

PRESS RELEASE from: **Bonnet and Belt Productions**

For Immediate Release

Canals of Old England

Canals of Old England is an exciting new musical show performed for the stage by emerging playwright and actor/musician Phil Underwood and acclaimed folk singer Nancy Potts. Dressed in colourful traditional canal costume they tell the story - through music, poetry and narrative - of the Golden Age of the English canals in the 19th Century.

Canals of Old England is based on solid oral and written historical research, weaving actual canal life and real stories into the narrative. It features historical and original songs & music composed and performed by the writer.

The show is aimed at increasing awareness, in a fun and entertaining way, not only of the key part that the canals played in the development of industry and trade in the 18th and 19th Centuries, but also the realities of life aboard a canal boat and the incredible close knit society that the boat people created.

"It was great to be entertained by a show that covered so much ground without the over-obvious signposting that we have seen in other canal-based productions." DI Harris, Folk Music and Waterways Journalist.

The story is underpinned by the writer's personal experiences as a boatman living on the Grand Union Canal and inspired by his training for the stage in 2012 with the **National Theatre's War Horse** production.

In 2016 the writer gained **Arts Council England** funding to develop his original script for a professional touring production, directed by Bernie C Byrnes and showcased at the New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth.

We also have developed **creating learning workshops and education packs** for teachers.

"The children had to imagine they were in a canal boat in overcrowded and cramped conditions. All the children enjoyed this and it helped to understand how families would have felt in the 1800s" Cottage Grove School.

"The outcome for these [Social, Emotional and Mental Health] learners is huge, you have given them the opportunity, the experience, knowledge and a voice to be completely involved with the arts.. " Harbour School

We are now **programming for 2017** and are looking for venues who share our passion for learning through drama and music. For example rural touring, festivals, libraries, folk clubs, theatres, museums, canal events, private functions, cabaret. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Best wishes

Phil Underwood, Writer, Producer

Ends. For more information:

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Note to Editors: Photographs are available on request from info@bonnetandbelt.com