



Canal &  
River Trust

Making life better by water

Summer 2021 Newsletter

# Arts & Culture on the Waterways



Inside:

Connecting communities

A National Street Art Trail

Coventry Canal transformed

Into the Hinterlands

Flow Photo exhibition

Plus: • Super Slow Way • The Line • WetLab

[canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk)



The Hatchling by Joanna Rajkowska at Cody Dock, Bow Creek in east London part of The Line. Photo credit: Vassilis Skopelitis

## Connecting communities

Most of our 2020 Arts & Culture on the Waterways events were cancelled due to the pandemic restrictions, but our canals still managed to offer a vital source of creative inspiration and wellbeing for many people up and down the country.

During the lockdowns we continued to encourage people to engage creatively with our beautiful waterways, both at home and along the (socially-distanced) towpath. For example, we continued to support The Line, a wonderful public art walk alongside the Lee Navigation in east London, that allowed people to benefit from spending time by water in urban areas.



Ian McMillan

### Words and street art

In another lockdown project in 2020 hundreds shared their creative skills for our Words on the Waterways writing competition. The winning entry by Will Richards was chosen by acclaimed writer, poet and presenter of BBC Radio Three's *The Verb*, Ian McMillan.

We also managed to transform unloved stretches of towpath with brand new artworks on canal-side walls by talented urban artists – part of our growing national street art trail.

## New wave of arts & culture connect communities along waterways as restrictions lift

### Covid-safe arts

This year, as restriction lift, a wonderful wave of outdoor arts on the waterways is with us. Many are taking part in covid-safe arts on the waterways activities, making life better by water. The programme is underpinned by an agreement (MoU) with Arts Council England that places innovative co-creation and wellbeing at its heart. Key partnership principles underpin the new agreement that will lead to more artists connecting local communities to their local canals, a focus on areas facing social and economic hardship and reductions in the carbon footprint of projects.

### Extraordinary events

We're particularly delighted to be a key partner with the Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 with some extraordinary events and initiatives this summer along the Coventry Canal and at the canal basin in the city. Elsewhere, people will experience beautiful street art alongside canals in Sefton, Tottenham and Walsall and there will be a family friendly arts-led Burnley Canal Festival in August, subject to local covid restrictions. Our Hinterlands programme will deliver a series of unique, participatory arts activities in Sheffield, Enfield and Tottenham and new audio works by women artists are being produced, curated by the brilliant Idle Women group.



Small Bells Ring. Images by Charles Emerson

## Coventry Canal transformed: a partnership with Coventry UK City of Culture 2021

The Trust's collaboration with the city of culture has led to a series of superb creative engagements on the Coventry Canal this summer.

TAKING PLACE IN



Our Community Roots team has prepared the towpath and local people for some great projects, already sparking a huge increase in visitor footfall. *Small Bells Ring* is a beautiful story-telling vessel designed by Studio Morison, commissioned by Super Slow Way and the City of Culture. This amazing floating short-story library will inspire hundreds of young people in Coventry as artists and writers collaborate with local communities.

*CastAway* is a wonderful aerial show about crucial environmental

issues devised by Highly Sprung featuring a unique, fully gyroscopic flying machine; the performance is part of a year-long collaboration with the Trust.

A programme called *Random String: The Canal Network(ed)* devised and led by Ludic Rooms will present outdoor and online performances, workshops, installation and experiments to help people explore water and waterways. Coventry's iconic Daimler factory has been transformed into a new Creation Centre for Coventry, right next to

the canal. The new Daimler Powerhouse will launch in August this year and will be dedicated to producing outdoor and site-specific work at the intersection of art, engineering, environmental, educational and social change. We're delighted that so many people will be attracted to the Coventry Canal through these amazing collaborations.

Further details can be found on the Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 website at <https://coventry2021.co.uk/what-s-on/>

