



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water

# Arts on the waterways

Summer/Autumn 2018 Newsletter

The Canal & River Trust's *Arts on the Waterways* programme continues to flourish by providing artists with time and space along waterways where they can slow down, research and make ambitious new work, responding to important social, environmental and heritage issues. At the same time, the programme supports the Trust's mission for living waterways to transform places and enrich lives. The arts are helping to change public attitudes to canals and rivers by engaging a greater diversity of people who live near them.

We've had a wonderful spring and summer launching the development phase of *Hinterlands* that has, with the generous support of Arts Council England and the Arts Council of Wales, created new connections among local people within deprived stretches of canal across England and Wales. A proliferation of artist-led engagement events took place in canal and community settings – varying from sonic art to puppet-making, game show style events to drone adventure photography, floating markets to absurd theatre, cartography to clay making, graffiti to Rangoli – during the run-up to our main *Hinterlands* programme over the next two summers.

Through the fruitful partnership with The Poetry Society, this year's Canal Laureate, Nancy Campbell, has continued to delight both poetry and canal audiences with her fascinating blogs and poems inspired by her escapades on the waterways in pursuit of wellbeing by water. Her work reflects a deep concern for environmental conservation through her 'on- the- water' activities.

*The Ring* project is now in full swing with excellent arts events and research activities happening at key points on the canals of Worcestershire. Please scroll down to find out more about the many cool events you can attend during the rest of this long, hot summer.



Everyday myths  
Image courtesy of The Bear Project

## Hinterlands: North East and Yorkshire

The Trust collaborated with The Bear Project on inter-generational story-swapping workshops, canal walks and an exhibition, targeted at 13–18 olds and the wider local community along the Sheffield & Tinsley canal, capturing and intertwining both real and imagined stories about the canal. Established artist-filmmaker, Jessica Brillhart and Sheffield Doc Festival aim to create innovative AV/VR arts experiences during the main phase of Hinterlands, for both local and international audiences. A Creative Lab skills partnership with Stockton International Riverside Festival is underway to explore environmental quality questions at the Tees Barrage. Tester creative skills events included a very popular drone adventure photography workshops, led by artist-filmmaker Michael Lazenby.

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Alex Rubes mural  
Image courtesy Graffwerk

## Hinterlands: East Midlands

The focus for *Hinterlands* along the Grand Union Canal in Leicester is environmental quality and the impact of litter on the canal in congested urban spaces. Outdoor Pursuit Centre and Graffwerk ran a litter picking event and commissioned a new mural/graffiti work on their canoe shed, led by artist Alex Rubes. For the Leicester's Riverside Festival, the African Caribbean Centre created new installations and paintings with communities led-by local artist, Tom Cleaver; Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre created a ragoli art work on site and young people from the New Park Adventure Playground collaborated to make a large-scale sculpture for prominent display. A series of foraging activities took place with conservation volunteers and artist Darrien O'Brien led fascinating sonic nature walks along the canal.

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Community Connect Foundation,  
Sarah Taylor Silverwood  
Image: Shabena Alim

## Hinterlands: West Midlands

Canal and arts engagement are being placed at the heart of local regeneration and housing plans with partners, Sandwell Council and Birmingham City Council Big City Plan, to promote wellbeing and a renewed sense of local identity in Smethwick and Sandwell on New Mainline and Dudley Canal. Artists, Mark Essen and Sarah Taylor Silverwood, have led events with Community Connect Foundation, Brasshouse Lane Community Centre, Galton Valley School and Age UK that explore local craft and heritage sites – with a long-term vision to re-defining the area as a centre of making. We are in conversation with local arts partner, Black Country Touring regarding co-productions along the waterways in 2019 and 2020.

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## Hinterlands: London

Students from local primary and secondary schools in Enfield along the River Lea and Lee Navigation have been inspired to adopt stretches of canal as their gallery or theatre space through participation in artist-led canal experiences and the creation of art works from the natural materials found there. The People Speak took their game-show style talkoake to Palace Gardens shopping centre and Forty Hall village fete to find out what the canal means to the people of Enfield. Local residents explored the themes of habitat inspired by the waterways, through painting, puppet-making, spoken word and performance workshops led by artists, Joshua Bilton and Shirley Mason. A *Hinterlands* partnership is developing with the local Council who are keen to support creative inventions that help to address critical social issues within the canal corridor.

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The People Speak, Palace Gardens Shopping Centre, Enfield  
Image: Clare Moloney

## Hinterlands: Wales

Artists in the Pontymoile Basin and the lower end of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal near Pontypool are exploring the role of the canal and community food initiatives in promoting wellbeing, mental health and connectivity in Torfaen, an area of relative deprivation for Wales. Events include musical composition workshops for 11–15 year olds (Torfaen Youth Service) and environmental sonic workshops with artist Steffan Caddick and Griffithstown Junior School. Two artists undertook mini-residencies – Ella Gibbs in a Torfaen allotment created a canal floating market and Rebecca Chesney worked with canal archives in Pontypool Museum. The renowned performance artists, Mr & Mrs Clark, consulted local people to compile canal chronicles that informed a comic/absurd theatrical performance at Party in the Park, Pontypool on 14 July.

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The Canal Chronicles  
Image artists: Mr & Mrs Clark

Five talented freelance creative producers, Clare Moloney, Melissa Appleton, Tony Guillan, Ian Sergeant and Jenine McGaughran, worked across the Trust's regions to collaborate with local communities and artists to help transform these environments. By developing local networks and partnerships they devised innovative proposals for high-impact site-sensitive and socially engaged *Hinterlands* arts programmes to take place during 2019–20. You can explore all the events to date via [Facebook](#) and follow the local Twitter conversations @HinterlandsLON, @HinterlandsNEY, @HinterlandsWAL and @HinterlandsWM and @CRTEastMidlads.



