

# London WRG News



(Wey & Arun, 11/1/03, Ed Walker)

## Issue 53 January 2003

# From The Editor

It's only just over a month since the last (heavily abbreviated) edition of London WRG News, but as the London WRG AGM is under a week away it was thought that some notice would be good. Despite this short period we have been busy with a good showing at the KESCRG/LWRG Christmas Party, the WRG New Year camp and another joint dig with KESCRG on the Wey and Arun Canal (report on this joint dig is in this issue). Apart from that we have updates on what London WRG will be up to in the next few months including the BCN Cleanup, Canalway Cavalcade and a number of extra socials.

See you at one of the socials!

**Ed Walker**

## Canalway Cavalcade

As you may know Canalway Cavalcade, the canal boat festival at Little Venice will happen, as usual, on the first bank holiday weekend of May (3-5/5/03) and London WRG will be heavily involved as usual. On the Saturday we will be entering a boat into the decorated boat competition (theme this year "Carry on Canals") and on the Sunday and Monday we will be running the Canal game as usual. Both these activities are great fund raisers for the group and so we need as many volunteers to help decorate the boat or work on the stand. If you are interested in helping out or have some good ideas for the decorated boat competition then get in contact or turn up to one of the socials.

Extra Social: To help us sort the final details for the decorated boat competition we will be having an extra social on Wednesday 30/4/03 from 7.30pm in the Warwick Castle pub, Warwick Place.

## Tim Lewis's Photo Site

Tim Lewis's website is fast becoming the first place to get photos of what London WRG get up to, mainly because so many of us have digital cameras now, so for the latest mug shots go to:

*[www.timlewis.org.uk](http://www.timlewis.org.uk)*

## London WRG Christmas Party and Awards

The London WRG Christmas Party was held at the London Canal Museum again this year and the high point of the evening, apart from the alcoholic raffle is always the London WRG awards, after a great deal of discussion by the judges over who should be singled out for each award the final winners were:

### Driving (Steering Wheel)

Martin Ludgate (or more precisely Martin's Morris) for the greatest number of breakdowns in one weekend.

### Leadership (Bull Whip)

Tunji Faley for the leading his first dig on the Thames and Severn.

### Brick Laying (Painted Brick)

Sally Nutt for removing more bricks than she laid on Creeting Lock.

### Lame Excuse (Crutch)

Rick Ansell, for being late to Waterloo, a lot.

### Cooking (Wooden Spoon)

Martin Ludgate for buying new baking trays for use in a hall without an oven.

### New Recruit (Beard)

Nat Belderson mainly because he had a proto-beard already.

Can those people who received awards last year and have not returned them please pass them on to this years incumbents.

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

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

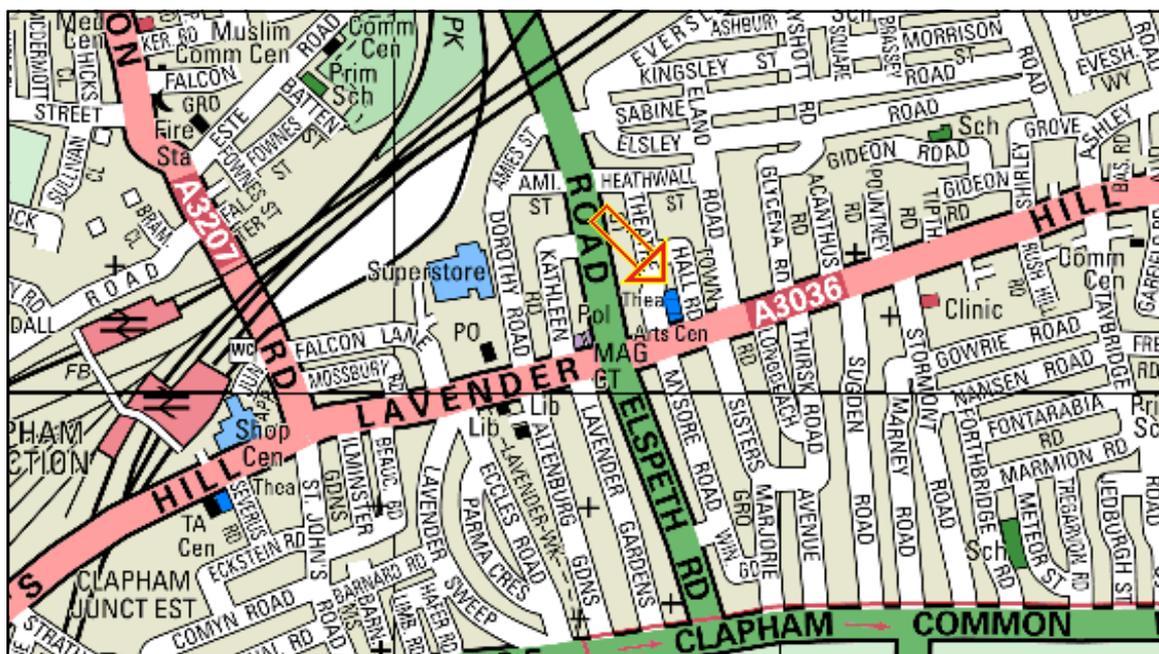
## Extra Social – Battersea Beer Festival

