

London WRG News



Sal and Martin collect the best decorated boat prize on behalf of London WRG at Canalway Cavalcade (Tim Lewis)

Issue 55 July 2003

From The Editor

As predicted it has been a busy couple of months for London WRG, in fact we seem to be having a very busy year! Numbers of people out on digs are up, so much so we are now having trouble finding enough work, if anyone out there has a large brick laying job that needs doing, give us a shout! With these large numbers available we have had some excellent digs recently as the dig reports on the next few pages will attest to, thanks to everyone who has been writing me stuff, it makes doing this magazine a whole lot easier.

In this issue of London WRG News, apart from the dig reports from the Hereford and Gloucester, Basingstoke, the H&G again (no we aren't working at Over!) and the Wilts & Berks, we have updates on the WRG "The Right Tool for the Right Job" appeal and the WRG Stamp Bank and finally after many years of promising it: the return of the London WRG "tube map" T-shirts! A lot research into pubs and canal routes, much reading of Mk2's Bumper Book of Canals and after a large amount of design work and consulting we have the new design. For a chance to order this hot piece of WRG fashion see the inserted order form.

We are now in the summer quiet period for London WRG digs, but people from London WRG are to be seen supporting many of the WRG Canal Camps, maybe I will see you on one?

Ed Walker

Change of Address

Dave Moore has moved to:

88 Spring Lane, Whittington, Staffs. WS14 9NA. Tel: 01543 - 432718.

And I have finally exchanged the roar of traffic in Battersea for the bird song of sunny Putney, new address and phone number on page 15.

Canalway Cavalcade 2003

Congratulations to everyone involved in this year's Canalway Cavalcade, it was an excellent event with a very strong London WRG presence, not only with boats (6 I believe) but fund raising, helping with site services, running waterspace and (obviously) propping up the bar. On the fund raising side we earned £850 from a combination of winning the Buckby can for the best-decorated boat by a volunteer group, the waterways name game, splat-the-wrgie and donations. This money has been split between London WRG funds and the "Right Tool" appeal. The traditional Saturday night curry was also the biggest and best ever, 30 of us hit a curry house opposite St. Mary's Hospital (a site visit having been carried out by Matt, Sal and I a few days before, why can't we have more of these?). A thoroughly enjoyable event, thanks to everyone who was there and many thanks to Sal for organising the fundraising, let's hope the National is as good!

AGM Fallout

As you may have seen in the last issue we committed to doing a number of things at the AGM, including tool purchase and recruitment. Well I am pleased to report that most of the tools we decided we needed, have been purchased. At this very moment the Stihl saw is being put to good use on the Grand Western Canal Camp and the new scrub bash kit has also seen a lot of work. Recruitment also seems to be going quite well, Andi seems to be dragging all her mates along and Sal and I seem to be doing very well at getting people drunk in pubs and persuading them to come out digging. In fact we have had so many volunteers out at weekends we have had to start running two buses to the dig from London!

London WRG website:
www.london.wrg.org.uk

Tim Lewis's photo site:
www.timlewis.org.uk/wrgpage1.html

Hereford & Gloucester Canal, 12-13th April 2003

Just for once, I'll try and keep this short, and not burble on about what happened in the days immediately before the dig, whose car was behaving oddly, beer, etc, etc, etc.

For me, there was only one way to deal with the excitement of a forthcoming dig in a constructive manner, and that was to go to the new builders merchants near my office on the Thursday lunch-time and purchase my own hard hat, and (at last!) some new gloves. Now go back and read the first paragraph, Mark. Oops.

We were detailed to arrive at or after 10pm, with beer. This was comparative luxury for me; I had time to throw my kit into the car leisurely, and even to scrape the remains of the last dig off my awful boots before heading Herefordward, stopping only to purchase a quantity of Crème Eggs, it being Nearly Easter. I did this in Hereford Tesco's, where the usual "one in front service" was to be found: there was one checkout open and it was in front of me. A kindly local woman turned around and said "D'you waaaant ter goo in frant of mee, with thoose egggs?", which I thought was nice. Now go back and read the first paragraph *again*, Mark. Double Oops.

The accommodation was a rather picturesque Victorian village hall, which I found parked behind Beastie, aka Marcus' Land Rover. Marcus himself I found parked in front of a large woodburning stove, which he had stoked up big-style. I sat quietly sweating, drinking a beer and eating the remains of the pepperoni pizza I had done for tea, which considering Marcus doesn't drink and is vegetarian was most polite of me (not). Eventually, after a cross-country kit-borrowing marathon of epic proportions, NJF arrived and several other members of London wrg were surgically removed (Sally via a collision with the roof) and filled with beer for convalescent purposes.

