

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Issued: 14 December 2018

### **MACCLESFIELD CANAL GETS £1.4 MILLION WINTER MAKEOVER**

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The Canal & River Trust, the national waterways and wellbeing charity, is carrying out more than £1.4 million worth of maintenance and repair work to the Macclesfield Canal in Cheshire this winter.

An extensive dredging project over the next three months will deepen the canal channel between Macclesfield and the canal's junction with the Trent & Mersey Canal, near Kidsgrove.

On the landmark Bosley Lock Flight, which features 12 locks, the Trust has installed new gates, carried out leak, masonry and pointing work, and repaired damaged sluices, gates and washwalls at locks 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12. Much of this work was completed during the summer when navigation along the canal was restricted due to the drought.

A leaking culvert, near Swettenham Wharf in Macclesfield town centre, is being repaired to prevent flooding and the canal bed is being re-lined in clay. Canal wall repairs are also being completed. The project is expected to be complete by mid- December and the canal water levels restored to normal in time for the Christmas holidays.

In Higher Poynton, the canal has been drained around the junction with the Burgess Arm to enable repairs to be carried out to the towpath and supporting walls.

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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

Before each separate lock or section is drained, fish are rescued and transported to another part of the canal which remains in water. New lock gates are hand-crafted in oak at a special Canal & River Trust workshop using traditional skills and then craned into place as part of a spectacular lift movement.

Dedicated volunteers from the Macclesfield Canal Society and other voluntary groups have saved the canal charity more than £80,000 in contractor fees this year by clearing away unwanted vegetation and repairing towpaths.

Tracey Jackson, operations supervisor with the Canal & River Trust, said: “The Macclesfield Canal was the first canal in the country to gain a coveted Green Flag Award, confirming that it is a quality green space, offering visitors a first class experience.

“It is vitally important to keep our 200 year old canal in good working order for the thousands of visitors and local residents who enjoy spending time by it.

“Although the canal was originally built to carry coal and other goods during the Industrial Revolution, it has now reinvented itself as a leisure destination and a haven for wildlife. Modern canals offer an amazing, tranquil space, where everything slows down – a great place to escape the pressures of modern life. We know from research that people are happier and more relaxed when they’re by water, and activities such as walking, cycling, boating, fishing, canoeing and paddle boarding improve people’s mental and physical well-being.

“Our Canal & River Trust volunteers enjoy being in the outdoors and they do a fantastic job keeping the canal towpaths in good shape. We are very grateful for all their hard work and their amazing contribution to keeping the canal worthy of our much-prized Green Flag.”

Today the 28 mile Macclesfield Canal is part of the popular 100 mile Cheshire canal cruising ring, which provides boaters with a chance to combine the beautiful rural scenery of the Macclesfield Canal with the urban waterways of Greater Manchester.

For more information on the Canal & River Trust's vital winter waterway repair programme or how to volunteer with the canal charity, visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk).

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**Notes to Editors**

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

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