

# London WRG News



Suzie and the Sally Nutt memorial sack barrow (Martin Ludgate, Wey & Arun Canal)

**Issue 64 October 2006**

# Noticeboard

## Bonfire Bash

See page 14/15 for further information and a booking form but it is looking very unlikely that a van will be heading up from London to the dig, lifts should be available from other people heading up – either contact IWA head office or the London WRG e-mail list for help.

## KESCRG/LWRG Christmas Party

The usual joint Christmas party dig will this year be happening on the Basingstoke Canal over the weekend of 2-3<sup>rd</sup> December. Apart from usual friends in KESCRG, WRG-SW will be joining in the festivities. Work will most likely be scrub bashing on the off-side of the canal, down near the junction with the River Wey.

The usual fancy dress party will be held on the Saturday night, this year with the theme of “The Beatles”. Alice Bayston has graciously offered to sell tickets for the event, she will be shaking people down at the Bonfire Bash, if you can’t make that event then post her a cheque (made payable to “KESCRG”) for £16 to Alice Bayston, 276A Myton Road, Warwick, CV34 6PT. Remember to give details of any food allergies etc. when booking on.

## A Reminder

Dig organisers should not only fill in the insurance form giving numbers of volunteers and types of work undertaken and forward it to head office, but from now onwards should also send in a list of names of volunteers who worked on site each day.

WRgie Words Forum:  
<http://p2.forumforfree.com/wrg.html>

## Christmas Camp

Just a quick update regarding the Christmas Camp. Yes I’m leading it, Paul Shaw is my assistant, and the cook will be Maria. The accommodation is to be at Renishaw Community Centre, which the locals say will easily accommodate 40 people. Next door is a working men’s club with a football field and shower facilities that the locals are also trying to get access to. The area is **about** 2 miles north of M1 Junction 30 on the A616, and within a mile of the worksite. Beware some maps might have the road as A6135: this is either an error or the road name has been changed. The locals will check for us.

Regarding work (oh yes that horrible word), we will be scrub bashing or ‘slash and burn’. And yes, we will have a bonfire or two! Small! Controlled! (well yes, everyone knows what I mean).

The WRG camps list did have the camp starting before Xmas, that’s probably wishful thinking on the part of the trouble makers in Head Office: I won’t mention their names, but Jenny and Jessica know that I’m talking about them. Damn that’s blown it. But if enough people inform me that they might be interested in starting the camp on Christmas Eve then I will go back to the locals and check the availability of the hall. Otherwise the camp will start 26th December and finish 1st January as usual.

The New Year Party will be fancy dress with a theme of ‘Star signs & heavenly bodies’. Paul, the able assistant, thinks this should give a certain ex-postie plenty of scope to indulge in his normal dressing-up-as-a-girl fetish. It also gives the rest of you plenty of time to think about a costume, so no excuses! (Last year seeing James in a Lara Croft getup was very scary...)

I should mention now there will be likely to be dogs in the hall, just in case anyone who is allergic to dogs was going to book on. (Sorry) We are in fact waiting for confirmation that dogs are allowed in the hall. Now you all know how I like to get people **booked early, and via Head Office**. Spaces could be limited.

**Dave ‘Moose’ Hearnden**

## Wilts & Berks Canal, Stepping Stone Bridge, 24-25<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

With the London WRG van being off on camps duty and a last minute change in site this was always going to be an “interesting” dig to organise. So Friday evening saw me loading up the Disco with a selection of tools and then stopping off at Tesco in Didcot to buy the food with Liz who had (foolishly?) volunteered to act as dinner cook for the weekend. Half an hour’s driving later saw us in South Marston where a short search ensued for the village hall – it was not in the place I’d been led to believe! The hall seemed quite nice with only two drawbacks – the car parking was 5 minutes walk away and there was no fridge! Good thing I packed the cooler bag then. Leaving the Disco outside as signpost seemed to work quite well as Richard Thomas and Sleepy David soon arrived and an expedition was mounted to the local pub. Got to love these new licensing hours – meant that when Tim, Helen, Nigel, Chris (the younger) and Lesley arrived they could still have a beer. Nigel probably had the worst journey in as he ended up collecting catering kit from somewhere near Dartford!

Saturday morning arrived far too quickly (that’ll be the downside of the new licensing hours!) and I was doing the leadership thing of cooking breakfast and delivering tea/coffee in bed. The Stepping Stone bridge site being a mile down an unmade track most people ended up walking down the canal from a nearby car park while Liz and I took the track in the Disco with the tools. Meeting up with Chris Forward (the local) on site we had the job for the weekend explained – basically tweak the bridge arch so that instead of being 17 foot wide it was 19 foot wide! Cue London WRGies wielding sledgehammers, picks, chisels, bars and an excavator. A short time later and two rather large piles of rubble were all that remained of the nearside arch and Nigel was wielding the excavator pulling back the clay infill (overheard to mutter “come back Blue, all is forgiven!”).