Working Party Reports

Oh *canals*? You want me to talk about canals? Well, the site was on the outskirts of Hereford (behind South Hereford Garages, should you feel like having a nosey) on a stretch of barely-in-water canal. Of course, the parts that appeared to not be in water were in fact sodden to a depth of, well, at least one welly, and several members of the crew were stricken as they attempted to cross the canal to the towpath side. Even after Richard Cool and Andi had tested the mud, Sal still had to have a go herself just to make sure. Now you will be thrilled to know that chivalry is Officially Not Dead in London WRG. Ed sprung to the rescue, and promptly got a wellyful of black goop himself whilst pulling Sally out. His walk carried a 50% squelch for the rest of the day.

The first task, which covered much of the work site, was to remove a number of stumps. Some of these were flippin' yoooge, so a tractor was brought in to assist. It was at this point that Marcus had a great idea. In addition to fetching building materials and dropping them to site, Beastie could be driven into the field adjoining the towpath, hitched-up Tirfor-style to the big stumps via a chain, and driven off with the stump being left with no choice but to follow. This "automotive Phill Cardy" arrangement proved most useful, and judging by the occasional manic grin from Marcus, quite good fun too.

Working Party Reports

The second task was to extend an outfall, via a culvert, across the towpath so that the path could be reinstated above it. The grille was removed from the old frontage of the outfall and put to one side whilst Matt worked on the formwork which would enable us to place a concrete slab as a “roof” across the existing concrete “floor and sides”. Ed put the new London WRG Stihl saw to good use cutting up some scrap metal sheeting to use as the “ceiling” for the slab. I can testify, having used it to cut some steel rods to length, that this is one Really Useful Engine, and well worth its purchase price. Sal and I, meanwhile, arranged said steel rods in a pretty pattern in the grass, and somehow ended up with a steel reinforcement lattice for the slab in exactly the right dimensions. In true WRG fashion, it was entirely held together with cable ties.

Another little joblet that was progressing nicely was to remove the barbed wire from the fence which closed off the towpath, and then remove said fence in order to extend the site right up to an infilled section above where we were working. Richard duly removed the concrete fence post, and it was, erm, duly put to good use.

Lunch break was taken back at the mobile dentists’ office (!) and involved numerous cakey and chocolatey items. Quote of the day, 1: Lesley (with lunch in hard hat): “I’ve got one ham sandwich and one tuna sandwich, so why do I have a cheesy helmet?” Quote of the day, 2: Richard (appropriating a cherry Bakewell): “I don’t like glace cherries.” Ed: “I’ll take your cherry, Richard!” Richard: “Gulp...”

Later, the outfall job continued with Sal taping down polythene sheeting (disguised as a load of opened-out bin bags) onto the formwork to get ready for the concrete pour. So was Matt, but he wasn’t using quite as much tape as Sal... A very helpful local resident (thank you, *sir!*) had allowed not only the H&G folks to have the materials dropped on his driveway, but also us to use his 200-litre water butt and electricity socket. And may I say now, publicly, how sorry I am for breaking the plastic handle off said water butt, shortly after realising the reason why the water was pouring in but the bucket wasn’t filling up (see: lyrics which go “dear Liza, dear Liza). By the way, when removing the bricks from the trailer, do not take out the ones ballasting the thing first, Mk2!

So, concrete made (with slightly arthritic mixer) poured and site made safe (or so we thought) it was time to wander back and see how the rest of the site looked. It looked like a Bob had hit it, of course! So back into NJF and off to the accomm where the delicious, garlicky smell of lasagne, being prepared by chief cook and bottlewatcher Martin Floodgates, met us at the door. It then mingled with the smell of the mud (see: wellyful, above) with less than pleasant results in the nostril department.

We were soon enjoying several panfuls of lovely lasagne and broccoli, washed down with whatever we could get our hands on. In my case it was wine in one hand and beer in the other. This was followed by a most gooey treacle tart, with washing-up consequently needing to be tackled in shifts. Not Welsh But Lives There Paul joined us just in time for a trip to a highly recommended pub, which didn’t have Trumpet in the name and wasn’t in the direction in which Adrian (for he had also materialised) was driving the bus. Once it was found the beer was discovered (by me at least) to be pretty ropey – did anyone have a pint of Woods that wasn’t cloudy and freezing? – so I rectified the situation back at the hall by having some bottled stuff.