At the last social and prompted by a few pints of Pride/ESB/Chiswick we decided to put in an appearance at the 13th Battersea Beer Festival. London WRG will be hitting the fest on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2003, meeting inside the hall from about 7pm. Suggestions that we meet at the fest on the Friday before the dig have been quashed by the management (read the van drivers).

The fest itself is at the Battersea Grand Hall (behind the Battersea Arts Centre) on Lavender hill (map below). Nearest station is Clapham Junction, as this is south of the river there are no underground stations nearby but the over ground service from Victoria or Waterloo is very good and there are a lot of buses.

Entry to the fest will be £3 (£2 for CAMRA members), glass deposit and beer (cider and perry as well) obviously will be on top of this. Food will also be available. This is quite a small fest as they go but it always has at least 100 different types of real ale on and the food was very good last year, There also seems to be more seating and space in general than other festivals.

Further details are available at <http://beerfest.org/>



# AGM And BeerFest

## London WRG AGM

The London WRG AGM and social will be held in the “Jugged Hare” pub on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003 at around 19.30. Come along and get involved in the running of the group and help answer the perennial questions about where shall we go digging, what social events shall we run, what tools and equipment should we buy and who will volunteer (or be volunteered) to organise all this! More seriously we have a large number of things that need to be sorted out as we have a large number of “To Be Arranged” (TBA) digs this year as there is not much work at our Dig Deep sites.

# Working Party Reports

**Wey & Arun 11 – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2003, Scrub bash at Furzen Woods.**

Maria & I were slightly unfortunate to volunteer for this weekend, back at the last AGM (2002). At the time it was not realized it would be a joint dig with our friends from Kescrg. The other point was we did not realize that it would be on the Wey & Arun.

The normal preparation started about a month before the dig, which meant emails were flying around before Christmas. Fast Eddie sorted the Accommodation etc but he was doing his best to confuse everyone by publishing the wrong date. (I think it's his age really). Maria had spoken to Maureen and Brian (Kescrg) saying she would be happy to cook if they wanted to go on site, they accepted the offer.

We slowly received emails back from people who wanted to come and play and others, who had double booked themselves (Andi). At some point the site changed because it was water logged (on the W & A that's normal).

The lists of people coming was getting longer, we even coaxed Mark Anthony or is it Mark Richardson or was MK2, he decided that playing with a saw (later a brush cutter), would be better than the decorating.

Maria & I were busy speaking to people who had used the accommodation in the past and finding out what we needed to take. The kitchen we were told was small and instead of swing the preferable cat this was swing the mouse! It might have some electric rings but no one could remember a cooker! So we decided what we would cook, but could not think of a pud. But we went shopping on the Thursday before the dig, only buying the breakfast and

lunch food. Even though we would be going in Maria's Land Rover, what with Helen Dobbie Taking up all the back seat and the two little dogs in the boot, we would not have much room (roll on when the six wheeler is back on the road)

Friday arrived, Helen arrived at the boat yard, the car was loaded and we set off. Easy journey to Guildford, went to our favorite Kebab shop. This was my first error I was driving so I had Helen and Maria munching away on the kebab whilst I'm driving along. It must be a form of torture. Second error was not realizing how dirty the headlights were after coming off the Motorway.

