

PRESS RELEASE

6 May 2021

Canal charities invite boaters to join those on the towpath in discovering the Walsall Canal

Waterways and wellbeing charity, Canal & River Trust, is working in a partnership with volunteers from the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society, to encourage boaters from across England to discover and spend time along the Walsall Canal.

Having been a haven for local people during lockdown, with visitor numbers to the towpath currently more than double what they were pre-pandemic, the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society is holding a weekend celebration cruise on Friday 14 May to Sunday 16 May – the first since 2019 due to lockdown restrictions - to show off the Walsall Canal and celebrate that the region's canals are now back open to boating.

The Walsall Canal runs for seven miles from Ryders Green Junction to Walsall Town Wharf. Once on the cusp of being lost forever, the arm has been refurbished to include mooring facilities for visitors and has an innovative new art gallery at the end.

Not always recognised for the important role it plays in bringing nature and health benefits, the Walsall Canal is fast becoming an example of an urban canal revived. The canal has been cleaned up and the environment improved, making it a true haven for local people.

The cruise will begin at 10:30am and will head to Walsall via Ocker Hill and will see boaters assembling at either Windmill End or Tipton before heading to Ryders Green Locks at Great Bridge.

On Saturday members of the Bradley Locks Restoration Society will be available to give a guided walk up the Bradley Locks and along the line of the infilled canal before the boats depart for the afternoon trip into Walsall. Boaters will be able to overnight in the basin of the Town Arm of the Walsall Canal.

Adnan Saif, director of West Midlands at Canal & River Trust, said: "It's wonderful to have events such as this celebration cruise up and running along the canal. This cruise is a fantastic way for boaters to rediscover the Walsall Canal and see just how much work our colleagues and volunteers have been doing to make this stretch of canal a lovely place to visit.

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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

“Research shows that being by water makes us all happier and healthier and seeing boats out and about is just one of the wonderful delights that attract visitors to their local canal. If you’ve not been to the canal in a while, I urge you to visit over this cruise weekend and see for yourself how wonderful our urban canals are.”

Bob Fox, from the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society, said: “The Society has arranged this Campaign Cruise to support the Canal & River Trust in promoting Walsall as a destination and activity centre, helping to encourage greater use of the less used Walsall Canal and Walsall Town Basin.”

To find out more about the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society and to join the Walsall Celebration Cruise visit <https://bcnsociety.com/event/walsall-campaign-cruise/> Please note there is a £10 admin fee for each boat taking part.

For more information on the Canal & River Trust, including how you can volunteer or donate money to support our work, visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

ENDS

For further information contact Sarah Rudy, comms & campaigns manager on 07788 691 219 or email sarah.rudy@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Notes to Editors

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

Birmingham Canal Navigations Society works to conserve, improve and maintain the Birmingham Canal Navigations and encourage greater use of the BCN through regular work parties, Explorer Cruises, rallies and Campaign Cruises. The Society also provides two boats for participants in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The Society is pleased to highlight the less frequented Walsall Canal and Walsall Town Basin through this campaign cruise.

1. Discover more about the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society at:

Website - bcnsociety.com

Follow us on FaceBook -

<https://www.facebook.com/BirminghamCanalNavigationsSociety/>

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