



PRESS RELEASE

24 July

21 Miles: art competition for all ages, inspired by the canals and rivers of Worcestershire

This summer people in Worcestershire are being encouraged to enter an art competition inspired by the canals and rivers of the county.

The competition is part of *The Ring* arts programme, which is running throughout spring and summer in celebration of the 21-mile circle of natural and historic waterways making up the Mid-Worcestershire Ring. Artists young and not-so-young, experienced creators and beginners are being asked to visit the River Severn, Worcester & Birmingham Canal and Droitwich Canals and send in their artwork. To top it off there will be an exhibition showing selected work at Worcester's magnificent library The Hive from 8 September until 5 October.

The Mid-Worcestershire Ring is an inspiring place for artists to work, with busy, built-up areas, picturesque mooring places and peaceful, rural locations. Entries can be in photography, poetry and creative writing, drawing, painting and mixed media or film, sound and music.

In addition to the exhibition, there are also prizes on offer, including t-shirts from the Canal & River Trust - the charity that cares for the waterways - funky stationery from The Hive, limited edition copies of 'The Muck and Shovel Brigade' by Heather Wastie (a book of poems written, with archive photographs by Max Sinclair) and a top-quality Abberley tent from project sponsors, OLPRO.

Artist and poet Emily Wilkinson, who is running a blog that will showcase entries, is leading the competition and Emily is keen to help local artists get involved. She says, "I'm so excited about this project, as a mixed media artist I really enjoy approaching ideas through a wide range of creative possibilities. Who knows, taking part in this competition could inspire a whole new direction for those who are interested in the arts and like getting out and about."

You can join Emily for a walk around part of The Ring on Thursday 26 July, setting off from The Commandery Cafe (WR1 2HU) at 10.30am, to find some inspiration.

The Ring is being run as part of the Canal & River Trust's Arts on the Waterways programme. Executive producer, Tim Eastop, says: "Water and nature have long been a catalyst for the arts and the waterways making up the Mid-Worcestershire Ring are no exception. They are tranquil, beautiful places to escape the hectic pace of twenty-first century life. They are also teeming with life, from wild flowers to unusual water-loving birds. There is always something different to be inspired by on every visit and I encourage any artist to get involved in this great

Canal & River Trust, Toll House, Delamere Terrace, London, W2 6ND

T: 0203 3204 4514 E: press.office@canalrivertrust.org.uk W: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk Twitter: [@CanalRiverTrust](https://twitter.com/CanalRiverTrust)

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competition. And even if you aren't an artist, take a trip to your local canal or river, and see what these amazing spaces can do for you."

To submit entries follow @theringworcs on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and send your work using the hashtag #TheRing21 or email thering21miles@gmail.com full details are here <https://thering21miles.wordpress.com/submit/>

The Ring began in March and runs until 2 September 2018. The project has commissioned seven professional artists and performers to create new work around Worcester and Droitwich:

- Poet **Heather Wastie** wrote a book of poems with photos from Max Sinclair's archive of the canal restoration (the e-book can be viewed on The Ring's website)
- **Rich White** created a sculptural installation that can be seen at Diglis Island until September
- **Katy Beinart** made a Salt Pavilion that journeyed by barge to Droitwich (on show at Droitwich Heritage Centre until September)
- a celebration of culture took place in Worcester, with a 10-day festival of arts and music featuring the sequined **Weorgoran Pavilion** designed by **NEON** and a soundscape by **Dave Crowe**
- an unusual arts performance in a specially designed artwork/costume by **Emily Speed** will take place on the 11th August
- And **Lucy McLauchlan** will paint a spectacular mural at Diglis Oil Basin in September.
- There are lots of special events too, with art walks, workshops and Diglis Island Visits to get involved with, more details online at www.theringart.org.uk.

Navigable by boat or on foot over a weekend, the Mid-Worcestershire Ring is a unique tourist destination. *The Ring's* artists have uncovered unusual and interesting stories of the place, people and natural environment and are producing ambitious and dynamic artworks and live events that encourage visitors and local people to explore and enjoy this loop of waterways in south Worcestershire.

The Ring is part of the Canal & River Trust's Arts on the Waterways programme and is supported by Arts Council England and other partners. For more information visit canalrivertrust.org.uk

Ends

Notes to editors

For more media information contact joe.coggins@canalrivertrust.org.uk 020 3204 4410

The Ring has been developed with the support of a range of partners, led by the Canal & River Trust, the charity that looks after 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales. It has also become a leading project of the Worcestershire Arts Strategy '1000 Days'. The project partners include: Arts Council England, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Arts Partnership, Wychavon District Council, Worcester City Council, Meadow Arts, Visit Worcestershire, South Wales and Severn Waterways Partnership, For Droitwich Spa, Worcester, Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society, University of Worcester, Severn Arts, Droitwich Arts Network, Sustrans, Museums Worcestershire, New Art West Midlands, Droitwich Waterways Trust and

Museum of Royal Worcester. Web: www.theringart.org.uk Facebook: @TheRingWorcs Twitter: @TheRingWorcs Instagram: TheRingWorcs

The Canal & River Trust is proud to support *The Ring* as part of the charity's *Arts on the Waterways* programme, which is supported through Arts Council England and Arts Council Wales. It provides artists with time and space along the waterways where they can slow down, research and make ambitious new work responding to important social, environmental and heritage questions.

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a real difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to transform their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms

Joe Coggins
National Press Officer

T 0203 204 4410 **M** 07827 357655
Canal & River Trust, Toll House, Delamere Terrace, London, W2 6ND
Twitter: @CRTComms