Instructions were good shame that I could not see the pond until I had passed it, but there was a convenient Car park for me to turn around in, and to clean the headlights. Back on our way find the hall was easy someone had thrown a big red transit in the carpark.

In the accommodation it was getting packed Maria's 1<sup>st</sup> job was to find a bed space and mine was to eat my Kebab. A quick look around the hall, showed the hall has obviously been refurbished recently. The Kitchen on the smallish size had a shiny cooker with grill and oven. Then it was down to the pub to meet the others.

Informed that Fast Eddie was arriving first thing Saturday morning with Kescrg trailer and cooking utensils. Alarm clock went off and out off bed Maria & I jump, get dressed etc to find no Fast Eddie. Oh that's a bugger we say, looking around the kitchen no pots or pans anywhere except the grill pan. Decided to make a start with grilling the sausages. Message from Fast Eddie, he was just down the road, and would be with us in minutes.

After breakfast because of the numbers I had to use the Land Rover to shuffle people to site and then come back, to help Maria make lunch. During the lead up to the camp I had been asked to give a person a call that wanted to come to a camp but he lived in Stroud. John Taylor (Tay for short) was going to arrive at the accommodation.

# Working Party Reports

Both Maria & I had seen this car go past, after the second or third time, I went out and the someone was standing by the car in a layby near us, asked if he was looking for us and he was. So Tay, Maria & myself went off to site, with the lunch.

After trying to find the site I knew where to park the car, we walked to what we thought was a large fire. After several sightings decided it must have been a Kesegr fire because it was feeble. After walking for at least half-hour we find site, and soon after a quick cup of coffee it's off to work we go.

Looking at the fire they were a let down hardly anything, so me being me I jumped on it, it got my boots nice and hot but it also made the fire come to life. Lunch was eaten and Maria & I had to then go off and do the rest off the shopping. (Tesco's did well),

What we had not realized was during this walking to find the site my mobile fell off my belt. After looking could not see it Maria had retraced our steps, every time you called it went straight to answer machine.

Back at the accommodation Maria & I started to prepare the vegetables two large pots full later, the stove was going well, Maria had decided to make Apple crumble that was prepared, garlic butter and herb butter was prepared for the French sticks.

The rabble had arrived back from site during all this, Wine was opened, beers poured and I could not drink, I had arranged to pick Andi up from the railway station, so she could at least go on site Sunday. Martin drove the mini bus to the Pub in the next village as it was found ours was closed until 19:00hrs. Martin then volunteered to stay sober and collect them when it was scoff time (thanks Martin)

Even better when Martin come in he said here is a present and it was my mobile. Some walkers out with their dogs had picked it up and they tried a few numbers and 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> number they tried happened to be Martin's. He was about 50 yards away from where they were. (Cheers again Martin)

After scoff, washing up etc I collected Andi from the station and then it was to the pub (surprising that).

Next Morning alarm went off Maria & I got up did the breakfast, our dogs Major and Bess decided to wake a few people up.

Bit later onto site today well it is Sunday. A lot of work was cleared in the morning, I was given a lesson on how to make a fire, and while this was going on the fire was small? Uninspired Maria & I looked for something to do. Arrived at the next fire after having been told is was struggling, to find the fire was going very well and it was getting rid off everything that was being thrown on it. (So much for the lesson on making fires!).

At lunchtime Maria & I and some others went back to the accommodation to start clearing up etc. As a lot of the work had been done by then. Martin after the site was cleared took the minibus and people too see the Aqueduct that has just been restored. When they returned to the accommodation in less than 2 hours we were locking the hall door and on our merry way home.

I think everyone enjoyed them selves; hopefully next dig, Maria & I will be able to do some site work! A good group of volunteers, about 24 – 25 turned up.