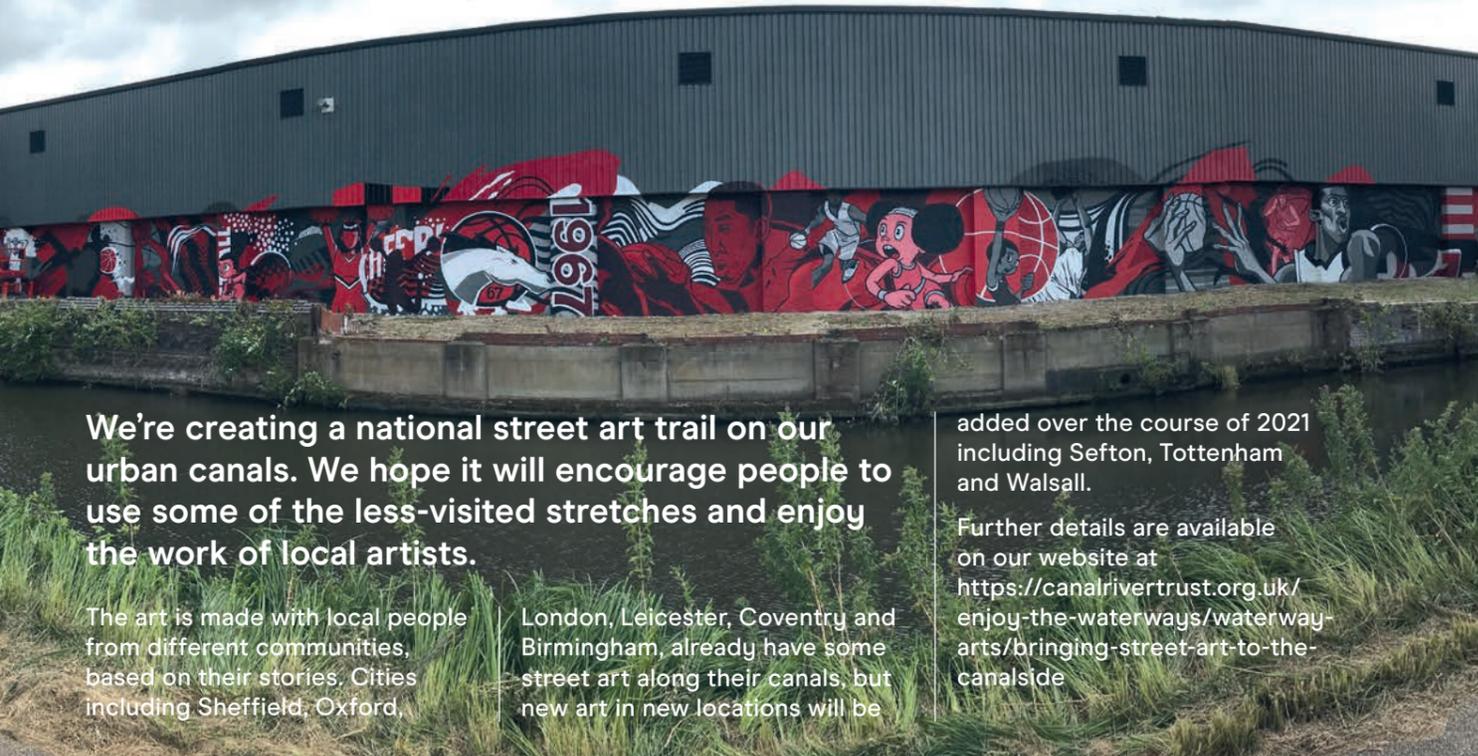


Castaway rehearsal 2020, by Highly Sprung

Daimler Powerhouse visioned by Imagineer Productions, Coventry



# Street Art to the canalside: A National Street Art Trail



We're creating a national street art trail on our urban canals. We hope it will encourage people to use some of the less-visited stretches and enjoy the work of local artists.

The art is made with local people from different communities, based on their stories. Cities including Sheffield, Oxford,

London, Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham, already have some street art along their canals, but new art in new locations will be

added over the course of 2021 including Sefton, Tottenham and Walsall.

Further details are available on our website at <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/waterway-arts/bringing-street-art-to-the-canalside>

Canal street art for Morningside in Leicester, part of the Trust's National Street Art Trail



Canal Clinic, a floating lab by public works and Assembly

## WetLab on dry ground

Through June this summer an inspiring floating laboratory created by public works and Assembly, used the canal network as site as well as subject.

During three days at the National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port, artists highlighted systems of care and culture in and around canals and explored the impact of climate change and pollution on our waterways. The project celebrated the networks that exist in the local area from the Trust's teams that care for the old and delicate vessels at the museum to the ecologists that encourage resilient local biodiversity around the canal-banks.

The lab brought together artists, architects, scientists, engineers, technologists and cooks with local people to envisage potential future uses for the canal.

Wetlab was commissioned by Abandon Normal Devices and Super Slow Way and delivered in partnership with the Canal & River Trust and Wigan Council. Supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

4 June - 10 August 2021



Jonathan Goldberg, Canal & River Trust Photographer in Residence

Woman texting on Regent's Canal, by Jonathan Goldberg, Canal & River Trust Photographer in Residence

Enjoy a unique exhibition at National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port this summer.

## Going with the flow

Following the Trust's 'Flow Photo' Competition in partnership with Future Water and Parker Harris, Jonathan Goldberg was appointed as the 2019 Canal & River Trust Photographer in Residence.

The selection panel agreed that his highly individual, idiosyncratic angle on people engaging with water would lead to a brilliant portfolio. His collection of new photographs focused on human interactions with

the waterways and the therapeutic and wellbeing rewards they offer.

