



Canal &
River Trust

PRESS RELEASE

Celebrating the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Bicentenary (1816-2016)

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LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL BICENTENARY RE-CREATION OF 1816 INAUGURAL BOAT PASSAGE (15-23 October, 2016)

Come and join the greatest long distance waterway party ever staged in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Merseyside. The Leeds & Liverpool Canal Bicentenary celebrations reach a high point this October as the historic short boat Kennet re-creates the inaugural ceremonial journey 127 miles across the Pennines from Leeds to Liverpool.

Organised by the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society, which runs Kennet as an education boat, and supported by Canal & River Trust, which cares for the canal, the voyage will be a culmination of a year of festivities and celebrations in honour of the 200th anniversary of England's longest canal.

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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

Flotillas “decorated with flags and streamers”, accompanied by “hearty cheering of immense assemblage of spectators” greeted the original ceremonial boat journey in October 1816. That trip lasted only five days but this year the Canal Society crew will take a more leisurely pace so more people can celebrate in daylight hours, leaving Leeds on Saturday 15th October and arriving in Liverpool nine days later on Sunday 23rd October.

And they want everyone to give them a hearty welcome as the boat progresses through Yorkshire, Lancashire and Merseyside, past mills and moorland, through Bingley, Skipton, Burnley, Blackburn, Chorley, Wigan, Burscough and some of the country’s most spectacular scenery.

Kennet organiser Harold Bond said: “We are calling on heritage boats, boat clubs and boaters to create a flotilla of decorated boats to join Kennet along the way. We would love to see crowds lining the canal as we pass by. Several mayors have already agreed to receive us and at least one brass band will be serenading us as we sail past.

“It would be fantastic if we could be joined by local school children and community groups, cheering and waving flags. Kennet will be decked out in bunting to symbolise the two great shire county roses. It would be wonderful to be greeted by a sea of red and white as our procession sails along.

“Back in 1816, press reports state that the ceremonial first boat was greeted by peeling church bells, brass bands and cheering crowds, and canal barges were be-decked in flags and streamers. We would love to create that spirit of celebration and achievement again.”

Sarah Knight, bicentenary coordinator for the Canal & River Trust, added: “I would appeal to any boat club, community group, brass band or organisation near the canal to start planning now. Get in touch with us to be part of the greatest long distance, waterside party Yorkshire, Lancashire and Merseyside have ever staged.”

For boaters wanting more information about timings and the route, please email: friendsofkennet@gmail.com.

To link into the community celebrations along the ceremonial canal route, please contact Sarah Knight at the Canal & River Trust on sarah.knight@canalrivertrust.org.uk.

All boats who spend at least a day with the ceremonial flotilla will be eligible for a free 200th anniversary plaque.

For more details about the bicentenary celebrations go to the Canal & River Trust website <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/our-regions/north-west-waterways/leeds-and-liverpool-bicentenary>

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For further media requests please contact:

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Notes to editors:

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

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