
- Alcohol seriously affects your ability to get yourself out of trouble

Don’t Drink and Drown was launched in 2014 following a string of tragic drownings of young people. Research indicated that around a quarter of all adult drowning victims have alcohol in their bloodstream and RLSS UK were keen to prevent more tragedies by promoting the dangers in hot spot areas.

For more information about the Don’t Drink and Drown campaign, visit <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/safety-on-our-waterways/royal-life-saving-society-partnership/dont-drink-and-drown>

**ENDS**

**For further media requests, interviews or images 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.

**\*National Water Safety Forum Water Incident Database (WAID) of which RLSS UK is a member. Data is used from 2012-2016, including accidental and natural cause records only. Adults aged 18 years+. Alcohol records are suspected or confirmed cases, based upon Coroners and emergency service records, court records.**

**The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) is the drowning prevention charity.** Around 400 people drown in the UK every year and the RLSS UK aims to prevent drowning through water safety education.

Through its trading subsidiary, IQL UK, there are more than 90,000 RLSS UK Pool Lifeguards in the UK trained in the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ). Around 95 per cent of all pool lifeguards are trained by the RLSS UK.

RLSS UK awards and programmes teach a range of lifesaving skills ranging from life support (CPR) to water survival and rescue skills. Programmes include Rookie Lifeguard (for eight to 12-year-olds), Survive and Save (for 12 years+) and Save a Baby's Life (a free course aimed at parents and carers of young children).

The RLSS UK (then the Life Saving Society) was formed in 1891. In 1904, as there was great support for the organisation from the Royal Family, the society was granted permission to use the Royal title and became the Royal Life Saving Society.