# Working Party Reports

Work proceeded in shifts as people stopped for squash breaks but soon we reached the stage of digging the footing for the arch former and new brick arch. Chris Wicks and Alice passed through to collect the London WRG Stihl saw for their camp – probably better to say they walked through as MKP had threatened a violent death if they took the brand new van down the track!

After lunch a small, select group (well Tim, Helen, Liz and Chris anyway!) headed off to the Pocket Park site to assemble and erect a kissing gate, apparently they had immense trouble with erecting it straight as it kept going on the piss.



Demolition in progress (Nigel Lee)

# Working Party Reports

After lunch Bob, Jon G and Richard Thomas carried on with excavating the footing – this now being in two inches of water meant that each swing of the pick sprayed Jon with mud. At about 5pm we left site, leaving behind two very large piles of rubble and a large pile of spoil – the starting point of a tasteful and sensitive restoration of an 18<sup>th</sup> century bridge, i.e. we're going to completely demo it in the end!

Back at the accom Liz was cooking lasagne and the last of the wayward volunteers turned up – Suzie, who managed to completely miss the accom despite finding the Disco parked outside it, James cried off at the last minute – something about being stuck in the West country with no trains back to civilisation.

Al fresco style garlic bread was made; we managed to remove most of the grass out of it before cooking!

Martin appeared just after dinner – the Morris having suspected head issues, a half hours work by torchlight in the school car park showed it was actually valves – apparently Martin always carries a spare.

Sunday – Tim and Helen cooked breakfast and we headed back to site – Tim to carry on with his kissing gate and put a couple of fence posts in while the rest of us finished the hole for the arch footing. About an hour later and Chris the local pronounced the job done – so tea was had, tools were cleaned and we headed back to the accom for lunch where Martin had finally finished grinding his valve. With nothing else to do people headed home, a group of us stopping off at the Abingdon Junction site to have a wander and take some “before” photos.

Many thanks to Chris Forward for having us on short notice – despite the dig being quite short the demo work was certainly fun! Nothing like trashing some quality heritage in a good cause!

**Ed Walker.**



Not much bridge left now! (Nigel Lee)

## Wilts & Berks Canal, Seven Locks, 15-16<sup>th</sup> July 2006

Friday

My first time running a weekend dig started off with not having to get in a minibus, for me that's a shock. Instead I got a lift with Sal we eventually (evil tube trains) we set off for the Foxham Reading Rooms. The journey took a little longer than expected as Sal had never been there before and I had only seen the route from the back of a van.

Eventually we met up with everyone else (except Martin, who had a worse journey than us) in the Foxham Inn where we stayed for a bit before heading back to the hall for toast and unpacking. I have to mention David living up to his "sleepy" nickname by getting a drink of water, sitting on his bed and falling asleep fully dressed within minutes of us getting back. He also got up at some ungodly hour of the morning looking for the toilet, headed in the opposite direction that he should and walked straight into the trolley full of folded tables.

**Saturday**

Sal did the honours cooking breakfast, we made the lunch and headed on to site where the Burco had just boiled so we sat down again for tea and job lists.

First up was the top of the nearly finished Lock 3, while Luke and another local worked to fit the last of the coping stones we dumpered and barrowed backfill in behind the existing stones and then compacted it with trampling, stamping, and, in Sal's case, line-dancing. While this was happening at ground level we sent Liz and Paul into the bottom of the lock to start chipping out some damaged bricks which would be replaced later.

Shifting bricks, always a popular task! (Nigel Lee)

# Working Party Reports

After lunch sand bags were in ingenious ways with the aid of a dumper, backfilling started on the, now complete, towpath side and people started neatly stacking the bricks that had made up lock 4. I swapped with Liz and went into the depths of the lock to discover that chipping out bricks is not as easy as it looks, especially when you think you are trying to remove a half brick and discover it is a whole brick end on.

Back at the hall Nigel and Chris joined us, fresh from looking at Universities, and Rowena with the shopping for her to cook tea. A traditional London wrg meal of Spaghetti Bolognese and Garlic Bread followed with fruit and squirty cream (more on that later) for pudding. We also presented Ed with a Bob the Builder cake for his upcoming birthday.



# Working Party Reports

Back to the Foxham Inn where even a small dig of 11 people can take over the whole place. The usual highbrow topics of Politics, the Arts and the Socio-Economic structure of the country were discussed (they could have, I can't remember) and then back to the hall for toast and rewriting "Everybody's free to wear Sunscreen" with a wrigle slant (See Navvies for more)

## Sunday

Liz cooked us breakfast and then it was back to site for more of the same. Nigel and Liz went into the lock to replace the broken bricks with Chis making mortar while Allan, David and Ed took the two Dumpers and an Excavator to collect dredgings and fill a ditch. Sal put her painting skills to use on the W&B scaffolding which left me and Rowena to move the bricks, at this point I made a command decision that Sal might need some help so we went to do that instead along with Ed's portable radio (Land Rover Discovery).

