

THE CANAL & RIVER TRUST

KEEPING PEOPLE, NATURE AND HISTORY CONNECTED



Canal & River Trust

THE FACTS

In its first year, volunteers will give more than

24,000 days

to the Canal & River Trust

91%

of people think the waterways are an important part of the nation's heritage

Top 20

One of the UK's Top 20 charities*

Third largest

estate of listed structures (only the Church of England and National Trust look after more)

200 miles

of new or restored canals opened in the last decade – the first time the network has grown since the mid-19th Century

Canals, rivers, reservoirs and docks in England & Wales generate

£500m

worth of annual public benefit

13 million people

regularly visit their local waterway – that's a quarter of all UK adults

The waterways support

23,000 jobs

100's

of designated wildlife sites

INTRODUCING THE CANAL & RIVER TRUST



The Georgian canals and rivers that connect our towns and cities were the transport arteries that made Britain a pioneering great industrial nation.

From their well-documented dereliction and decline, the story of the last sixty years since nationalisation shows what can be achieved when a community values and invests in its waterways. They have been turned from a national disgrace to a national treasure.

All those with an interest in the waterways – those who look after them, those whose livelihoods depend on them, those who enjoy them and especially those who have supported them through thick and thin – should be rightly proud of what they have achieved.

Building on this waterways renaissance, in 2012 the Canal & River Trust – a new charity in England and Wales – will take up the waterways' cause, with community involvement at the heart of its founding principles.

The Canal & River Trust marks a new start for this extraordinary network and a radical, modern approach to the care of our national heritage. It is a new model for delivering public services and offers a chance for communities to have a real say in the running of their local waterway.

The people who use and enjoy the network will be integral to helping ensure that this wonderful national asset is looked after and, in turn, its potential is unlocked as a haven for people and wildlife, as a catalyst for regeneration and commerce and to help mitigate against climate change.

250 years since the waterway network was first built, the Canal & River Trust will ensure our precious waterways are safeguarded for the next 250 years.

Tony Hales
Canal & River Trust chair of trustees



THE STORY SO FAR



1940s & 50s

NATIONALISATION AND FREIGHT DECLINE

- > The canals see a resurgence of freight traffic as their creaking infrastructure is pressed into service for the war effort. But with peace comes the threat of decline and irrelevance
- > Canals still have supporters though. Formed in 1946, the fledgling Inland Waterways Association lobbies government for disappearing canals to be saved
- > In 1948 the waterways, somewhat as an afterthought, are moved into public ownership as part of the new British Transport Commission
- > Already impacted by the growth of rail and road transport, waterborne freight is further pressured by the opening of the first motorways. Many canals are abandoned as there is little prospect of alternative use

1960s

FROM BIG FREEZE TO LEISURE REVOLUTION

- > Derelict canals have become standing jokes in comics like the Beano. Local authorities start to fill in canals as public safety hazards
- > British Waterways is created to operate much of the nation's inland waterways but a particularly harsh winter sees boats unable to move, virtually finishing off commercial freight carrying on the narrow canal network
- > A 1967 Daily Mirror article 'The Wasted Heritage' draws attention to the plight of derelict canals, heralding...
- > Barbara Castle's 1968 Transport Act gives the first official recognition for the recreation value of waterways and a remit to develop their leisure potential

1970s

THE GREAT STAGNATION

- > Long term underfunding still plagues the waterways, however enlightened enthusiasts are mobilising. Although a far from fashionable pastime, their passion is central in saving and restoring many miles of canal in a recessionary and largely heritage-blind decade

Canals were Britain's first national transport system and underpinned the success of the Industrial Revolution. By 1793, the country was in the grip of 'canal mania' as rich and poor alike clamoured to invest. Pioneering engineers were the heroes of the age, building structures never attempted before: waterways were carried across valleys, up slopes and through hills. A network of canals soon joined cities, towns and countryside, and at its greatest extent stretched to over 5,000 miles. Following this golden age, the network fell into decline, however the last 70 years have been a captivating story of enthusiasts, communities and government rediscovering the value of the waterways



1980s

THE REGENERATION POTENTIAL

- > The early 1980s sees leisure boat numbers top 20,000 for the first time
- > By the mid-1980s, the successful redevelopment of Brindleyplace in Birmingham and London's Docklands helps to further shift attitudes towards waterways

1990s

THE REALISATION

- > The value of the waterways is increasingly realised. Research shows that properties next to well-maintained waterways are worth up to 20% more
- > The case is successfully made for increased investment in canal maintenance and in 1999 the Deputy Prime Minister announces new support and funding
- > By the late 1990s waterway restoration schemes pick up pace as community support and grants from the newly created National Lottery enable the biggest expansion in the network in 150 years

2000s

THE NEW MILLENNIUM

- > Once toxic, lifeless channels are now precious habitats for wildlife
- > More than £1 billion is invested into the waterways, repairing and upgrading the network where possible after more than 50 years of neglect
- > Canals that were once fenced off are now open for everyone. 13 million people, including cyclists, ramblers, commuters and anglers, now visit every year and 35,000 boats use the network
- > The new found popularity of the nation's ageing waterways creates new financial pressures, as well as exciting opportunities for engaging with communities



History has taught us that we can't take our canals for granted. An ageing network means the cost of protecting and maintaining this unique national treasure rises ever year. That's where we come in. We're a new charity called the Canal & River Trust and we have been entrusted with the care of 2,000 miles of canals and rivers in England and Wales. It's an exciting task but we can't do it alone.

