

PRESS RELEASE

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FIRST COAST TO COAST CANOE TRAIL LAUNCHED BY CANAL CHARITY WITH 162 MILE RELAY AND CELEBRATION EVENTS

A five year youth project by the Canal & River Trust charity to create the England's first Coast to Coast Canoe Trail reached a climax over August Bank Holiday weekend with five public celebration events and the end of a canoe relay over the Pennine hills across the entire 162 mile route.

The trail stretches from Liverpool in the West to Goole on the Humber estuary. Hundreds of people attended youth-led festivals in Burnley on Friday 23 August, Leeds Dock, Blackburn and Goole on Saturday 24 August, winding up with the finale at Liverpool Waterfront on Sunday 25 August. (See details below)

Relays set off from Goole on Wednesday 14 August and Liverpool's Eldonian Village the following day, meeting up near the Canoe Trail's mid-point in Burnley on Friday 23 August. Special commemorative paddles carried on each leg will be placed into a permanent celebratory artwork on the canal towpath nearby.

Funded by a £1.3million grant from the Desmond Foundation, the trail is known as the Desmond Family Canoe Trail and has provided new training and volunteering opportunities for thousands of young people aged 16-25, on both sides of the Pennines. Community canoe hubs have been created in Sefton, Wigan, Burnley, Castleford and Goole, with plans for extra hubs in Skipton, Leeds and Blackburn.

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Several of the young people have become so engaged in the project they have trained as youth leaders and hope to carry on with the project after it officially winds up next year.

In partnership with British Canoeing, two new detailed trail leaflets have been produced for would-be canoeists, kayakers and paddle boarders, giving top tips on how to negotiate the route, which follows the 127 mile Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Britain's longest single canal, and 35 miles along the Aire & Calder Navigation through Yorkshire. The first covers the western side - Liverpool's Eldonian Village to Reedley Marina near Burnley, and the second maps out the eastern side from Burnley to Goole, dividing the route into a series of shorter day trips.

This new grand waterway adventure is not for the faint-hearted. It involves carrying canoes around 91 locks, including the 21 lock Wigan flight and Bingley's famous Five Rise Staircase, and paddling under the summit of the Pennine hills through a mile long tunnel at Foulridge.

To help paddlers, a number of canoe access improvements have been made at Liverpool's Eldonian Village and Wigan, with further work planned for Castleford and Goole. New canoe signage will also help people find their way along the coast to coast waterway route.

The Desmond Family Canoe Trail project was the brain child of waterways and well-being charity, the Canal & River Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways across England and Wales.

Danny Matley, Canoe Trail project manager with the Canal & River Trust, said: "The celebrations over the sunny August Bank Holiday have attracted hundreds of people, who learnt more about the trail and enjoyed music, food and canoe taster sessions. Since the project launched in 2015 we have supported thousands of young people in a range of activities, not only giving them the chance to get out on the water in a canoe, but also to learn a range of valuable new skills.

"Thanks to the trail initiative, young people have found new ways to engage with their local communities and grown in confidence as they've acquired environmental and waterway skills, working on their neighbourhood canal.

"The amazing legacy from this brilliant project is a Coast to Coast Canoe Trail, every bit as challenging and engaging as Alfred Wainwright's famous Coast to Coast Walking Trail. Of course, paddlers can do just as little or as far as they wish along the 162 mile route, but we are certain this new cross-country waterway trail is set to capture the imagination of every canoeist, kayaker and paddle boarder with a taste for adventure."

Pick up the Desmond Family Canoe Trail leaflets at venues across the route or to download maps go to <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/the-desmond-family-canoe-trail>

ENDS

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
www.canalrivertrust.org.uk.

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SPECIFIC EVENT DETAILS

PUBLIC CELEBRATION EVENTS

Date	Event details
Fri 23 Aug 12-4pm	Burnley – UCLAN, Victoria Mill, Trafalgar Street, Burnley, BB11 1RA. Canoe taster sessions, live music, free young canal explorers activities, food and drink, inflatables, Burnley FC in the Community.
Sat 24 Aug	Blackburn – Eanam Wharf, Calypso Restaurant, 16 Eanam, Blackburn, BB1 5BL Canoe taster sessions, yoga, live music, food and drink.
Sat 24 Aug	Leeds – Clarence Dock, Leeds, LS10 1PZ Canoe taster sessions, live music, yoga, food.

11am – 4pm	
Sat 24 Aug 3–8pm	Goole – West Park, Airmyn Road, Goole, DN14 6XB Live music and food
Sun 25 Aug 12-6pm	Liverpool Waterfront – Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BY. Music, canoe taster sessions and games.

162 MILE RELAY FROM LIVERPOOL TO GOOLE

Date	Western side	Eastern side
Wed 14th Aug		Goole Waterway Museum to Whitley Lock Dutch Riverside, Goole, DN14 5TB.
Thu 15th Aug	Liverpool Eldonian Village – Brewery Lane, West Lancs.	Bulholme Lock to Castleford Flood Lock, WF10 2LN
Fri 16th Aug	West Lancashire: Brewery Lane – New Lane Swing Bridge	Castleford Flood Lock, WF10 2LN, to Leeds Clarence Lock, LS10 1LT. Community walk/run/cycle
Mon 19th Aug	New Lane Swing Bridge to Wigan canoe hub, nr Trencherfield Mill	Leeds Dock river lock to Bingley
Tue 20th Aug	Canoe: Wigan Top Lock (WN21 1JJ) to Red Rock, Walton Summit branch Cycle: Red Rock to Chorley	Bingley to Skipton
Wed 21st Aug	Canoe: Wheelton Top Lock to Hollin Bridge.	Skipton Basin (opp Pennine Cruisers), BD23 1LH to Greenberfield Locks.

	Cycle: Hollin Bridge (BB2 4AZ) to Rishton.	
Thu 22nd Aug	Rishton to Rosegrove canal yard Contact Vicki Birch	Greenberfield locks, Lock Stop Café, Barnoldswick, BB18 5SU. to Reedley Marina
Fri 23rd Aug	Rosegrove canal yard, Lowerhouse Lane, Burnley, BB12 6HU to UCLAN, Victoria Mill, Burnley	Reedley Marina, Barden Lane, Burnley, BB12 6HU, to UCLAN, Victoria Mill, Burnley.