It was a shame the work consisted more of garden-ing instead of a proper scrub bash that you can get your teeth into, with the numbers we had, we could have made a very worth while contribution. But it was not the original site we were going to be at.

**Moose & Maria**

# From The Archives

## Seventeen... err 18... 19... 20 years of Canalway Cavalcade

London Region IWA's ever-popular Canalway Cavalcade rally every May Day Bank Holiday at Little Venice has been going since 1993, and London WRG have been there every time - usually taking part in the Pageant of Boats. Here is the third instalment of what began as Martin's memories of 17 years of bad puns, ridiculous costumes, bizarre displays, beer, fun and fund-raising... but since it's now three years since I wrote the first two instalments, it has now become two decades of wrestling with string, Sellotape, hardboard and pissed-off harbourmasters...

The last instalment ended with our 1990 'Restore the canals of Mars' effort. I almost ended it with a comment about Martians and Martianesses with reference to a certain unfortunate incident on the tideway around that time, but thought that such a comment might have been thought to be in rather poor taste then. (Indeed, thinking about it, its taste hasn't really improved much since then. A bit like the beer in the 'Bridge House'?)

Anyway, come 1991 we were all set to commemorate the imminent reopening of the Basingstoke Canal with our entry in the pageant, but unfortunately it turned out that all of us were so busy helping with the Cavalcade organisation, running the WRG stand and tombola and various other things that we wouldn't have had anyone left to go on the boat. Given that even 'Fulbourne' hasn't been there enough times that it can find its own way to Camden and back without crew, we decided to give the pageant a miss. Which brings us to...

## 1992: Giving it some welly!

This being the 10<sup>th</sup> event, the organisers decided that the theme would be 'anniversaries'. Most people decorated their boats to look like birthday cakes with 10 candles on them, but we decided to celebrate a rather less well-known anniversary: 175 years of the Wellington Boot.

We all wore wellies, we made welly-shaped beer glass holders, we made a pair of enormous cardboard wellies (which Jude and Rachel hid inside, so that they could leap out as we passed the judges) and we made a huge amount of welly-shaped cardboard bunting in lots of jolly colours with which we decorated the boat.

Unfortunately due to a combination of:

- (a) the fact that much of the bunting had been painted in jolly colours with non-washable poster paints...
- (b) the rain and...
- (c) one Mike Palmer and one Roger Burchett appearing on the horse-bridge as we arrived in the pool, armed with buckets of water to 'test' how waterproof our wellies were...

...we ended up with not only the bunting but also ourselves and the boat painted in lots of jolly colours.

This was also our first use of Rupert's boat 'Ben', with its big flat deck - ideal for putting on a display with lots of people involved in it - and with Rupert at the helm, dressed as the Duke of Wellington.

Sadly we once again failed to convince the judges - despite the fact that this year they included a real live Duke in their number. Perhaps the way we dressed Rupert as a Duke - in a Lambeth Council donkey jacket with 'DUKE' written on the back in yellow masking-tape - failed to impress His Grace.

## 1993: Victory at last - after 200 years!

Around 1992-3 British Waterways came up with the idea of 'Canals 200', to commemorate the bicentenary of the height of the waterway-building 'Canal Mania' and I think we managed to demonstrate what a bunch of canal maniacs we all were!

Actually that's not really true - this was one of the most serious displays we've ever done. Once again we used 'Ben', and this time we divided the flat deck into two halves. The front section featured a group of 1790s navvies wearing gaudy waistcoats, hobnail boots, stocking-caps and trouser legs tied up with string, with some replica wooden tools and a wheelbarrow that was so convincingly rickety that it had to be repaired three times on its way from the Bridge House to the boat. The wheelbarrow was towed by Basingstoke the pantomime horse, reincarnated as an 18<sup>th</sup> century canal contractor's workhorse. The rear half of the boat featured some 1990s WRG canal restoration 'navvies' with modern tools and safety clothing. Both halves featured a large number of placards tied to the sides of the hull with names of all the canals that were being worked on in the 1790s and the 1990s - and one or two canals appeared in both.

