

London WRG News



Sal rebuilding the swing bridge abutment (Grantham Canal, Tim Lewis)

Issue 62 October 2005

From The Editor

Autumn again and the pace of London WRG weekends has picked up after the summer break – we now seem to be doing a dig every two weeks! (See page 14 for the up to date diary, anyone fancy leading one of the “TBA’s”?) I hope everyone had a good summer – my (and Liz’s) camp on the H&G came off well with the help of a large number of London WRG regulars, to help make up the numbers in the kit some of our tools also came on holiday as well!

June saw the London WRG tool painting weekend where a few of us got together at Moose’s boatyard to lavish some TLC on the kit. After a hard day plying the paintbrush we got treated to a BBQ before retiring to a wide selection of tents.

A bumper issue of dig reports this time going back as far as the Basingstoke dig in May, we also have an article on the effect of London winning the 2012 Olympics on the canal system and the minutes from the half AGM.

See people at the Reunion (booking form on page 15, hint, hint!)

Ed Walker

New Tirfor

Thanks to a port-fuelled conversation between Moose, Nigel “Site 1” Baker and I at the end-of-National party, London WRG is now the proud owner of a rather neat 1.6 tonne Tirfor winch with attached cable drum. Bungle has managed to get it safety checked and acquire a tree strop for it – all we need now is the chain! Many thanks to Nigel for donating us this rather useful piece of ballast from his boat – apparently he now has to find another 20kg weight to replace it!

KESCRG/London WRG Xmas Party

The traditional KESCRG/London WRG Xmas party will this year be held on 3-4th December 2005 on the Wilts & Berks canal working on lock three of seven locks – continuing the rebuilding work and repairing the towpath. Accommodation will be in the Wootton Bassett Civic Centre (which we used 2 years ago). The theme for the Saturday evening party will be “Mad Hatters” – continuing on from the theme of the National, the idea is everyone decorates a hat and there will be prizes for the best. Tickets will be available from Ian & Liz at the Bonfire Bash in November priced £15 (cheques made payable to “KESCRG”) or by post to Ian Williamson, 79, Oakley Road Chinnor OX39 4HR. Remember to give details of any food allergies etc. when booking on.

London WRG Xmas Party

The usual London WRG Christmas party will this year be held on the evening of 13th December from about 7.30pm. Liz Wilson has kindly volunteered to host the event this year at her (and Clive’s!) new flat in Swiss Cottage. The evening will cost £6 to cover the buffet, please contact Lesley (lesley@navvies.demon.co.uk) if you intend on turning up so catering can be organised. A polypin of beer may also be purchased – please also tell Lesley if you are interested in this. Liz’s flat is at: Flat 6, New College Court, Finchley Road, Swiss Cottage, London NW3 5EX.

KESCRG/London WRG Barn Dance

The annual KESCRG/London WRG barn dance will be happening on Saturday 18th February 2006, again at Benson Parish Hall. Tickets (£10 including fish and chip supper) will be on sale at both the Bonfire Bash and the KESCRG/LWRG Xmas Party.

Congratulations

Dave “Taz” Tarrant and Jo “Smudge” Smith on their engagement.

Basingstoke Canal, 14-15th May 2005

It being Friday 13th I set off to the Basingstoke canal with some trepidation – surprisingly the journey came off without a hitch. At the almost unheard of time of 8.30pm I met up with Pete, Dippy Claire and Marcus (who required much straightening out after four hours in Beastie). With the Scouts in residence in the hall the only answer was to head to the pub! While Pete detailed the work for the weekend the rest of London WRG dribbled in by car, train and minibus (well only Andy (Sal's) and Martin – the smallest number in the bus ever?) The pub ran out of real beer by about 10 so we started making inroads into the Guinness.

The next day started earlyish – many jokes were made about the dig leader, me, being last out of bed. A good breakfast courtesy of Maria and a wave of navvies headed to site. The work for the weekend was to be on the old Brookwood Mental Hospital site (a case of the inmates returning voluntarily to the asylum?) that has now been turned into a country park. The main jobs were to be constructing a disabled access ramp and removal of the old boundary fence – this was to help with the running of a campaign rally on the site next year.

