

PRESS RELEASE

13 December 2019

CANAL & RIVER TRUST UPDATES ON £43.6 MILLION WINTER WORKS PROGRAMME

The Canal & River Trust, the national waterways and wellbeing charity, is carrying out a £43.6 million programme of repairs on waterways across England & Wales this winter. Ahead of Christmas, the charity is providing an update on the first six weeks of works and what's coming up in the new year.

Of the 118 hand-crafted lock gate leaves due to be replaced, over 100 have been made and about half are now on site either having been fitted or about to be put in place. The Trust's teams have completed 14 of the published winter improvement works with another 36 due to be finished by the Christmas break. A further 92 repair and refurbishment projects will be completed in the new year.

In terms of major projects that the Trust is carrying out, work has been completed to replace gate cylinders on the Tees Barrage. On the Lancaster Canal, the Lune Embankment is being relined, while on the Macclesfield Canal similar work is being carried out at Palmerston Street Embankment. At Hurleston on the Llangollen Canal, where movement in the lock walls has restricted passage through the lock, the Trust is carrying out work to rebuild the affected wall, halt movement, and increase the width of the lock chamber. Work is ongoing at Winterburn Reservoir, and at Blackbrook Junction Bridge in the West Midlands.

In the New Year the charity has scheduled a programme of works that includes repairs to mechanical swing and lift bridges, embankment relining, and culvert repairs, amongst others. Two pumping stations are also on the list for special attention. Bowyer Street Pumping Station, a key water supply to the Grand Union Canal, will see works to upgrade and replace life-expired pumps. On the Wendover Arm, a similar project at Tringford Pumping Station will replace the pumps, pipes, electrics, and gantry.

Dredging has been completed on the Macclesfield Canal and on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, where the Trust has removed 27,000 tons of contaminated sediment at Titford Pools. Further dredging, bank protection and tree works are planned in the New Year. On the

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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Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal at Pontymoile, 4km of dredging has been completed, with a further 2.2km planned in the New Year.

Spot dredging on the Llangollen Canal is ongoing with around 1700 cubic metres of silt removed from the 2km length between Frankton Junction and New Marton Locks, with some dredgings reused to repair offside erosion. The work will continue into the new year, along with reactive spot dredging across the country and projects at Sharpness Dock, Ribble Link, Liverpool Dock approaches, and on the Upper & Lower Peak Forest and Chesterfield canals.

The Trust is also offering people the chance to see ‘behind the scenes’ at a number of sites. The open days will give visitors access into drained lock chambers on the Grand Union Canal and Trent & Mersey Canal, whilst repairs to the ‘Cathedral of the Canals’ – Anderton Boat Lift provides an amazing opportunity to get a rarely-seen view of this ‘wonder of the waterways’. A number of the events, including on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, will highlight the Trust’s #plasticschallenge which invites people to get involved in helping to stop the flow of plastic litter into the world’s oceans. Find out more about the open days here:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/events/open-days>

Richard Parry, chief executive of the Canal & River Trust, comments: “Research tells us that time spent by the water can help us all to feel happier and healthier, so this programme of works is about far more than bricks and mortar. By investing over the winter months we’ll not only be protecting the historic fabric of the region’s waterways and making sure that they’re working well for boaters, but we’ll also be ensuring that local communities have safe, open waterways to enjoy.”

“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. Our winter open days are a chance for people to come along and find out more, and we look forward to seeing lots of new faces as well as many old friends at the events.”

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

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For further media requests please contact:

Fran Read, Canal & River Trust

m 07796 610 427 e fran.read@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Notes to editors:

Winter open day locations:

Date	Location	What's on offer
19 January 11am to 3pm	Dowley Gap, Leeds & Liverpool Canal, nr Bingley	<p>The Trust is replacing a set of lock gates at this staircase lock flight. 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>Engineers and the construction team will show how lock gates are replaced and visitors can even have a go at stone masonry by helping to build a miniature bridge.</p> <p>The Trust's education team will have fun family activities and visitors can have a trip around various canals via virtual reality headsets.</p> <p>Enjoy a crisp walk down the towpath and grab a free hot chocolate.</p>
January/February/ March	Todd Brook Reservoir, Whaley Bridge	Further public open days will showcase works progressing on site – an important part of keeping residents of Whaley Bridge up to date.
1 & 2 February 10am to 3.30pm	Bedford Street Locks, Trent & Mersey Canal, Stoke	<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> <p>In addition, the Trust will be showcasing repairs to the lock's 200-year old brickwork.</p>
Early February – maybe 8 th & 9 th	Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Llangollen Canal, nr Wrexham	<p>The Trust is draining the aqueduct at this World Heritage Site as part of an important ten-yearly inspection.</p> <p>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.</p>
8 th & 9 th February 10am to 3pm	Anderton Boat Lift, River Weaver, Cheshire	<p>Visitors will get a 'behind the scenes' look at the maintenance that goes into keeping the 'Cathedral of the Canals' in good working order.</p> <p>There will be guided tours to the very top of the lift and visitors will have a chance to gain access into the dry well.</p> <p>There will be activities for children and talks about the works taking place (accompanied by CCTV footage) for those unable to gain access into the dry well.</p> <p>Access to Anderton visitor centre and café will be as usual.</p>
29 February	Stanley Locks, Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Liverpool	<p>The Trust is hosting a heritage tour of the Stanley Lock Flight with a heritage walk between Top Lock and Stanley Dock.</p> <p>We are hoping to offer boat trips between Bottom Lock and Princes Lock. The Trust's Lets Fish! programme will offer visitors the chance to try angling for free.</p>
February and March	Foxton Locks, Grand Union Leicester Line, Market Harborough	<p>At the famous Foxton Locks we'll be undertaking major works to several locks along the flight including gate replacements and brickwork and ladder repairs.</p> <p>The Trust is hosting a programme of weekend events and activities (guided walks, talks etc) over the course of the maintenance works. Visitors will also have the opportunity to step down into one of the locks on a specially-installed staircase.</p> <p>Events will run at weekends in February and March with further details confirmed on the Trust website.</p>

March	Gloucester & Sharpness Canal	<p>This spring we will be hosting a programme of weekend events and activities along the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal.</p> <p>There will be guided tours and talks at some of our key sites including Sharpness Docks and Saul Junction, as well as family activities at Gloucester Docks.</p> <p>Confirmed dates and times to follow.</p>
16 May	Diglis, River Severn, Worcester	<p>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.</p>