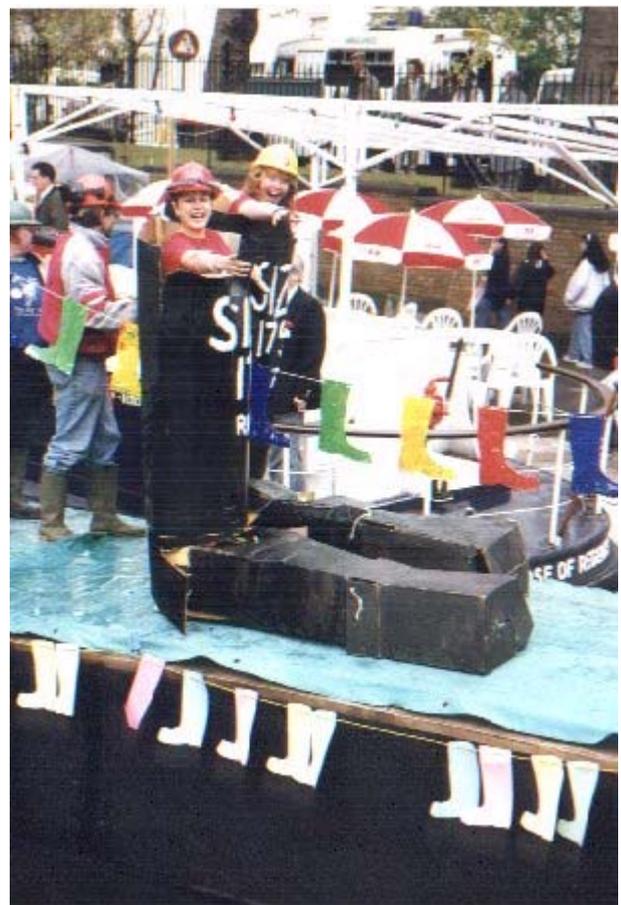
The judges must have been impressed because they finally awarded us the coveted Marcus Boudier Trophy. As one well-known Cavalcade committee person was heard to say at 3am as the victory celebrations were still in full (and loud) swing (fuelled by large quantities of Ron's home-made 'Carrot Diesel' wine) on the deck of 'Ben', and the strains of 'Ironing my goldfish' and 'Mud, glorious mud' echoed around the basin...

**"Now you know why we only let them win it once every 10 years!"**

# From The Archives

**More next time** - by which time it will probably have to be titled '21 years of Canalway Cavalcade' anyway because we'll have had another Cavalcade by then... speaking of which (and the whole point of Ed asking me to write this!) - what are we going to do for this year's event? The theme is 'Carry on canals' - make of that what you will...

**Martin Ludgate**



Size 200 Wellies! (Cavalcade 1992, Tim Lewis)

# London WRG Dates List

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

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

**Working Parties:** Transport available Friday evening in the London WRG minibus; meet by the post box outside Costa Coffee 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
8-9/2/03	Dig Deep on the Basingstoke Canal	Andi/Helen/Ed
1-2/3/03	Dig Deep on the Wey & Arun Canal	Dave Moore
22-23/3/03	BCN Cleanup, Salford Junction, Birmingham	Aileen Butler
12-13/4/03	TBA	TBA
17-18/5/03	Dig Deep on the Basingstoke Canal	TBA
7-8/6/03	TBA	TBA
5-6/7/03	TBA	TBA
2-3/8/03	Dig Deep on the Wilts & Berks Canal	TBA

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

**Social Gatherings:** Tuesday night, normally 11 days before each dig i.e. 28<sup>th</sup> January (AGM), 18<sup>th</sup> February etc. at the **Jugged Hare** pub 400 yards South of Victoria Station along Vauxhall Bridge Road, from about 19.30 till 23.00.

## Other Events:

28/1/03	LWRG AGM, Jugged Hare Pub	-
6/2/03	Extra Social, Battersea Beer Festival	Ed Walker
4-6/4/03	Aston Locks Opening	-
30/4/03	Extra Social, Warwick Castle Pub, Little Venice	-
3-5/5/03	Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice	-
10-11/5/03	WRG Training Weekend	Centrally Booked

## Who to contact:

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