

PRESS RELEASE

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MONTGOMERY CANAL TOURING PHOTO EXHIBITION LAUNCHES IN WELSHPOOL

Montgomery Canal's beautiful waterway scenery and impressive historic structures provide the inspiration for a new touring photographic exhibition which launches at Welshpool's Powysland Museum on Friday 5 October.

Curated by Glandŵr Cymru, the Canal & River Trust charity in Wales, as part of a £4 million Montgomery Canal restoration project, the exhibition features the work of dozens of community photographers, as well as fascinating black and white archive pictures of the Welshpool Big Dig of 1969.

The Trust, which cares for the Montgomery Canal and 2,000 miles of waterways, is currently working on a major project to restore a section of the Montgomery on the Shropshire/Welsh border, which is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

At the launch event, 3pm – 7pm, the Trust's Montgomery Canal community development officer Sylvia Edwards will be on hand to provide the latest updates to visitors about the project and the ground-breaking work to create new nature reserve ponds next to Aston Locks.

Sylvia said: "This exhibition is a great opportunity to view different aspects of the Montgomery Canal through the eyes of people of all ages.

"The canal is currently going through a fascinating period of change and development and we would be delighted to hear what people think. We first hosted a community photographic exhibition last year and the feedback was so positive that we're delighted to return with an even bigger collection this autumn."

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

The canal restoration project is being funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Shropshire Wildlife Trust's Freshwater First ERDF Programme, supported by the Montgomery Canal Partnership, and delivered by the Canal & River Trust. Only around half of the canal is currently navigable but, with the help of the Shropshire Union Canal Society and other volunteers, this latest major phase should be completed by 2020.

Work is progressing well on upgrading nearly five miles of towpath, restoring 1¼ miles of the canal to navigation from Maesbury to Crickheath and creating a dedicated turning point for narrowboats, known as a 'winding hole'. This will enable boats to return to the area for the first time since 1936 when the canal was closed.

The Montgomery Canal photographic exhibition will be at Powysland Museum, Canal Wharf, Welshpool, until mid-December before it goes on tour. Opening hours are weekdays: 11am-1pm & 2pm-5pm; Saturday 11am-2pm.

For more information about the Montgomery Canal, becoming a Friend of the Canal & River Trust or supporting canal restoration, go online at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk or phone 0303 040 4040.

If you would like to support the wider restoration effort of the Montgomery Canal, go to <http://restorethemontgomerycanal.uk/>

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Notes to Editors

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

The Montgomery Canal Partnership members include; Canal and River Trust, Montgomery Waterway Restoration Trust, Powys County Council, Shropshire Council, Natural Resources Wales, Natural England, Historic England, Cadw, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, Environment Agency England, Shropshire Union Canal Society, Inland Waterways Association, Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Severn Rivers Trust. The Partnership is working to restore the canal under the terms of the 2005 Conservation Management Strategy.

The Montgomery Canal has already been restored in England from Lower Frankton to Gronwen Bridge, near Maesbury (7 miles). In Wales, about 12 miles have been restored in the Welshpool area. So 19 of the canal's 35 miles are already fully usable. The areas to be restored are the 7.5 miles from Gronwen to Arddleen (the northern end of the navigable Welshpool section) and the 8.5 miles from Refail (the southern end of the Welshpool section) to Newtown, Powys. Unlike many other canal restoration projects, with the Montgomery canal, it is all in single ownership; water supply is secure; and all the locks have already been restored (in all cases, except for the two miles at the Newtown end). A restoration fund has been established and is currently focused on raising £300k to rebuild Schoolhouse Bridge, the last lowered bridge in England. Donations can be made by visiting www.restorethemontgomerycanal.uk.

Works covered by the £4m scheme include creating extensive new nature reserves in recognition of the SSSI status of part of the canal in England; relining the canal bed to Crickheath. In Wales, the work will include restoring 12 historic structures; four areas of dredging to improve the flow of the water; towpath works and community involvement.