The next morning, we encountered Bristol Paul on the road to site, and recruited him to the gang. I hope he *meant* to be there! We re-opened the concreting site to find a log and two bricks had been lovingly thrown into the wet concrete raft. I say lovingly because the “artist” was so proud of his “efforts” that he had signed them. Jason, wherever you are, there is a canal restoration project somewhere just waiting for you to become a permanent structural part of it. I’ll hold you down by the neck whilst Matt and Ed pour the concrete.

Matt restored the damage done by dear Jason and removed the formwork whilst Martin inspected the bricklaying task. We took it in turns to backfill the hole with earth, and a group effort involving the linking of arms saw to packing it down into a vaguely towpath-shaped arrangement.

Lunchbreak saw even more cakey, chocolatey and donutty items being consumed than Saturday. Afterwards, as manic Tirforing continued throughout the site, Martin built a brick doobery resembling a pizza oven on the front of the outfall, in local red bricks and blue engineering examples. Into this the grille was re-instated. A new site closure was built using Heras fencing instead

Working Party Reports

of ‘orrible barbed wire. The tools were cleaned up using a handy tap (I hope the factory doesn’t view their CCTV footage *every* Monday morning!) and puzzled over whose strop was whose whilst Sal (very) carefully reversed NJF around to pick up the kit.

Back at the hall, goop-covered clothing was removed, the floor was swept to within an inch of Andi’s ability to breathe (sorry, Andi – I think we may have been a touch over-zealous) and numerous minutes were spent peering into the engine bay of Sleepy Dave’s Golf, which was acting strangely again, this time by not breaking down.

Oh, and the hall now has a log pile which is the envy of the parishioners.

Mark Antony “Mk2” Richardson



Matt putting the finishing touches on the concrete cap (Ed Walker)

Working Party Reports

Basingstoke Canal, 17-18th May 2003.

I left work Friday with laughter ringing in my ears. My colleagues found it hilarious that I was choosing to spend my two days outdoors. I was also dubious about the weather forecast. The laughs got louder when I reached Waterloo early. Everyone else had arrived even earlier and they were hidden in the minibus. A couple of calls summed up that Aileen was on her way and Andi was in Colchester.

The journey was smooth and since we had no keys to the accommodation, we sadly ended up in the pub with the bonus of extra drinking time. Needless to say, the pub was drunk dry of Pride. Pete Redway discussed the work for the dig.

On Saturday morning Tunji woke us before Bob had the chance. The first casualty of the day occurred before we left for site when Aileen filled a cup with boiling water and it split. We thought Ed had taken the minibus keys to site but Martin found them in the hall so it was time to get to work.

There were three teams: pipe layers, people who dug holes and refilled them (for entertainment? – No, bywash position and leakage checks – Ed.) and ballast shovellers who laid the towpath. On the way to fill the first of several dumperfuls by hand, we were greeted by the sight of Matt dancing YMCA or Macarena for Nigel on the top of a heap of ballast. It turned out Matt was teaching EIWE (Excavator Instruction Without Excavator).

So far the weather was overcast but dry. Nigel filled our second dumperful while Martin showed Sally and Richard Cool how to use the roller, prompting yet more smutty jokes. The pipes arrived for the pipelayers who were in discussion around what appeared to be a hole surrounded by piling.

During lunch it began to rain after a cheeky five minutes of sunshine. We went back to shovel another dumperful of ballast by hand. Martin optimistically told us it would brighten up soon. To be fair it did brighten up (at ten to six as we were packing up), by which time we'd lost count of how many times he'd tried to convince us.

Sally and I navigated the dumper with sand to the pipe layers. On our return a man in a white van nearly collided with us, clearly mesmerised that hard hats also fit girls' heads. Matt's desired location for the sand meant that we couldn't get the dumper past so the next load of ballast was barrowed back and forth by Rick and Richard. This load was man handled three times instead of the usual two we were used to. Rick took to the roller and the job was over for the day.

Lesley and Nigel's hole digging team had to refill their hole. The pipelayers laid one piece of pipe. The trench was so deep Ed almost couldn't be seen. Richard Thomas and Dave came back to the accommodation looking like they'd been swimming in a mud bath. Unfortunately for them there was no shower.

