

## From The Editor

Welcome to the new edition of London WRG news and welcome to the last year of the 20<sup>th</sup> century! I hope everyone's new millennium rehearsal party went off OK, personally new year on the Thames and Severn was very enjoyable.

Down to more serious business now and the write up for the London WRG Christmas Party, thanks to Dan for letting us use his flat and thanks to all the people who cooked and helped make the party a great success. Obviously the high point of the evening was the presentation of the London WRG awards, a special award this year went to Dan and I for the directions supplied to the party. The other awards were given to:

The whip - Alison Smedley, for organising the piss up in the brewery.

Steering Wheel - jointly to Clive Alderman and Chris Spencer for their novel marking method for excavators.

The other awards seem to have gotten lost over the last year so if anyone is holding onto one, then please return it.

I think that's about it, see people down a muddy hole at some point (that will be Over then!)

**Ed Walker**

All the latest information:

[www.danevans.co.uk/lwrg](http://www.danevans.co.uk/lwrg)

### **London WRG AGM**

The London WRG AGM will be held at the Mad Hatter pub (directions inside the back page) on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2000 starting at about 7.30pm. This is our main organisational meeting and where the organisers for digs are sorted out. So if you want to volunteer for this job or influence where we should be digging over the next year then come along!

### **Internet Update**

A lot of changes have been going on recently in the various WRG webpages, Our own Dan Evans has recently put up the new main WRG website at:

[www.wrg.org.uk](http://www.wrg.org.uk)

This is a much-improved site with a lot of important information and useful links and documents. Also Tim Lewis has put up a webpage which obviously could not be complete with lots of photos of people working on canals. This can be found at:

[members.netscapeonline.co.uk/wrgtim/Wrgpage1.html](http://members.netscapeonline.co.uk/wrgtim/Wrgpage1.html)

London WRG is entering the information age more and more now as well. The London WRG e-mail list is getting a lot of use for the organisation of digs and other general matters so if you aren't already subscribed then contact Dan now!

For further information about this and all the other waterways e-mail lists (including the restoration list) check the web page:

[lists.ukwaterways.net/index.html](http://lists.ukwaterways.net/index.html)

## **Wey and Arun Canal: 2-3 October 1999.**

After the usual song and dance at Waterloo station (who's travelling in the van, when is the van arriving, etc., etc.) we finally set off for deepest, darkest Surrey and the prospect of a particularly damp weekend preparing the Wey and Arun canal for its winter closure. As the work program was to be quite varied it was decided to take the London WRG trailer on its second ever outing, this meant a particularly empty bus on the way down. Congregation of all the people for the weekend was in the Foresters Arms as usual, the news that the landlord had recently changed was received poorly, no more late night water fights in that pub! The news that Matt had volunteered to cook for us all weekend was went down well but the music from the other bar did not, it was a tad packed in there.

The next day dawned way to early as usual, the usual run round half the county to collect equipment was carried out and we reached site just in time to make tea. Work was going to be varied, scrub clearing further down the canal, paddle hole lintel concrete pour, back pump outfall, stonework in the lock chamber to finish patching the wall and maintenance work on the field drainage system to prepare it for winter. Pumping the lock chamber out was to be the first job, the usual problems with getting pumps started were encountered and overcome and a start was made on clearing the land drain. Once the chamber had been pumped down far enough so that the scaffolding could be used it was found that a lot of Kango work would have to be done before the new stones could be laid. At this point I was passed the job of Stihl saw driver for the weekend and promptly disappeared in a cloud of stone dust as I started to cut the new stones to size to

## **Working Party Reports**

fit the gap in the lock wall. By the end of the day a lot of the stones had been cut up, the drain was in a better state but still seemed to be leaking/broken somewhere under the field. So it was back to the hall for dinner, beer in the pub and assembly of London WRG news.

Sunday, more of the same really. Got to site, pumped chamber down, started laying the stones and backfilling for the back pump outfall, completed the stone cutting and finally finished the shuttering for the paddle hole. The afternoon was spent doing the concrete pours for the paddle hole lintel and filling the void behind the freshly laid stones in the lock chamber. In the end we only managed one course of stone due to lack of time, mainly because of waiting for the chamber pump.

