

# PRESS RELEASE

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5 November 2019

## TAKE A 'BEHIND THE SCENES' TOUR OF YOUR LOCAL CANAL

This winter the Canal & River Trust is hosting a series of free winter open days to showcase the work and attention that goes into keeping the nation's network of canals and rivers open and available for local people to use and enjoy.

The Trust, the waterways and wellbeing charity that looks after 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England and Wales, carries out much of its heavy maintenance at this time of year to keep disruption to boaters and towpath visitors to a minimum.

Between now and the arrival of spring the Trust is draining stretches of canal as it replaces 118 lock gate leaves and carries out important repairs and inspections to 200-year-old canal structures including Scheduled Ancient Monuments and a World Heritage Site. The public is being given 'behind the scenes' access at ten different sites.

The open days will give visitors access into drained lock chambers on the Grand Union Canal, River Soar and Trent & Mersey Canal, whilst repairs to the 'Cathedral of the Canals' – Anderton Boat Lift – and the draining for inspection of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct both provide an amazing opportunity to get a rarely-seen view of two of the 'wonders of the waterways'. A number of the events, including at Sharpness Dock where the canal network connects with the sea, will highlight the Trust's #plasticchallenge which invites people to get involved in helping to stop the flow of plastic litter into the world's oceans.

Richard Parry, chief executive of the Canal & River Trust, comments: "Millions of people visit our canals and rivers each year. They are places to relax and take time out, they are places for leisure, boating, and recreation and are often places in our towns and cities to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

"But many people may not realise the work and attention that our charity and our volunteers put into caring for the waterways or indeed how getting involved, simply by visiting their local canal, can improve their health and wellbeing.

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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

“We look forward to seeing lots of new faces as well as many old friends at this winter’s open days.”

Because the open days are often linked to winter construction and maintenance work, many of the precise dates will be confirmed on the Canal & River Trust website nearer the time. The open days are:

| Date  | Location   | What’s on offer   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>17 November<br/>11am to 4pm*</p> <p>*Event tbc as the River Soar is currently in flood</p> | <p>Belgrave Lock,<br/>River Soar,<br/>Leicester</p>          | <p>The Trust is carrying out maintenance at North, Belgrave and Birstall locks in Leicester.</p> <p>At Belgrave Lock visitors will be able to descend into the drained lock chamber – a unique opportunity to see below the waterline.</p> <p>The Trust will be carrying out work on the solid oak gates, ensuring they provide a good seal when closed to help preserve water next summer.</p> |
| <p>19 January<br/>11am to 3pm</p>   | <p>Dowley Gap, Leeds &amp; Liverpool Canal, nr Bingley</p>   | <p>The Trust is replacing a set of lock gates at this staircase lock flight.</p> <p>A walkway over the drained flight will provide a unique view down the staircase.</p> <p>Visitors will be able to see both the new and old hand-crafted lock gates, while a stonemason will be showcasing this heritage skill.</p>   |
| <p>January</p>  | <p>Stanley Locks, Leeds &amp; Liverpool Canal, Liverpool</p> | <p>The Trust is hosting a heritage tour of the Stanley Lock Flight and Collingwood Dock. This should coincide with work to replace fenders on the gates at the top lock – giving a flavour of the work that goes into keeping the canal open and available for people to use.</p>   |
| <p>January/February/ March</p>  | <p>Toddbrook Reservoir, Whaley Bridge</p>                    | <p>Further public open days will showcase works progressing on site – an important part of keeping residents of Whaley Bridge up to date.</p>   |
| <p>1 &amp; 2 February (tbc)</p>   | <p>Bedford Street Locks, Trent &amp; Mersey Canal, Stoke</p> | <p>This staircase flight of locks will be drained with visitors able to access the bottom of the lock where repairs are being undertaken at locks 1 and 2.</p> <p>The Trust is replacing the top end gate and relining two other sets of gates to help save water by reducing leakage through the flight.</p>   |

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|                   |   | In addition, the Trust will be showcasing repairs to the lock's 200-year old brickwork.   |
| Early February    | Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Llangollen Canal, nr Wrexham         | The Trust is draining the aqueduct at this World Heritage Site as part of an important ten-yearly inspection.<br><br>We are hoping to allow people to walk in the aqueduct's drained trough which spans the Dee Valley below. Trust experts will be on hand to talk about the history and maintenance of the aqueduct and canal.  |
| February to March | Foxton Locks, Grand Union Leicester Line, Market Harborough | The Trust is hosting a programme of weekend events and activities (guided walks, talks etc) over the course of the maintenance works. In addition, a viewing platform in one of the drained locks will provide a unique view of the lock flight.  |
| Early February    | Anderton Boat Lift, River Weaver, Cheshire                  | Visitors will get a 'behind the scenes' look at the maintenance that goes into keeping the 'Cathedral of the Canals' in good working order.   |
| March             | Sharpness Dock, Gloucester & Sharpness Canal                | This showcase of Sharpness will include tours of the site and an insight into how the Trust operates the Docks.<br><br>The National Waterways Museum Gloucester will help illustrate the history of the docks whilst the Trust's #plasticschallenge will invite people to help tackle the issue of plastic pollution flowing from inland canals and rivers into the world's oceans. |
| 16 May            | Diglis, River Severn, Worcester                             | As part of a celebration of World Fish Migration Day, the Trust's partnership project <i>Unlocking the Severn</i> , which will ensure the return of migratory fish to the River Severn, will provide tours showcasing the construction of an important new fish pass at Diglis.   |

For more information about the Canal & River Trust, including how to volunteer and donate, or to see further details about the open days, visit: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/events/open-days](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/events/open-days)

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