Shelley Eva Haden performing  
at Woergoran Pavilion  
Image: David Broadbent photography

## The Ring

The month of June was a particularly exciting one for [The Ring](#) project and the city of Worcester. South Quay was home to The Ring's sequin-laden Woergoran Pavilion for a ten-day festival of music, poetry, dance, theatre, performance and history celebrating the amazingly diverse talent the region offers. From a set by Ledbury-born international beatboxer Dave Crowe, to drumming workshops, yoga classes and a takeover from the [Clik Clik Collective](#), there was something for everyone.

The Ring recently launched *21 Miles* – an art competition open to all with a range of fantastic prizes for the winners. The public are invited to send in drawings, writing, photography, video or anything else made in response to the 21-mile of Mid-Worcestershire circle of waterways until the deadline of 2 September. [Full submission details are here](#). Curator, Emily Wilkinson, will be creating her own responses and she will be adding both her and public entries to the [21 Miles blog](#).

The artist Emily Speed is collaborating with the Museum of Royal Worcester to present an intriguing interactive performance. Join her for a special performance on 11 August, 1.30-4pm along a route connecting the Museum of Royal Worcester and Worcester & Birmingham Canal. Part of the performer's journey will take place on working boat 'Wanderer'. A film of the performance made on the day will be exhibited alongside the costume in [The Precious Clay](#), a major exhibition by Meadow Arts at the museum from September 2018 to March 2019.

There is still time to take the opportunity to view *Occupation* up close and make your own discovery of the secrets of Diglis Island, guided by resident artist, Rich White. Just a short walk from Worcester City centre, the island lies at the junction of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal and the River Severn. You can visit the final open days on 30 August when there will be three tours at 11am, 1pm and 2.30pm

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## Poet Paddle: a hundred mile trip

In June our 'wonder woman' (Marie Claire magazine) Canal Laureate, Nancy Campbell, blogged about the impact of plastic on the canal environment after participating in litter pick activities with Moo Canoes and Barge Fiodra on the Lea Navigation. She also experienced the narrow mile-long Islington tunnel deep beneath one of the busiest road networks in London; another canal experience that is inspiring a new poem.

This centrepiece of Nancy's summer is culminating with a week long, 100 mile kayak trip along the new [Desmond Family Canoe Trail](#), which spans over 160 miles from Liverpool to Goole along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. After setting out from Liverpool on 18 July her journey took her to stops in Aintree, Parbold, Wigan, Blackburn and the locks and swing bridges in between, until her arrival in Leeds on 25 July for a celebratory reading. Nancy's writings, observations and upcoming events are published on [Waterlines](#), the Canal Laureate's website, and you can follow her adventures via Twitter [@CanalPoetry](#).

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Islington Tunnel  
Image Nancy Campbell

## 'Practice Purpose Place' Symposium

Canal & River Trust were pleased to be part of a key symposium on 28 June attended by 90 people. Led by the National Trust's Trust New Art team, the symposium was hosted by Exeter University with the support of Arts Council England. Other partners, including the Churches Conservation Trust and Forestry Commission, shared experiences and challenges of contemporary art programming in heritage and environmental sites across the country.

The day was enriched by contributions from non-arts disciplines. Dr Beverly Hawkins from Exeter University described what arts and community organisations might learn from business schools and progressive leadership models focussed on social purpose to shape their futures.

Other speakers included Chrissie Tiller, author of the recent Creative People & Places report 'Power Up', who emphasised the importance of landscape to our sense of cultural identity and addressed access issues. Laurie Peak powerfully demonstrated how Super Slow Way had become a key agent of social change in the the deprived wards along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. Katherine Clarke of MUF spoke about the challenges for artists working in contested public spaces for commissioners who find speculative processes challenging.

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Practice, Place, Purpose  
(Crossings Lunch)  
Image: benjaminjborley



Burnley Canal Festival  
Image courtesy of Huckleberry Films

## Super Slow Way: Burnley Canal Festival 2018

The Burnley Canal Festival returns in August, when this dynamic celebration of the town's peerless canal heritage will occupy its regular slot on Bank Holiday weekend. Super Slow Way's free family event runs over Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 August and is co-produced with Mid Pennine Arts and Deco Publique in collaboration with the volunteers of the Festival Committee representing local communities.

All the Festival ingredients return this year, with lots of opportunities to get involved with arts and crafts workshops, plus music, performances, street food, stalls, canoe taster sessions, narrowboats and more. Once again, the Towpath Explorers will devise a mystery quest, to encourage all the family to explore some of Burnley's special canal side places. Festival entry and most activities will be free. Look out for regular updates on the website and [Facebook](#) page.

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Greenham Women Steph  
and Penny (1985)  
Image courtesy Ming De Nasty

## Slow Boat: Bring Your Own Vinyl night (Ming De Nasty)

The Trust is pleased to support the latest phase of Ikon Gallery's Slow Boat programme, Looping the Loop. A converted narrow boat, Slow Boat is a unique floating space for local communities and artists to make and experience art in a stimulating and creative environment. *Slow Boat* is curated by Ikon's Learning Team with members of Ikon Youth Programme (IYP).

Slow Boat's residency programme is an opportunity for artists to explore ways of working with new audiences along the Birmingham, Sandwell and Ladywood canals. During summer 2018 artist Ming De Nasty, who has been a key part of the Birmingham photographic scene since the 1980s will be hosting an onboard 'meet the artist' night at the beginning of her journey.

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