Thanks to Matt for organising the dig and most importantly for cooking all the food, I could get used to hot soup and baked potatoes on site for lunch! Despite the weather forecast the rain held off (mostly) until Sunday evening, just as we had to trudge across the fields to get back to the van, even managed to get a bit of a suntan despite it being October!

**Ed Walker**

## Working Party Reports

### Lichfield Canal: 23-24<sup>th</sup> October 1999

A large group from London WRG headed towards the darkest Midlands with the vain hope of a dry Lichfield dig, no chance.

After a leaving from Waterloo late we finally arrived at the closest pub to the village hall only 3 minutes before closing time, a swift round of drinks and it was time to head to the hall for the usual toast orgy. The next day dawned and we reached site BEFORE 9am!! Martin then proceeded to leave us in the van to slope off towards the H&G for a restoration committee meeting, the unfortunate souls left on site had the priority job of putting the finishing touches on the shuttering erected by BITM and the local's over the previous week. The concrete lorry arrived promptly at 10am and we found that idea of pouring the concrete straight from the lorry into the shuttering was going to be unworkable, as the lorry could not get on site! Swift improvisation with some plywood, a large number of barrows, a small dumper and the 3C meant that we spent the next 1.5h shovelling and barrowing 10 tonne of concrete into the shuttering. After a successful strike was led by Marcus lunch was decided to be a good idea, just in time Jan appeared with the cake!

The afternoons work consisted of demolishing one of the lock wing walls that acted as a base to the bridge to allow rebuilding. Finding that mortar seemed to be an invention not used on

this canal the wall came down in double quick time, even quicker with a slight tap of the bucket on the 3C. The weather having held dry for most of the day decided to rain on us just as we left site, back at the hall dinner was started and a small number of us sloped off to the pub to make up for the previous night. Martin reappeared from Over just in time to put the finishing touches on an excellent chicken stew.

Next day on site was more of the same, shuttering was removed from one side of the lock and reerected on the other side by a team led by Dan, Martin and Lesley did syncopated brick removal and patching on the lock wall, Radio 5 Live turned up and interviewed us, and a large amount of earth and bricks were bucket chained from the wing wall.

Overall a very good dig, it is god to see that a site we have worked on before is coming along so well.

Ed Walker



Marcus and Dan receive a cheque for London WRG from the Lichfield branch of the IWA (Ed Walker).

## Working Party Reports

### Hereford and Gloucester Canal (Over): 11-12<sup>th</sup> December 1999

Despite the rain & the cinema running out of tickets for James Bond a contingent from London WRG on an extra weekend & the local H&G bricklayers attended the first topping out ceremony of the basin walls (upto their ankles in water!) Yes.....The long slipway wall (Phil's wall) is the first to receive its blue copings.

Elsewhere, this meant that by 4:00pm on Sunday afternoon, the curved slipway wall, the short limb, & 50% of the long limb is now complete without copings.

That's 7,100 out of 7,600 bricks.....demolished, salvaged, palletted, shrink wrapped, cleaned, palletted, shrink wrapped, laid, pointed, admired

WELL DONE

The only downside if D. Penny goes for blues along the wharf walls as well, that's only 175 out of 1050 to date.

**Matt Taylor**

## Next Time Out

### Thank God: it's all Over!

Following on from the two extra London WRG digs at Over, a number of weekends are planned during the next few months on the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal. These will not be London WRG digs officially; there is no way that we could support them as such without our digs on other canals, including Dig Deep sites, suffering. The weekends will be run centrally, and be open to any volunteer. However:

- the weekends are being organised by some very familiar faces;
- several London WRGies have already indicated their support for these weekends;
- we hope to arrange transport from Waterloo to as many of them as possible.

The purpose of the weekends is to enable the H&G Canal Trust to complete the work required by August 27<sup>th</sup> to fulfil the complex legal agreement. If the work is not completed, then there is a strong possibility the developers of the surrounding land may fill in the canal basin that many of us have spent the last year excavating, as they are legally entitled to do.

