

## PRESS RELEASE



**Issue date: 12 March 2026**

**\*\*Photo Call Notice: ICICLE CAMPAIGN CRUISE ON THE WALSALL CANAL,  
21 MARCH 2026\*\***

**Event:** Icicle Cruise to Walsall Town Arm, organised jointly by the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society (BCNS) and the Fund Britain's Waterway campaign (FBW)

**Date:** Saturday 21 March 2026

**Location:** Walsall Town Basin, Gallery Square, Walsall WS2 8LG

**Time:** The flotilla will set off on Friday 20 March, descend the eight Ryders Green Locks on the Walsall Canal and moor overnight at Moorcroft Junction with the Bradley Canal. On Saturday 21 March the boats will cruise to Walsall and assemble in Walsall Town Basin. The Mayor of Walsall and other dignitaries will visit the boats in the basin at 14:00 on Saturday.

**Photo opportunities:**

1. An informal gathering of supporters will meet at Walsall Town Basin from 11:00 on Saturday to walk along the towpath and see the flotilla arriving.
2. The Mayor of Walsall, Councillor Louise Harrison, will arrive at Walsall Town Basin at 14:00 on Saturday, to view the assembled boats and meet the boaters plus Fund Britain's Waterways representatives and other invitees.

**Why:** Join us for a visually compelling photo opportunity as a flotilla of around 26 narrowboats including two historic working pairs gathers in Walsall Town Basin.

The Icicle Cruise is the first BCNS cruise of the year. This year BCNS has teamed up with the FBW campaign to jointly organise a campaign cruise on the Walsall Canal to

Walsall Town Basin, for a belated celebration of the re-opening of the canal after a [toxic chemical spill](#) in August 2024 resulted in the closure of 12 miles of canal for 10 months.

The closure meant that walkers, cyclists, canoeists and anglers as well as boaters were unable to use the canal. Since it is one of the less well-known parts of the Birmingham Canal Navigations it is especially important to encourage and promote its use.

The cost of the clean-up ran into hundreds of thousands of pounds, money which would otherwise have been invested by the Canal & River Trust in maintaining its waterways. Although in this case the company responsible has contributed, the situation is a specific example of the vulnerability of the entire inland waterway network. Communities and businesses across the country are at risk as navigation authorities face mounting financial pressures and increasing impacts of all types, from climate change to pollution incidents and other damage.

This is the reason that the Fund Britain's Waterways (FBW) campaign was set up and is calling for a comprehensive national review of waterways infrastructure. Our rivers and canals are not just for boaters, or even for the millions of other people who use them to walk, cycle, jog, commute, canoe, paddle, fish or just relax. They are vital for local economies and the environment and an irreplaceable part of our national heritage. We owe it to future generations to look after our waterways and keep them safe and well maintained.

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**About the [Birmingham Canal Navigations Society \(BCNS\)](#):**

The Birmingham Canal Navigations Society (BCNS) was formed in 1967 with the goals of conserving the 250 year old Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN) canal system, improving its status and encouraging its use, and providing education about the historic and ecological importance of our canals. It has a headquarters with a meeting room and library in Titford Pumpouse in Oldbury, it organises work parties to carry out 'clean ups' around the BCN system, and it holds social events and boating events. The BCNS welcomes this important FBW initiative and is pleased to be working together with FBW in highlighting the value of our local waterways and the threat they face from inadequate funding.

**About [Fund Britain's Waterways \(FBW\)](#):**

FBW brings together a wide range of organisations with the sole purpose of campaigning collectively for an increase in government funding of Britain's inland waterways to avert their decline, and to promote awareness of the huge economic, environmental, and social well-being value they provide. Established in June 2023, it already has more than 160 members representing hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways.

**Contact:**

For further information about Fund Britain's Waterways, or for further information about the cruise, including precise timings on the day of the cruise, contact the cruise organiser and FBW Project Manager Stephen Busby ([stephen.j.busby@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.j.busby@gmail.com), 07486 984677)

**Narrowboats flying FBW banners on a previous campaign cruise**

(credit: Brian Sharples)