Jenny cooked a fabulous meal and we followed tradition by revisiting the pub where we found a new word puzzle – DGE (Deliberate Grammatical Errors).

The first dumper of ballast on Sunday proved challenging, not because our muscles ached but we'd done such a good job Saturday, the heaps of ballast were smaller so reaching the dumper required more strength. Rick kept singing a coal mining song.

We filled in a crater that Marcus had rolled for us down at lock 8. Nigel came to our rescue by filling the dumper for us only for us to find it required manual emptying. We were still handling ballast twice over. Sally's "Shovelometer" reached 42 tonnes by the time we completed the towpath.

The pipelayers got their second pipe in and Bob used the wackerplate while Matt played with the excavator. The rain held off, but flirted with us, all day.

All that remains is to thank Ed for organising the weekend and Jenny for feeding us so well.

Natalie Parker

And the view from the trenches:

“It’s the Basingstoke, we must be pipe laying again, yes?” pretty much the conversation I had with Pete Redway before the dig, the only advantage being we were laying backpump pipes which are steel and less easily nadgered. Saturday was hard going, some of us were on site by 8.45am, Marcus led off the survey team to look at bywashes while Matt and I started on backpump pipes. We dealt with the remnants of the “interesting” job that Newbury had getting the last piece of pipe in and started trenching.

While we were grubbing around in the trench, Marcus was doing a mole impression at lock 8 and found that the ominous depression in the lock side was caused by that common Basingstoke disease, “leaky bywash,” think we will be fixing that one on the summer camp!

Matt and I went on a site visit for the summer camp in the afternoon (seemed a reasonable excuse to get out of the rain!) and when we got back we were almost ready to lay the first pipe section. This went in with a lot less effort than had been foreseen, these smaller pipes are far easier to handle than the big bywash pipe we fitted last time. After backfilling with sand and levelling off we realised that it was 8pm and if we did not make it back sharpish we would be turned into tomorrows breakfast by Jenny!

Sunday came off with far fewer problems as everyone knew what we had to do and we had a fresh site to work on. The Saturday pipe was backfilled; a new length of trench dug, piled and the second pipe section of the weekend went in after lunch. Backfilling and tidying up led us to 6pm and we realised it was time to go.

A very busy dig with a lot of manual work, probably explains why I was accompanied by a chorus of snores as I drove back into London! Thanks to everyone who took part.

Ed Walker

Working Party Reports

Hereford & Gloucester Canal, 6-8th June 2003.

We were supposed to be working on the Grand Western Canal this weekend, but last minute site difficulties meant that unfortunately this camp had to be cancelled. Luckily Adrian managed to find us a new site on the Hereford and Gloucester Canal. The trip down on Friday was interesting. Two mini-buses meant that one could go ahead to the accommodation while the other (GCW) went to pick up Martin from Reading.

The journey in GCW was without audio entertainment, as we didn’t have the code in order to be able to work the radio. This was because Sal had run the battery down earlier (probably by doing something silly and girlie like plugging her hairdryer into the cigarette lighter and then using it for 3 hours).

We ran a bit late due to circling inner Reading for an hour looking for Martin, so we had to phone our drink orders ahead to the advance party who had travelled in NJF. We arrived just as last orders were being served, and Bungle managed to make us look dodgy by wandering round with GCW’s radio under his arm.

On Saturday we arrived on the site of the future Newent Wharf. Suspicions were aroused when we arrived at the site. It was located in “Old Station Road”, the wharf remains consisted of two partially buried parallel walls looking rather like station platforms, the canal itself ran on an embankment, yet didn’t seem to have any banks to keep the water in and the canal bed was made of compacted stone rather like ...railway ballast. It was time to face the truth. We were on a railway camp.

Working Party Reports

Having renamed ourselves the London Railway Recovery Group, we set about our tasks. One team focussed on scrub-bashing, chopping down many trees and removing undergrowth. This was mainly in the station area, but also extended along the line of the railway/canal, and ivy was also removed to uncover some impressive red sandstone bridge abutments that had previously carried the railway across a nearby road.

Richard spent the day in Blue excavating buried sections of platform. All sorts of debris was uncovered including several bits of car, the porcelain base of a toilet, and eventually ...a station platform.