Work will be very varied, both on each weekend, and as the basin progresses towards completion. There should be:

## Next Time Out

- bricklaying
- plant operation
- concreting
- formwork
- painting
- towpath laying
- landscaping

Accommodation for all weekends is at Hartpur Village Hall, 4 miles north of site on the A417 between Gloucester and Ledbury. The hall is way better than any previous halls we have stayed in on the canal, not least because of its proximity to the Royal Exchange pub. A map is available on the new WRG website: [www.wrg.org.uk](http://www.wrg.org.uk).

We will be meeting in the Royal Exchange from 8pm onwards on Friday evenings. Work will finish on site on Sundays at about 4pm, and the accommodation is available until shortly after 5pm. Cost is £6. On weekends when we have a van going from London, it will leave Waterloo at 7pm (not 7.30).

The extra dates are:

11-12<sup>th</sup> March  
08-09<sup>th</sup> April  
[29/30 April/01 May - LWRG will be at Cavalcade]  
27-29<sup>th</sup> May  
10-11<sup>th</sup> June

Please also remember that on the 26/27 Feb, London WRG have a dig on the Dig Deep site at Oxenhall.

Adrian Fry is organising these weekends, and can be contacted for further details on: 07976 640962 or [adrianfry@netscapeonline.co.uk](mailto:adrianfry@netscapeonline.co.uk)

However, to book on any of these weekends, please contact Marcus Jones by e-mail on [over@wrg.org.uk](mailto:over@wrg.org.uk), phone (020-74246601), or mobile (07715-357593). (If you want to travel from London in the minibus, please tell Marcus when you book, so that he can pass on the details to whoever is driving it, it will probably be Martin for most weekends.)

Further information will appear in Navvies and in the next issue of London WRG News. The latest details of forthcoming Over digs will be posted regularly to the London WRG and Canal Restoration e-mail mailing lists, and on the WRG web site.

**Marcus Jones**

## London IWA Update

The London Region IWA holds social meetings/talks at the Grouse & Claret P.H., Little Chester Street, near Victoria, London. All meetings are 7.30pm for 8pm, details as below.

17/2/00: Speaker: Mike Stevens: "The BCN challenge"

16/3/00: Speaker: Jim McDonald: "The Best Job on the Cut"

20/4/00: Region AGM (venue TBC)

18/5/00: Speaker: Mike Palmer (WRG Chairman).

For up to date information check  
the London WRG web pages:

[www.danevans.co.uk/lwrg](http://www.danevans.co.uk/lwrg)

## London WRG Dates List

**Working Parties:** Transport available Friday evening in the London WRG minibus; meet outside Burger King at Waterloo station; normally at 19:00 but may be earlier or later depending on distance. Contact Tim, Martin or Lesley for details.

Date	Location	Organiser
5-6/2/00	H&G (Over), joint dig with North-West	Martin Ludgate
26-27/2/00	Dig Deep on the H&G (Oxenhall)	TBA
11-12/3/00	Extra dig on H&G (Over)*	Marcus Jones
25-26/3/00	BCN Cleanup (Dudley No 2 Canal)	-
8-9/4/00	Extra dig on H&G (Over)*	Marcus Jones
15-16/4/00	Dig Deep on the Wey & Arun	TBA
13-14/5/00	Barnsley	TBA
27-29/5/00	Extra dig on H&G (Over)*	Marcus Jones
3-4/6/00	Wey & Arun, (Martin and Dan's Birthday)	TBA
10-11/6/00	Extra dig on H&G (Over)*	Marcus Jones

**Note:** Digs marked "Dig Deep" are on projects where work is being co-ordinated under the Dig Deep Initiative, a scheme involving ourselves and three other mobile groups (NWPG, KESCRG and WRG BITM).

**Social Gatherings:** Wednesday night, normally 10 days before each dig i.e, 16<sup>th</sup> February, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 5<sup>th</sup> April etc. at the **Mad Hatter** pub, 200yds south of Blackfriars bridge on the right, from about 19.30 till 23.00. We are usually somewhere round the back of the bar.

\* There will not be socials before the extra Hereford and Gloucester digs.

### Other Events:

16/2/00	London WRG AGM, Mad Hatter pub.
29/4-1/5/00	IWA Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice.
24-25/6/00	BCN Marathon Challenge.
26-28/8/00	IWA National Waterways Festival, Waltham Abbey.
9/00	WRG "Flying Circus", 30 <sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations (TBC).

### Who to contact:

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