We are delighted to showcase the results of Jonathan's residency in this unique exhibition.





Rebecca Chesney planting commission, images by Vaida Barzdaite



## Into the Hinterlands with nature and the arts

Hinterlands is a national programme, led by the Canal & River Trust and based on the success of the Super Slow Way programme in in our North West region.

The socially engaged arts projects are funded by Arts Council England and the Arts Council of Wales and led by experienced creative producers. Although interrupted by the pandemic, artists are re-grouping and co-creating projects in Pontymoile in South Wales, Sheffield and Enfield and Tottenham in London.

In the midst of the 2020 lockdowns, artist Rebecca Chesney managed to develop a creative monitoring kit for local residents to observe plant and insect species and also to note other qualities such as colour and mood/wellbeing. This culminated in a spring 2021 planting commission alongside half a mile of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal's near Pontymoile Basin. Grass cutting was reduced and Rebecca's team planted three beautiful native species – yellow flag iris, purple-loosestrife and meadow sweet.



Buff-tailed bumblebee at Pontymoile Basin



Purple loosestrife

## Super Slow Way

Super Slow Way is a leading arts and cultural initiative backed by the Canal & River Trust.

It was set up in partnership with local authorities, academic and cultural organisations with funding from Arts Council England's Creative People & Places scheme. It's a unique programme shaped by the local communities of Pennine Lancashire who work alongside local, national and international artists and producers.

The iconic Leeds & Liverpool Canal runs through the area it serves and the vision is for the waterway to become a vehicle for bringing communities together. Super Slow Way is showing how radical and ambitious art programming by local people can develop creativity, strength and connectedness across and within communities.

This year, alongside amazing new co-commissions such as *Small Bells Ring*, Super Slow Way is leading



Pennine Lancashire Linear Park: Feasibility Study, 2021

the case for an extraordinary Pennine Lancashire Linear Park. The idea is to create real opportunities for people to live, play and be inspired along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal corridor.

More details about the feasibility study can be found on the Super Slow Way website at <https://superslowway.org.uk/news/unlocking-the-potential-of-the-leeds-liverpool-canal-in-pennine-lancashire-feasibility-study-launched/>

## The benefits of walking The Line

The Line is a free public art walk in London. It runs between The O2 and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, following the Lee Navigation and the line of the Greenwich Meridian.

The Trust is proudly supporting The Line, sharing a commitment to bringing the distinctive wellbeing benefits of spending time by water to urban areas.

Featuring an evolving programme of art installations, projects and events, The Line illuminates an inspiring waterways landscape where everyone can explore art,

nature and heritage for free. The changing seasons and tides mean no two visits are the same. Recent installations next to, or bridging, the Lee Navigation are *The Hatchling*, a giant 'sound egg' by Joanna Rajkowska at Cody Dock and a work straddling Bow Creek celebrating the work of the well known outside artist Madge Gill (1882-1961). Upcoming sculptural works by Rena Begum, Eva Rothschild and Tracy Emin are expected to be installed in coming months.

Olympian, Christine Ohuruogu is one of the advisors for this fast-growing charity, strongly advocating the health benefits of The Line and the waterway it follows.



A celebration of artist Madge Gill, by The Line. Cody Docks, Bow Creek. Image by Simon Myers

## Upcoming creativity

The Trust is also delighted to be supporting more thought-provoking, collaborative initiatives later this year and into 2022:

- **Canal Laureate and Towpath Poems:** The Trust's ongoing partnership with The Poetry Society will manifest as poems as street art along towpaths in Sheffield and Sefton, and the appointment of a new Canal Laureate.
- **Appetite:** A new partnership with this amazing Stoke-on-Trent organisation that enables more people to take the lead in choosing, creating and taking part in art experiences in the places where they live. Supported through Arts Council England's Creative People & Places scheme, the partnership will create new light art, street art and environmental arts projects made with the people of Kidsgrove by the Trent & Mersey Canal.
- **Mikron Theatre boat tour:** This acclaimed touring theatre boat will be presenting two wonderful new outdoor plays by canals across England.
- **Experiments with Everyday Objects:** Exhibition by the artist, writer & boater, Harun Morrison at Eastside Projects, based in Birmingham. From the Lee Navigation in London to Birmingham's canals, Morrison's boat became a floating 'pinhole camera' and a vessel for on-going creative engagement and debate about waterways.
- **Alarum Theatre:** Poetry and creative writing workshops will be offered by this well-known canal based theatre group. Details can be found on their website.

**Tim Eastop**  
Arts & Culture Partner,  
Arts & Culture on the Waterways programme  
Canal & River Trust

 @CanalRiverTrust



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Enjoy. Volunteer. Donate.  
[canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk)  
0303 040 4040

 /canalrivertrust  
 @canalrivertrust  
 @canalrivertrust