A third task was putting in RSJs as heavy-duty fenceposts around the boundary of the site. Fly-tipping had been a problem prior to the recent acquisition of the site by the H&G Canal Trust (hence why Richard was having to excavate the platform), so the insertion of the fenceposts was a priority. The RSJs were cut and manhandled into holes dug through the tarmac using a JCB pneumatic drill-type thingy. The holes needed to be about 2' deep as the posts were so large. Once positioned within each hole, the posts were levelled up and concreted in. Getting water for the concrete was fun as the river was down a very steep bank and there was no bottom in the bucket.

Some of us stayed in lateish on the site in order to get as many posts concreted in as possible. We were only on site for 11 hours that day though.

Martin did a brilliant BBQ in the evening and we ended up in the pub again. I don't seem to remember it being raided, but I'm sure there were policemen wandering around in flak-jackets at one point. Maybe they had heard about suspicious characters having been in there the night before!

On Sunday, we put in more fenceposts. This time, rather than RSJ's, they were concrete. They were about 8' tall with angled anti-scale arms on top facing inwards. Possibly this is in order to prevent wrgies from escaping? These posts will use chainlink, rather than panel fencing. The need for big blokes to lift the fenceposts into the holes meant that Tim actually had to do some work for a change.

The panels we had did not quite fit between the RSJ posts we had put in the day before, and various lengths of wire and suchlike were needed to put the panels in place.

Martin used Blue to remove tree stumps and level part of the site where the fencing would allow widened road access. This was necessary in order to provide adequate passing for lorries in the road next to the site.

Although the site was an old railway line, the actual aim is to build the new canal *on top* of the disused railway (which was partially aligned along the original canal formation). The old station platforms will eventually be extended in height to form a wharf either side of the canal, and the two fine old red sandstone bridge abutments will eventually carry the canal across the nearby road.

As this was my first experience of leading a camp, I must say that I had fun poncing around in a hi-vis jacket looking important, but it did seem a bit like herding cats at times! New(ish) people Jean and Andy seemed to enjoy themselves, which was good, but hopefully everybody enjoyed the weekend. Thanks must go to Adrian for managing to find this site at short notice, and to Martin (and others) for provision of breakfast and BBQ.

The end.

Nat Belderson

London WRG News

Wilts & Berks Canal, 5-6th July 2003

It started out, in the planning stages, as a trip to the Ipswich and Stowmarket Canal as a joint dig with Essex, but finished up at the Wilts & Berks. Planning, and I use the word loosely; fell apart when I had to go away for work purposes at a crucial time. Thanks, Matt, for stepping in. So, different location, Essex dropping out like the proverbial, and, to cap it all, no transport – the van was off on its summer jaunt around the Canal Camps. At the end of the day, we had a goodly turnout, despite my best efforts to sabotage the event. I must say a special thanks to Kay for all the meals.

We were working at Pewsham on the three locks and dry dock. The work was ‘back to basics’. Chamber clearance with picks, mattocks, shovels and wheelbarrows as we extended the access to the nearside lock wall that, rumour had it, had been used for demolition practice during the war. Either they used very neat charges or someone had done some extensive tidying up as the remains of the wall were very neat, once we had established the line and dug through the mounds on earth and clay that had settled on it. Various holes were dug to ascertain the depth of the lock chamber and attempts to find the cill. All very ‘Time Team’, without the eccentrics – on second thoughts we can produce enough of our own! The long-term aim is to restore the lock chamber so that it can act as a dam for the next stretch towards Foxham that the society had just purchased and wish to restore to a navigable state.

Tea Break at Pewsham (Tim Lewis)



Working Party Reports

The remainder of the group spent the weekend uncovering the dry dock alongside the third and lowest lock of the flight. Several theories were developed about the construction and use of the dock, which, considering the close proximity of a very large oak tree was in remarkably good condition. The tree has grown between the remaining lock wall and the dry dock without having much of an adverse effect on either.

Sunday saw some of us doing some tidying up at what is euphemistically called ‘Double bridge’, not because it has two arches, etc, but because it appears to be double the width of usual accommodation bridges. No one seems to know why. There are pictures on the Wilts & Berks websites. It is in a parlous state and looks like an unfortunate sneeze would bring the whole lot down. We removed some vegetation, rescued bricks from the parapet that were in the canal bed and generally cleared the area around one bridge hole so that scaffolding could be erected. This is a Dig-Deep project, so the bricklayers could be busy for some time.

Thanks to all for making the effort to turn up, especially following my shambolic organisation. I wonder if the local neighbour ever did find out who was ‘murdered’ on Saturday night!