KEEPING PEOPLE, NATURE AND HISTORY CONNECTED

In an increasingly fast-paced and crowded world, our waterways are a vital local haven for people and nature. Just a moment away from our everyday lives, they allow us to escape, to relax and to reconnect with ourselves and the people who matter to us. Canals are also a key part of our heritage, offering us the chance to step back through time and experience living history.

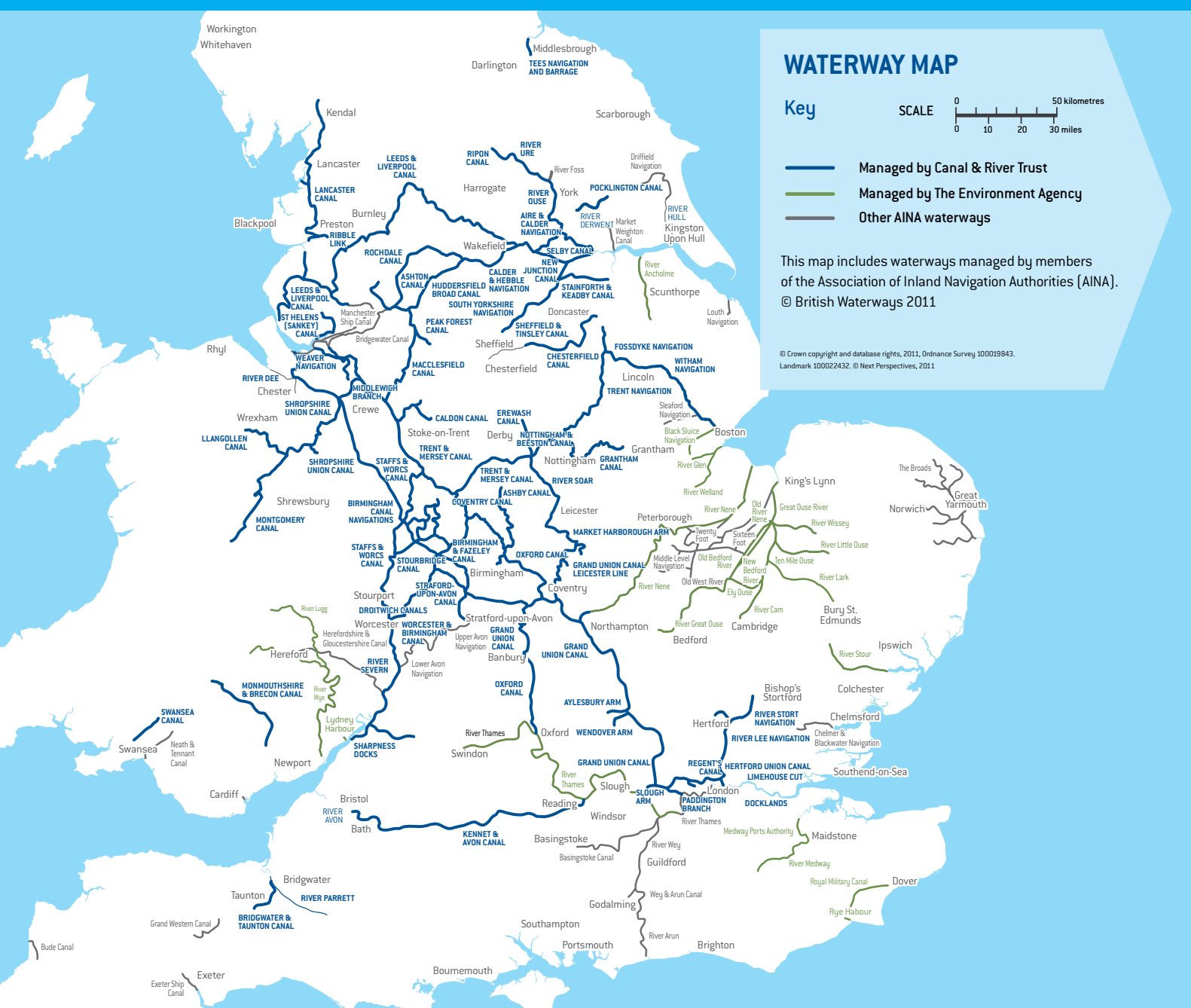
So it's easy to forget that less than half a century ago, we almost lost much of our canal network forever. Today, keeping the waterways special means we need your help. By supporting us financially, giving your time or your voice, help us ensure that your favourite stretch of canal – and the rest of the network – remains safe, clean and accessible for everyone.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE IS TO:

- > ensure canals and rivers are recognised as an important part of the fabric of our nation and cherished by local communities
- > help more people discover the magic of our canals and rivers
- > ensure that our canals and rivers are accessible to all and protected for future generations
- > build enduring partnerships which increase our resources and help us deliver our promises
- > make a difference to the canals and rivers, and the communities we serve
- > be innovative in our approach to revitalising our canals and rivers

“It is for their therapeutic value, however, that canals should chiefly be promoted. Anyone who walks or boats along them knows that they possess a mysterious, balm-like power. Stealthily, even secretly, they carry the peace of rural England into the heart of frenetic cities. Millions are aware of this secret world, but millions aren't. If it takes the creation of national waterways trust to spread the word, I'm all for it.”

The Times, chief culture writer, May 2009



WATERWAY MAP

Key

SCALE 0 10 20 30 miles / 0 10 20 30 kilometres

- Managed by Canal & River Trust
- Managed by The Environment Agency
- Other AINA waterways

This map includes waterways managed by members of the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA).
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The Canal & River Trust will be known as Glandwr Cymru in Wales

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