So while Moose lead a team off to find the fence that required trashing (NWPG had started the work previously) Marcus, Martin, Pete and I hunted for the “obvious” path crossing the ditch that we had to bridge. This being the Basingstoke the bridge would involve burying pipes. After a good half-hour's wandering round we decided that an existing bridge was in the right place but would need a lot of work to make it disabled person rated. So the pipes went back in the van, Andy “Kate”, David Miller, Dippy Claire, Rick A and Jon G started to make concrete bags while Marcus directed Andy (Sal's) in the excavator. By tea break 1 tonne of ballast had been turned into concrete bags, the outline of a ramp was developing and Moose's team had stripped all the chain link fence from the fence posts.

Working Party Reports

Around tea break James the Postie arrived with his Land Rover. Having a Tirfor in the back he was assigned to pulling (posts), unfortunately the Tirfor refused to pull despite 5 people peering at its insides. So after lunch the Land Rover was pressed into use as a surrogate tirfor, which worked very well and kept James amused for the rest of the weekend.

By lunch a further tonne of concrete bags had been made and most of the ramp layout had been done, designing done and altered on the fly. With concrete bags forming the edges of the ramp, Andy was dispatched to a spoil heap found by Pete that would provide the three or four dumper loads of earth Marcus needed for the path.



Pulling fence posts- the easy way (Ed Walker)

Working Party Reports

By the end of the day four dumper loads had been delivered by Sleepy Dave and the spoil heap (which turned out to be the local kids bike ramps) had been reprofiled to order. The fence pulling team had developed their methodology and were going great guns – so much so that we managed to tire out Hurricane Bob, temporarily renamed “Light Breeze Bob”.

Back at the accom and a small team started to undercoat the new Stihl saw and bow saw boxes made by Marcus, everyone else seemed to collapse on their beds! Dinner was Maria’s signature scrumpy and paprika stew with “death at five paces” garlic bread. People were still so tired after dinner (Bob headed home for a shower and a soft bed) that we only just made it down the local pub where the real ale had been restored.



The disabled access ramp (Ed Walker)

Sunday, much like Saturday but quicker – Bob arrived much later than the previous day, we must have tired him out! We were on site by 8.45am though and with Sal taking Andy’s place in the excavator (some excuse about a niece’s birthday party) and Tim and Martin off at the WRG meeting, it was a smaller team than the previous day.

So while David Miller and Sal got on with shifting the last four dumper loads of spoil to make up the access ramp, the fencing team made a start on the 42 remaining posts (Yep, James counted them!).

By lunch Pete had arrived with the tug and barge for us to load the posts into, the last of the fence post had been pulled and the ramp had had two tonnes of ballast applied. After lunch Marcus and co put the finishing layer of 40-to-dust over the ramp and gave it a final wacker plating. The fence pullers started to transport the posts back to the barge – using a Land Rover of course! With the excavator finally free of loading duties I took over and loaded the posts into the skips in the boat – only managing to loose one into the canal!

By 5pm everyone was tired and we headed back to the accom and home. Proving that Didcot is the centre of the universe, GCW’s route home involved meeting Martin and Andy at my flat before they headed back to London.

Many thanks to everyone who worked very hard over the weekend, whether they were shovelling soil/ballast/concrete/roadstone or digging out fence posts – we filled two skips with fence posts and a lot more were left behind. The local OAP’s were very impressed with the new access ramp – it makes a nice change to build something completely in a weekend! Thanks to Nigel’s son Chris for coming on his first weekend – apparently we haven’t put him off and he’ll be back!

Ed Walker

Mon & Brec - 25-26th June 2005 (a few days after Tim's 47th Birthday)

Aka The Elite Excavator Exploration

Friday - drive up there was kinda the storm after the mega sunshine, but we were going to Wales so it had to rain.