Allan Scott

Appeal Update

The Right Tool for the Right Job

Appeal Update: 7th July

Thank you:

The purpose of this update is two-fold: Firstly it is to update all those interested in the Appeal in its progress. Secondly, and just as importantly, it is to say a hearty **thank you** to all of you that have already given and to let you know where their money is going. To do this individually would stretch the Appeal team beyond the bounds of any volunteer and divert them from raising the rest of the much needed total. So we apologise for this rather generic thank you but please believe us **we really do send buckets of thanks to all of you that have given to the Appeal.**

Progress to date:

How is the Appeal going? Well the very good news is that **in 4 months we have raised over £30,000!** So we are over a third of the way there. But there is much more to do as many of the items in our 'Shopping List' are urgently needed for projects that start very soon.

The scope of fundraising ideas has been phenomenal, overleaf are just a few that have caught our eye.

However we have started spending the funds already - concrete mixers, brick-saws, hard hats and personal protection kits have all been purchased and will be in action by the time you read this. So it is just possible that **your donation is at work restoring the Waterways right now.**

In addition we are now ready to start negotiations for a new minibus. It will take a bit of 'wheeler dealing' to get what we need at a price most advantageous to the Appeal so if anyone knows of any friendly Ford dealers then please introduce us!

We are also currently in contact with leading Dumper manufacturer, Benford of Leamington Spa, who are keen to support us with a very competitive price. We hope to take advantage of similar contacts where available for the purchase of the other large items of kit.

What else can you expect:

The next major item on the calendar is the **Murder Mystery Cruise** in Bath on 2nd August. This will be the cultural high point of the Appeal. Those of you who find the WRG pantomime just a little bit uncouth will find this much more to your liking - an afternoons entertainment while cruising the Kennet and Avon canal near Bath. Real actors performing a murder mystery drama while you enjoy a quality evening meal with wine and waiter service. Only 40 places are available so for those of you who would like to support the Appeal in this unique way please contact Spencer Collins on 07970412490 or see the website (www.wrg.org.uk/appeal.htm).

The fridge freezers purchased by the Appeal will be making their first appearance at this years National Waterways Festival at Beale Park. As part of the Appeal we will be running one of the catering stands - yes, WRG grub comes to the masses! And for the Bank Holiday weekend they will be earning their keep and helping to raise funds before going off on Canal Camps.

How is it all going?

Liz Williamson, Appeal Co-ordinator says "it is going very well so far. It has been amazing the response we have had, and the variety of things people have done to raise money. We've still got a long way to go, but if we keep coming up with ideas, we **will** reach our goal of £75,000."

Here are just a few of the ways that people have come up with to contribute to the Appeal:

- The Leaflet appeal – we feel no shame in placing this first and foremost in our list, for individual donations make up the vast bulk of the cash so far. WRG has always been remarkably lucky in the strength and number of its so called armchair supporters. Individual donations have ranged from £1

to £1000 and every one represents a significant contribution to waterway restoration. Yes the new minibus may well be important to get the volunteers to site but so are the gloves that mean they can work once they get there.

- Aston Locks Reopening Race Night – organised by Brian Bayston, and supported by over a hundred members of Shropshire and Border Counties branch of IWA and WRG. This has raised £3000 pounds, part in donations on the night and part in corporate “matching” sponsorship. This was further increased by a donation from Shropshire and Border Counties branch, bringing the total to £3500.
- IWA branches have been generous in their donations, which have come from their own fundraising efforts. One example of this is the Northampton Boat Show made enough profit for IWA Northants branch to donate £1000. Many other branches have been equally generous.
- Donations of equipment such as a concrete mixer, donated by Roger Davis. Other individuals and groups have used their contacts to obtain such items as a Bricksaw, and a tirror winch.
- Corporate sponsorship – this has been one of the most surprising, and pleasing, successes of the Appeal. Many companies will donate “matching funds” if one of their employees is involved in voluntary work, which can double the amount raised at an event. This was a major factor in the final total of the Aston Reopening Race Night. Barclays, Vodafone and Scottish and Southern Energy have all contributed significant sums to the Appeal.
- Company Donations - we have been very pleased with the support of the Waterway Community - an example being a donation from Fox-boats who held a charity event at their marina and shared the proceeds with the Appeal. Additionally Avery, Knight and Bowler of Bath were able to give a very generous discount on their specialist stone masonry tools.

