



Canal &  
River Trust

## PRESS RELEASE

Issued: 6 October 2017

### RENOVATED RIVER WEAVER HUT REMINDER OF SALT INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

A historic brick hut on the banks of the River Weaver Navigation in Cheshire is being restored, thanks to the Canal & River Trust charity and Saltscape Landscape Partnership.



*Canal & River Trust staff and volunteers renovate a historic hut on the River Weaver.*

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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

Originally built as a small storeroom and shelter for Weaver bridge-keepers at the turn of the last century, the hut lies close to an area that was once part of the impressive Newbridge Salt Works development, just north of Winsford.

All trace of the Salt Works disappeared long ago and the area is now a leafy caravan park but the hut remains as an important landmark and reminder of Cheshire's thriving industrial past.

The River Weaver Navigation too has undergone significant changes. The coastal cargo vessels, once a common sight, have been replaced by narrowboats and leisure craft, and the navigation is now managed by the Canal & River Trust, the charity which cares for more than 2,000 miles of the nation's waterways.

Sadly in recent years, the building has suffered from the ravages of time and vandalism. The corrugated iron roof was leaking and the decaying brickwork had become daubed in graffiti.

Kate Lynch, Canal & River Trust heritage adviser, explained: "The Newbridge Hut, next to two strategic bridges over the River Weaver, has a close link with the bridges. It provides evidence of a time when the bridge-keeper played an important role in the workings of the river navigation and the management of freight traffic, including boats carrying salt.

"We are keen to preserve it for the future. The roof has been replaced, graffiti removed, a window repaired and a bat box installed. Heritage skills training on how to apply lime mortar and preserve old buildings has also been part of the project, which has involved Trust staff and volunteers working together to make a difference.

"As a charity, we want to encourage people to come down and use the waterway, to be healthier and happier, and this modest building is an important link with the past that helps local people connect to their local history. We are always looking for more volunteers to

help keep our national waterways looking their best and would love to hear from anyone with enthusiasm for the outdoors and a few hours to spare.”

Saul Burton, Saltscape Project Officer, said: “The restoration of this unassuming little building will bring back memories for lots of Winsford people who once worked at this important Meadowbank site. You can hear the fascinating stories of some of these people first hand on [www.weaverparkway.org.uk/listen](http://www.weaverparkway.org.uk/listen) as part of a Saltscape oral histories project. They really bring the area to life!”

The Saltscape partnership, launched in 2015, runs a programme of developments designed to protect, restore and celebrate mid-Cheshire’s salt heritage and landscape. The partnership is funded by the National Lottery, through the Heritage Lottery Fund, and is expected to generate £1.4million of investment in the Weaver Valley during its lifetime.

For more information about how to volunteer or donate to the Canal & River Trust, check out [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk) or call the customer services team on 0303 040 4040.

## ENDS

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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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**The Saltscape Landscape Partnership** is a 3 year Heritage Lottery funded programme of developments designed to protect, restore and celebrate the salt history and wildlife of the Weaver Valley, a distinct landscape that is rare both nationally and internationally.

The Saltscape extends along the Weaver Valley from Frodsham in the North to the salt towns of Northwich, Winsford and Middlewich in the South. Only here will you find this

unique mix of wildlife habitats, post-industrial landscapes, rivers and canals that result from Cheshire's industrial salt heritage. It is one of Cheshire's best kept secrets!

Saltscape is led by Groundwork Cheshire with key partners Cheshire West and Chester Council, Canal and River Trust, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, The Mersey Forest and a range of other local groups and organisations.

For further information about the Saltscape Landscape Partnership, contact Press Officer Hannah Petrie on 01606 723160 or [Hannah.Petrie@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:Hannah.Petrie@groundwork.org.uk).

[www.saltscape.co.uk](http://www.saltscape.co.uk)

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