Saturday - Frankly breakfast was by Frank. Arrived on site nearly at 9 o'clock(ish) to overcast and drizzly (weather).

Morning was spent imitating Glastonbury 2005 - loadsa mud and no music (Hi Sally and Andy :) mud clay was supplied by Dave and Nigel (the Dumper and Digger), mud slinging was had by all and we also had Bob the human Whacker plate. It rained for 5 minutes whilst we had tea (and coffee) in the visitor centre (along with the coal dragons and the sheep tea towels – it was Wales). Frank got in a hole with a local... to seal the side pond bi-wash outflow (erm thing) they were also playing stuck in the mud/fill a wellie [the spell check prefers Willie?!] with muddy water (sounds Glastonbury like again?!). Nigel and Dave, dug and dumped clay - we think they may have been trying to create a raised bank that will become a path - possibly. Taz and Rick practised their archaeology - cleaning out a seam of mortar on the sidepond spillway, oh and playing with the local wildlife - 5 toads, a newt etc . Whilst at the same time Helen, Liz and Chris were doing strange things with sandbags, traffic cones and a device to mix cement with other substances.

Things were going well until five o'clock (just as we were about to leave site minus the dinner crew who were already dinnerring) when Nigel (having obtained permission from the dig leader Tim (47)) learnt the hard way not to dig himself complete with excavator into a hole he can't get out of. Two hours, lots of shovelling, swearing and tree-trunks later the excavator and Nigel were returned to solid ground (blackmail photos to follow). Spirits were improved by a splendid curry and 47th birthday cake (oh you're that old are you Tim??).

Working Party Reports

Sunday - Sunny and Nice and The Dignitaries came for lunch.

Taz and Rick finished (this is only a little cryptic) removing vegetables from the overflow however the current crop is not the last so leek soup/curry can be enjoyed by all on the next camp too!! Tim had a go on the excavator (for the 1st time in many years) and did not do hippo impersonations with it. David broke the dumper (something to do with its gears?). A late lunch was had so that we would not disturb the dignitaries (including David Fletcher IWA chairman who was receiving an award on behalf of WRG as 'photographed by Tim Lewis) from having theirs. But they then came to see us working after their lunch just as we were going to Our lunch - several people trifled with the remains of the dignitaries lunch.



Pointing! (Tim Lewis)

Working Party Reports

The hole digging crew (this time not digging the excavator out) turned into the concrete making crew (to make a base for the outflow). Taz and Rick continued to point and reset stones. The dignitaries did visit to see us working and then it was Home time - back across that big 7 bridge (except for Taz the almost local contingent).

Motto for the dig - when you're in a hole stop digging!!

AND we didn't make it to the pub either Friday or Saturday night!! – what is happening to us (we are seriously worried - come back Andy and Sal, Martin and Lesley - is it Tim getting old or Frank(ly) just past it??) Oh god help us, we're turning into Essex WRG!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! NOOOOOOOOOOOO! [Frank - you've got a long way to go yet!]

Helen (aka The Purple Fairy)!!, Tim (of The Lewis variety), Taz (girl), Nigel (The Elite Excavator Explorer to the inner earth), Rick (SBT), Chris (Nigel's son), Frank (from Essex but actually Hertford), Liz (for half a day), (Sleepy) David and Bob (the human whacker plate).



The right team for the job (Martin Ludgate)

Sleaford dig: 6-7th August 2005

This was my first attempt at organising a dig for about three years, and by Friday evening you could tell I'd been losing my touch. For starters, we didn't make it to the pub – mainly because there isn't one within easy walking distance of Sleaford Rugby Club. There was also a spot of bother with the keys: I arranged for one of the Sleaford locals to turn up at the club and hand them over to Chris and Lynne (new volunteers, recruited on the Sleaford camp) who were going to be there early... but I didn't tell said volunteers that they were going to be picking up the keys... and they then found that they couldn't get there till Saturday... and by the time they told me, the local chap had been waiting at the Rugby Club for two hours...