Appeal Update

- Perhaps the most unlikely contributor has been Mr **Gordon Brown and his Treasury chums** So far Gift Aid has contributed around £4,000 to the Appeal so please do remember to fill in the Gift Aid declaration if you can.

So as you can see there are many ways to support this Appeal and once again **we thank everyone who has contributed for their generosity and support.** WRG volunteers are out at work using the tools bought from this Appeal right now.

Mike Palmer



Part of London WRG’s contribution - Splat The WRGie! Richard Cool at Cavalcade (Tim Lewis)

London WRG Overdose?

Think you are digging too much? Always seem to be getting a minibus somewhere? Worried you may be OD'ing on the canal restoration? Check this handy guide of symptoms compiled from extensive studies into London WRG regulars.

You know you've been in London WRG too long when:

- You drive dumpers or vans more than cars.
- Your local pub is 150 miles away from where you live.
- You receive the Screwfix "big stuff" catalogue.
- and read it.
- Your friends ask, "Which canal is it this weekend?" when you say you can't go to a party.
- Your parents get you round to do brick laying or demolition jobs.
- You call your house/flat "the accommodation"
- You can't remember when the last weekend was that you slept in a bed.
- Trips to the supermarket include buying vast amounts of beer/wine/port for the next weekend.
- You put your boots on to go to the loo in the middle of the night.
- All your stuff is drilled, numbered and kept in curver boxes.
- You keep your beer at the end of your bed.
- You have forgotten what your hairstyle actually is.
- You carry half the contents of your garage/workshop/shed/understairs cupboard hanging from your waist via a crabbie.
- Most of your jackets are reflective and all are filthy
- You can't go to a smart event wearing short (let alone no) sleeves
- Your colleagues think you're an archaeologist
- You look twice at every passing red transit van and make an audible 'coo' upon passing plant hire/sales sites
- Your idea of a cute member-of-the-opposite-dooberly is someone in a hard hat, with a slightly dirty but maniacally grinning face, well-used t-shirt, hi-vis, grubby shorts with crabbies various attached, chunky socks and steelie boots, who can drive transits, diggers and dumpers with aplomb and knows everything there is to know about 'star trek'/cars/beers/navigating to far-flung corners of Britain.
- No weekend is complete without Cable Ties or Gaffer Tape
- You don't notice bruises unless they are about 4 inches across and black, small green/yellow ones barely count as bruises!
- You no longer get lost in Reading when collecting a van (well it has to happen eventually!)
- Making garlic bread involves the use of at least a bulb of garlic.
- 1/3 of your t-shirts are red.
- 1/3 of your trousers are combats
- 1/3 of your footwear has steel toecaps.
- A machete doubles as a handy steak knife.
- Sundays have mornings.
- You give plant drivers on building sites marks out of 10.
- You put 3½ spoonfuls of sugar in your tea on a Saturday.
- You put 3½ spoonfuls of tea in your sugar on a Sunday.
- You get to Waterloo without being able to recall how you got there or when you packed.
- You always carry insulating tape.
- You can remember the entire round of drinks for the whole of LWRG for as long as the bar keeps serving!
- Moving house is planned around the camps schedule.

Ed Walker
Mark "Mk2" Richardson
Sal Nutt
Richard "Cool" Worthington

Snippets



**Buckets of
FUN
for Everyone!**

DIGGERLAND
www.diggerland.com

**A great fun day out!
GUARANTEED**

Where kids & adults
can drive real JCBs!
Entry only £2.50 per person.

Seen when the London WRG (Hill Walking) section went on a tour of Sellafield, an advert for an excavator theme park! Although at £1.50 for 5 minutes in the cab it is a bit expensive, at those rates a typical day on site would cost £126! An idea for some fund raising?



**I need your clothes,
your safety boots,
and your excavator**

Stamp Bank & Boat Trip

The WRG Stamp (and lots of other things) Bank

Steve and Mandy Morley of Essex WRG operate the WRG Stamp Bank which is a central collecting point for various stamps, vouchers and recyclables which are then passed on to different canal societies around the country to raise funds for canal restoration projects.

Stamps: all used postage stamps (UK and foreign). Please trim the envelope to leave about 1/4 inch on all sides of the stamp.

Trading stamps and coupons: it is still possible to redeem obsolete trading stamps eg Green Shield, Co-op etc provided you can track down the company that is the successor to whoever originally issued the stamps, so if you find any of these stamps when you clear out the loft please don't throw them away. Also any petrol tokens etc.

Printer ink cartridges: any type of empty cartridge from a computer inkjet printer, or toner cartridge from a laser printer. These are sold to companies that recycle/refill them.

Aluminium: Steve & Mandy say 'any aluminium', so try offering them a Land Rover body (or a Morris Traveller roof) and see what their reaction is... Seriously, aluminium foil (make sure it's real aluminium, not the silver-painted plastic stuff), drink cans (check that they have the 'ALU' recycling symbol on them), ring-pulls off any drink cans (the lids are always aluminium, even if the rest of the can is steel) and old saucepans.

Die-cast toy cars: Matchbox, Corgi, Dinky or any other make of model car, no matter what condition it is in.

If you're going to the IWA National Waterways Festival at Beale Park, near Reading, this August Bank Holiday weekend, please bring all your contributions to the Stamp Bank with you and take them to the collecting point near the WRG stand, in the IWAMarquee.

If you're not going to Beale Park, either give your stuff to somebody who is going, or send it to Steve & Mandy Morley at IWA/WRG Stamp Bank, 33 Hambleton Grove, Emerson Valley, Milton Keynes MK4 2JS. If you've got heavy or bulky items to send, it's probably worth giving them a ring on Tel 01908 520090 or an email (steve@morleytowers.org.uk) first, as it's possible that a convenient drop-off point can be organised, to save the cost of postage.

Martin Ludgate

London WRG Annual Boat Trip

Tuesday 15th July saw the return of the annual London WRG canal boat trip, last run (if I remember correctly) in 1996! An intrepid bunch of WRGies plus various other people who had been dragged/invited along, met up at Camden lock for a trip on the London Waterbus Company's boat "Water Buffalo" down toward Ladbroke Grove and back. Confusion ensued for several people even before they reached the boat due to the fact Camden Lock isn't actually called Camden Lock but Hampstead Lock! By the time we left we were still short of a number of people who would have to join us en route. As we cruised around past London Zoo we received a phone call from Steve Davis, "Could we slow down a bit so he could catch up?" a few minutes later a figure was seen striding up behind us! We were tempted to keep the boat just slightly ahead of him so he would never quite catch up but decided it would be a little cruel! Back at more normal speed again we headed through the Maida Vale tunnel and into Little Venice. Many comments were made that it doesn't look right without all the boats in it and we continued under the horse bridge after looping behind the island. During this idyllic trip much food was eaten, beer drunk and the conversation ranged over topics like the care of PhD supervisors, housing in London and possibly most importantly: pubs on the new LWRGT-shirt!

Reaching the Ladbroke Grove Sainsbury's we turned around and headed back toward Little Venice and Camden, we stopped briefly to pick up an extremely smart Martin who had just made it in from work. After a very smooth run back to Camden, we went our merry way to take our chances with the Underground.

Many thanks to Tunji for organising the evening, to Lesley and her team who provided the wonderful buffet, to Andi for another of her never ending salads and the London Waterbus Company for putting up with us. Contrary to usual LWRG events it was a very civilised evening cruise, but I am sure we will be back to normal by the next social!

Ed Walker
London WRG News

London WRG Dates List

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

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
2-3/8/03	Dig Deep on the Wilts & Berks Canal	Matt Taylor
6-7/9/03	Froghall, Caldon Canal	Tunji Faleye
27-28/9/03	H&G, Newent (TBC)	Sal Nutt
18-19/10/03	Dig Deep on the Wilts & Berks Canal, TBC	Aileen Butler
8-9/11/03	Bonfire Bash, site TBC	Centrally Booked
6-7/12/03	KESCRG/LWRG Xmas Party	-
17-18/1/04	TBA	Moose & Maria
7-8/2/04	TBA	Tim Lewis

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. 22nd July, 26th August, 16th September 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:

5/8/03	Extra social, Great British Beer Fest, Olympia	Ed Walker
22-25/8/03	National Waterways Festival, Beale Park, Reading	-
29-31/8/03	Dorset Steam Fair	-
16/12/03	London WRG Xmas Party, Canal Museum?	Lesley McFadyen
29/1/04	London WRG AGM, Jugged Hare pub	-

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London WRG on tea break (Alan Lines, H&G, April 2003)



Martin stump pulling the easy way (Alan Lines, H&G, June 2003)