Anyway eventually all of us got there (except Chris and Lynne), met the locals, had a few bottles of beer, admired Ed's new Discovery (that's a kind of Land Rover by the way – Ed hasn't just found the source of the Nile, or become the first white man to set foot in the legendary land of Shangri La), watched the cricket on the telly (!) and went to bed.

Saturday saw us heading eastwards to South Kyme village, followed by a half-mile drive across the fields (so Ed got to go off-roading in his Discovery... but then so did I in my Morris Traveller...) to a rather low and decidedly elderly-looking Bailey Bridge across a cutting containing the weedy channel of the River Sleas.

Our job for the weekend was to raise this bridge by about a foot, so that more boats could fit under it. The locals had a Plan (and one of them had been involved the last time the bridge was raised 15 years ago) so after an appropriate period of standing about looking at it, we raised one end up using jacks and Acrow props, then removed several of the old railway sleepers that formed the deck so that we could get in and start digging out a foundation trench for the

new supports. We also made a start on landscaping the earth around the end of the bridge, to bring the ground up to the new level of the deck.

Following several phone calls to ascertain exactly where we were and how to get there, Chris and Lynne surprised everyone by arriving by car across a different field on the opposite side of the river.

Meanwhile a smaller group had been despatched to work on another job: removing enough brambles and other weed growth from around a footbridge to see how badly knackered the bridge was. They removed all the weeds and confirmed that it's seriously badly knackered.

Oh yes, and some of us listened to the cricket on the radio.

By Saturday evening we'd completed the foundation trench and cast the concrete base, but were having slight concerns about whether we really ought to be raising the other end of the bridge before the first end was actually sitting on its foundations.

Back at the accommodation, we ate an evening meal that probably consisted of some kind of chicken casserole followed by treacle tart. We usually do when I'm cooking (especially when I can't cook my other recipes of lasagne or spag bol because we're got a non-pasta-eating non-cooked-cheese-eating person with us) but I can't remember. I do remember that Sal helped to cook it, and also that a fair amount of wine went into the cooking – which is probably why I can't remember what I cooked...

Once again we didn't go to the pub because there still wasn't one within walking distance (please can we have a van that James can drive?) but we drank some bottles of beer and watched the cricket on the telly.

Sunday morning we played an interesting game called "hunt the non-closed window that's stopping us from setting the burglar alarms" before heading to site (I managed to (a) run out of petrol and (b) slide the car into the ditch in a single journey – impressive?) where we set about laying the second foundation trench, this time without lifting the bridge first.

Working Party Reports

Chris and Lynne departed to fetch some concrete blocks that were to be salvaged from a building on local Norman's farm – unfortunately once they had been salvaged they resembled rubble more than blocks, so they probably wouldn't have been a great deal of use for supporting several tons of bridge.

Some of us listened to the cricket again... at least until ENGLAND WON at which point appropriate text messages were sent to acquaintances in Australia.

As we had decided that we couldn't be sure that it was safe to jack up the other end of the bridge, we ran out of work at around lunchtime. However the local Sleaford Navigation Trust folks seemed pleased with what we'd done, and I've since heard that a group of them went back a few weeks later and finished the job. So we packed up early and went home.

SNT would like to have us back for another weekend next year. Can we stand another whole weekend without a trip to the pub?

PS apologies for any inaccuracies in the above report. I'm pretty sure that most of the things that I said happened actually did happen. And I'm quite certain that the things I said didn't happen definitely didn't (especially us going to the pub). But I've described them in the right order, or even on the right day (or possibly on the right dig) I'm not at all sure. **Note to self:** when writing stropy editorial columns for *Navvies* pointing out how much better it is to write camp reports and send them in straight away while it's fresh in your memory, *remember that it applies to me too.*

Martin Ludgate

Working Party Reports

Wey & Arun Canal, 10-11th September 2005.

The first dig after the National is usually a big one, this years did not disappoint. The work for the weekend was to continue the brick work on the new lock at Loxwood (opposite the Onslow Arms pub) that a series of three canal camps had started over the summer, a novelty for a London WRG brick laying job – the walls were straight, the bricks new and we didn't have to key it into the old structure - luxury! The accommodation was first rate as well – Plaistow village hall boasts showers! Friday night saw Suzie and I braving the weather and traffic around Reading to pick up Dippy Claire from the station before heading on to the accom, on arrival it was obvious that parking was going to be tight over the weekend. On to the pub where Suzie was having balance issues even before the first girlie drink of the evening! Nigel and his son Chris were waiting in the pub to regale us with tales of roller coasters in America, little did we know that this would be the only pub visit...



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Saturday morning and after Jenny Wilson had done her usual bang-up job with breakfast we headed to site. David Miller (the organiser for the weekend) soon assigned pieces of wall to bricklayers (many jokes about lego or duplo walls depending whether they were laying stones/concrete blocks or bricks), Moose and Maria had started the industrial mortar production process and I had set my brick cutting shop up. By lunch the lock was going up quickly, a comment heard from the duplo team was “it's really easy to build walls with these big stones”. Jobs for the afternoon included more bricklaying (there's a surprise!), cable duct laying and building a shed for storing cement in, and yes it really does take 5 WRGies to put up a shed. James Butler appeared after work in his new Range Rover, taking the on site Land Rover collection to three (or four when the locals turned up) and there was much anoraking about off roading and suspension.

The evening, after a top beef stew courtesy of Jenny, the London WRG half-AGM was held and as soon as it was over we attempted to head back to the pub – unfortunately it was closed! There seemed to be a party in progress in the village and we can only assume that everyone was there. With enough supplies laid in at the accom we decided to stay there – making it two London WRG digs in a row that we haven't made the pub!

Sunday, more of the same – breakfast followed by brick laying. Martin headed off in the van to the WRG committee meeting with the new LWRG tinfoil (Thanks to Nigel “Site 1” and his wife for donating it at the end-of-National port session) so that Bungle can get it tested - hopefully we will get it back soon with our toaster! On site and a small team started to fill the voids in the block shuttering wall with concrete while everyone else carried on brick laying. Suzie got some more Stihl saw practice while carving bricks for Lesley's curved wall and James got to play with a vibrator.

By 4.30pm everyone headed back to the accom and started to wend there way home. Many thanks to David for organising a great weekend, see people on the next one!

Ed Walker

Father and son working well together (Ed Walker)

London WRG News

Grantham Canal, 1-2nd October 2005

This weekend saw Elanor taking the reins as leader and taking us northward to repair a set of swing bridge abutments. Friday evening saw the usual departure of the van from Waterloo and gathering of the troops in the village pub for one or two pints of bitter. Our home for the weekend was the village school which now holds the local youth club, high marks all round as we had a separate sleeping, eating and socializing areas - complete with pool and giant connect 4!

Saturday morning and on to site, our job for the weekend was to work on a set of swing bridge abutments. One of the summer camps had removed the concrete bridge and we needed to help restore the remaining abutments to be kept at as set of narrows (or a handy point to get on or off your boat for the lock!!). Martin, Lesley, Liz, Ed, Elanor and myself started work in earnest removing the foliage, soil and loose bricks in an attempt to find the solid sections to work from. A tree stump was also removed to allow access to one of the many areas needing patching. This work took us up to lunch and included the arrival of Gilly and Sleepy Dave. Post lunch it was time to start the patching, our instructions were to make it as historic as possible. This sounds simple but we had the challenge of new bricks which were a different size to the old ones and more different types and sizes of bricks and bonds in the wall than imaginable. Additionally the original wall had been refaced with a single skin brick wall at some point in the past and unfortunately they were no longer tied together. Despite this work progressed well and the holes started to shrink, with the locals supplying us with mortar. There was also some tiforming going on further down site by Ed, Gilly and Elanor.

Back at the accommodation dinner of stew and potatoes, followed by crumble was a little delayed due to a few minor incidents in the kitchen, however it tasted very good and more importantly left room for a few beverages back at the pub.

Working Party Reports

Sunday saw us back on site with the addition of Frank and Mike (doing the honours on the brick cleaning) and Tim who joined the tiform and small and controlled fires team. More bricks went in, more mortar mixed, plenty of brick ties and concrete shovelled in by hand (literally in my case as I had my hand in a plastic bag and my arm inside a hole in the wall as it was the only way to fill it!!). Work progressed well, so by the end of the day the two abutments were defiantly looking improved and more stable. The day finished with some speed pointing (it always seems to take longer than you think it will!) before returning to the hall to finish the packing.

Thanks to all for a good weekend.
See you next time

Sally Nutt



Liz and Martin patching the abutment (Ed Walker)

Olympics

Everyone's talking about London's recent success in winning the Olympics. It's going to be a fantastic chance for the city to show what it's really capable of in staging 'the greatest show on earth'. The Olympic events will be hosted in different venues around London and the UK, but with the majority of new venues and facilities planned for the Lower Lea (or Lee) Valley in Stratford in East London. The most important theme that has recurred throughout information from the organising bodies* is that of the Games' Legacy – the Legacy for Stratford, its communities... and its canals.

The River Lea flows from Luton in Bedfordshire, through Hertfordshire, through industrial Stratford, joining the Thames almost opposite where the Millennium Dome is now situated. Most improvement works to the navigation were carried out in the 1700s when new cuts and locks were added.

However the route continued to be used well after the introduction of the railways, mainly for transporting timber up to Walthamstow and coal to the power stations at Hackney and Brimsdown. The Bow Back River, Pudding Mill River and Waterworks River are also part of Stratford's neglected industrial heritage.

These days, the upper parts of the River Lea promote a range of leisure activities including boating, fishing and walking, but the decline of industry in the lower valley has left derelict land, run down facilities and scattered communities which are segregated by the waterways, rather than united by them. But despite their unloved appearance, the waterways in Stratford are one of the few features that give the area an identity. The LDA are keen to keep Stratford's unique 'sense of place' and this is good news for the waterways and their regeneration.

The Olympic stadia, and remaining Olympic Park (i.e. the Games' Legacy for Stratford) will be integrated into the network of canals with the addition of 40 new pedestrian/cycle and road bridges across the site. The LDA's aspiration for the waterways is to re-acknowledge what London has long turned its back on, and instil a new appreciation for the debt that it owes to navigable rivers.



Carpenter's Lock, at the junction of the Old River Lea and City Mill River, a possible restoration project? (Liz Wilson)

There are plans to lower many of the high-level towpaths, particularly on the Bow Back and Pudding Mill Rivers. The paths will also be widened in many areas to provide space for pedestrians and cyclists. It seems that the advice of both British Waterways and the Inland Waterways Association has been taken on board, and there will be an attempt to locate and restore historical features of the waterways, particularly where they are intrinsically linked to the surrounding built environment.

All of the waterways will also benefit from a program of ‘extension and enhancement’ of their navigable sections, with the provision of new wharves, mooring posts and boaters’ facilities. It is also part of the LDA’s plans to make use of these transport corridors during the construction of the Olympic Park – for moving and importing earth and materials. Maybe if they can achieve this, they will have the best understanding of the importance of well maintained, cared for waterways; and ultimately provide the best regeneration solutions for everyone.

There is more detailed information on the plans for Stratford’s waterways on the Hackney Council website www.hackney.gov.uk which is hosting many of the Olympic Planning Documents.

Liz Wilson

*LOCOG (London’s Organising Committee for the Olympic Games) and the LDA (London Development Agency)

Olympics



Top: Aerial photo of the development area. *Bottom:* Junction of the Old River, Lea and City Mill River, the Olympic pool and stadium will be built near here. (Liz Wilson)

Half AGM Minutes

Minutes of the LWRG Half-AGM 10th September 2005

Present: Lesley McFadyen, Martin Ludgate, David Miller, Phill Cardy, David Hearnden, Maria Alderman, Richard Thomas, Nigel Lee, Chris Lee, Jenny Wilson, Sally Nutt, Andy Richardson, James Butler, Claire Bedford, Rick Ansell, Elanor Napier, Bob Metcalfe, 'Tunji Faleye, Rick Ansell, Ed Walker and Suzie Pounce

Dave Hearnden (Moose) agreed to chair the meeting

1. Dates for next year

Dates had already been chosen up till April 2006, and leaders allocated to some dates. (see below). The following dates were agreed for the remainder of 2006:

13-14 May 2006

3-4 Jun

24-25 Jun

15-16 Jul

5-6 Aug

9-10 Sep Half AGM

30 Sep - 1st Oct

21 - 22 Oct

4-5 Nov Bonfire Bash

18-19 Nov (possible – depending on the success of the 19-20 Nov 2005)

2-3 Dec Xmas with KESCRG

2. Dig Deep Projects

Martin reported on the proposed Dig Deep projects for next year, which he had provisionally offered two weekends on each of.

2.1 Wey & Arun

Currently working on the new lock. We agreed that we will continue with 2 weekend digs a year from LWRG subject to all going smoothly.

2.2 Mon & Brec 14 Locks: 2 weekends agreed

2.3 Lichfield Tamnworth Road Locks: 2 weekends agreed

2.4 Wilts & Berks 7 locks: 2 weekends agreed. Lock 3 is nearly finished; work is moving to Lock 4 under local leadership of Rachael Banyard and Luke Walker

It was agreed to give the dig dates to Bill Nicholson and let him sort out the Dig Deep dates to fit with the other groups. It would however be good if the AGM dig on 4th-5th February 2006 was at Lichfield for maximum attendance from both north and south. We will ask Bill to allocate our first four free weekends in 2006 to Dig Deep projects (with 4-5 Feb on the Lichfield if possible) so that we don't have to worry about finding any other sites until after the AGM. We will also ask Bill to allocate any four more from our remaining 2006 dates (other than the Bonfire Bash and Xmas dig) to Dig Deep projects.

2a. Forthcoming Christmas Party dig

It was reported that Eddie Jones has booked the Wootton Bassett civic centre for the Christmas dig. We will be working on lock 3 of Seven Locks bricklaying, concreting and towpath work. The theme of the LWRG/KESCRG Christmas Party is to be Mad Hatters - everyone makes and wears a silly hat.

3. Sites

Possible sites for other digs were discussed. The following were suggested:

Sleaford – they would like us back

Derby – as we had to cancel one there

Wendover

Chichester

Droitwich (possible project)

Cotswolds (possible project)

Grand Western - but only one as its such a long way

WRG are likely to be supporting the IWA Jubilee Project with several camps next year – there are currently 9 projects shortlisted including Droitwich and Cotswolds. This might well provide us with a suitable venue for some digs.

4. Organisers for digs

The following people volunteered to lead weekend work parties (see page 14 for this - Ed.)

5 Tools and kit

We have been donated a Tirfor by Nigel at the National (Site One). It needs a certificate and strops, etc. It was agreed that Martin would give it to Bungle at the September WRG meeting to arrange testing and bits and pieces. We hope to get it back in time for the reunion weekend.

Sally raised a Point of Information that we have over £700 in the LWRG account so we can authorise spending on testing and strops etc for the Tirfor, with extra to fix it if needed.

Bungle still has the toaster and is still proceeding. [Cue song: “Feed the wrg... there won’t be toast in london wrg this christmas time...”]

The brick kit needs new scutch hammers: Bob to buy two new Drapers scutch hammers. (If anyone can get replacement handles for the broken ones, tell Moose & Maria)

Lesley to buy 4 fluffy brushes and 2 stiff for brick kit.

Sally will find small hawks possibly screwfix.

Sally and Ed have got new wire brushes, mattock handles, wooden spoons and a plastic bowl.

Sally will acquire baking sheets and dessert bowls.

Lesley will get blue string for useful bag.

A bag or something to keep dust off the plates will be found. M&M to look in camping shop.

Phill has a source of china mugs.

Half AGM Minutes

6. AOB

6.1 Sandwich Boards

These have been painted. We need to think of basic wording.

6.2 Van/minibus

It was reported that the minibus that we currently have the use of outside the camps season (GCW) is going to North West this winter as they are “buying” it from WRG central to replace SKN. It has been suggested that LWRG might get 6-seater utility van RFB (which WRG Forestry won’t be using this winter) modified so that it has 9 seats instead of six. This could also be driven by those with newer licences who can’t drive GCW (but would still qualify for exemption from congestion charge) and can also be used for towing (subject to the driver having the correct licence). The only disadvantage is that it won’t hold quite as many people as we sometimes carry between accommodation and site in GCW, so we might need to take more vehicles to site or make multiple trips if parking space is tight. It was agreed that LWRG supported the idea of having RFB, once it was modified to 9 seats, and that Martin would report this to the WRG meeting.

6.3 Personality problems affecting WRG.

A problem which arose earlier this year affecting some parts of WRG including LWRG was raised. It was agreed to leave the matter in the hands of the WRG central organisation for the present.

The meeting was closed at 9.55. So, unfortunately, was the pub.

Lesley McFadyen

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.

Dates	Location	Organiser
5-6/11/05	WRG Bonfire Bash	Centrally Booked
19-20/11/05	Wilts & Berks, West Vale	Nigel Lee
3-4/12/05	KESCRG/LWRG Xmas Party, Wilts & Berks	-
14-15/1/06	Dig Deep on the Mon & Brec	Sally Nutt
4-5/2/06	Dig Deep on the Lichfield (AGM)	Moose & Maria
25-26/2/06	Dig Deep on the Wilts & Berks	Andy Richardson
18-19/3/06	BCN Cleanup	Aileen Butler
8-9/4/06	Dig Deep on the Mon & Brec	TBA
13-14/5/05	TBA	TBA
3-4/6/06	Dig Deep on the Lichfield	TBA
24-25/6/06	TBA	TBA
15-16/7/06	Dig Deep on the Wilts & Berks	TBA
5-6/8/06	TBA	TBA
9-10/9/06	Dig Deep on the Wey & Arun	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. 8th Nov, 22nd Nov, 3rd Jan, 24th Jan etc. at the **Star Tavern** (upstairs room) Belgrave Mews West, behind German Embassy on Chesham Place, from about 19.30 till 23.00.

Other Events:

4/2/06	London WRG AGM, Lichfield dig	
18/2/06	KESCRG/LWRG Barn Dance, Benson	
29/4-1/5/06	Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice	-
6-7/5/06	WRG Training Weekend	Centrally Booked

Who to contact:

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**waterway
recovery
group**

**NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING
BODY FOR VOLUNTARY LABOUR
ON THE INLAND WATERWAYS OF
BRITAIN**

WRG Reunion Bonfire Bash 2005

I would like to attend the 2005 WRG Bonfire Bash on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canals on November 5th-6th

Forename: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

email: _____

Phone: _____

Any special dietary requirements? _____

I require accommodation on **Friday night / Saturday night / both nights**

I enclose payment of £ _____ (please make cheques payable to 'WRG') for food
(cost is £10 for the whole weekend, based on £2 for each meal.)

How will you be travelling to the Bonfire Bash? _____

Do you want to work with volunteers from one of this year's Canal Camps or from one of the regional groups? If so, which camp or group? _____

Do you suffer from any illness, such as epilepsy or diabetes, about which you should know, or are you receiving treatment or under medical supervision for any condition **YES/NO If yes, please attach details on a covering letter.**

In the unlikely event that you should be injured, who should we contact?

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Signed: _____

(parent's signature also required if aged under 18): _____

Please send this form to:

Bonfire Bash Bookings, WRG, PO Box 114, Rickmansworth WD3 1ZY



Top: Building the new lock on the Wey & Arun (Ed Walker). Bottom: fencing on the Grantham (Tim Lewis)