Lunch included Ed's birthday cake and also the leftovers from last night pudding, a bowl of fruit and most of a can of squirry cream, the challenge being "how much can you put on a bit of fruit and still eat it?" It also made it's way onto chocolate cake and the almond cakes, we stopped short of putting it on the celery.

After lunch Nigel went off to discover the "interesting" controls of the excavator, Martin went down the lock to finish off the brickwork and Ed joined us on the painting and brought his eclectic selection of music with him.

With the scaffolding and brickwork finished we stopped about 4:30, packed up and went back to the hall. Kit was packed, the hall was swept and Liz managed to find a few more bits of fruit to cover with the last of the squirry cream.

Thanks, as always to Luke and Rachael for organising the jobs on site, to Liz and Sal for cooking breakfast, and to Ro for cook tea.

**Richard Worthington**



Dredgings disposal (Nigel Lee)

**Wet Weekends in Wiltshire: No. 253:  
Steppingstones Bridge, 28<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup>  
October 2006**

Our fascinating series proving that not all WWWs are on the internet continues and starts on the Wednesday evening. Yours truly, after a nightmare day at the office (I know why I prefer being field-based, believe me) and a rain-soaked drive down the A361, arrived at South Marston Village Hall. This pleasant, if cobwebby, little edifice was named after Edwardian philanthropist Lord Southmarston Villagehall, who later shot to fame when he invented Swindon.

When I finally entered the building after sitting in the car allowing a live Malinky set on R2 to finish, I was carrying my just-purchased lunch (that's 'lunch' as in '~~should have eaten it at~~ lunchtime') in a carrier bag and was somewhat taken aback to see those already present finishing off a two-course cooked dinner. Getting any further than putting my carrier bag down was interrupted by the immediate need to unpack the trailer brought down behind Jimmy B's Disco and then MKP arrived in SAD. I accompanied the latter Chairman-vehicle combination to Sainsburys and finally got to eat my Quavers (they're floaty light, I'm led to believe).

The big dinner brigade repaired to the local watering hole re: 6X and MKP, Jimmy B, Harri T and I settled at the table to enjoy some bottled stuff. Mike started worrying about getting Chairman's Chat finished (for 'finished', read: 'advanced beyond 5 one-word headings').

Thursday morning saw the pre-weekend group arrive (in JB's case, backwards, with trailer attached) at Steppingstones Bridge to admire the specially-constructed steel arches and wooden formwork. Brickery proceeded as soon as Di had mastered the generator and mixed up a barrow or several full of 'muck'.

The task was to build the brick arch over the formwork in three layers, working up from both abutments which themselves had been demo'd down to the solid work and patched up where required.

# Working Party Reports

Two main types of brick were present on site: engineering and facing. The latter had grooves on the non-facing side but all the bricks were of a similar darkish-red colouring. The third and fourth brick types present, of course, were original ones (usable) and original ones (past it).

Supporting tasks included Stihl-sawing half-bricks for stock and specials to order – I had a bash at this and worked away until the saw developed the collywobbles and had to be taken to Rachael's favourite saw hospital – brick reclaiming and generally moving things around until they made sense.

A nice dinner was cooked by Harri T that evening and then I had one of my Great Ideas (cue sighs) regarding the pub at the A420 end of the village (I'm a bit of an Arkells fan, having spent too many hours in the Highwayman at Winstone in the 1990s and also having lived in Stratton St. Margaret for precisely seven weeks) so we fitted the James attachment to SAD and drove down. The pub closed before our very eyes. Great Idea No. 2 involved one of the tiny little cottage-sized Arkells pubs in Highworth. Karaoke night. So off to The Fox, as ever a reliable source of good Arkells with friendly hosts.

Friday started with show-stopping rain. The choice of alternatives was narrowed down to going to see The Queen (the film, that is; it would have been too short-notice for an audience with the monarch) or taking in STEAM, the railway museum in Swindon. The latter won as there wouldn't have been a cinema in Greater Swindonia with 10am showings.

So Rachael negotiated discounted entry for us and a straggle of WRGies (Rachael, Di, Harri T, MKP, Jimmy B, MKP, Jeremy, Frank, Steve Bloody Johnson, Robert Brotherston and me) dodged WW2-replica children to enjoy the museum.

# Working Party Reports

I recommend it; it's less antiseptic than NRM York and the chance to walk beneath a Castle class loco and then stand on its footplate to talk to two former railwaymen who worked on such machines in their day was worth the entry fee on its own.

By the afternoon, the rain had calmed down and the site had turned to quagmire, a state in which it was to remain for the rest of the dig, as rain showers continued to pound down at regular intervals. Brickery continued and I went to pick up the saw.

Friday evening was when things really started to get interesting. Through an ingenious double-booking facility, Watchfield Village Hall had been booked in addition to South Marston, so the vanguard group split between the two accomms for the night. Kate had arrived from Cardiff in time for dinner. We ate (and ate well – Di's pudding vying with Harri T's stew for fillingness) at South M and then most of us moved to Watchers to meet the London WRGies, aware that Nic & Cam were already ensconced in the pub.

The weekend brought another task. Whilst the bridgers were augmented with the likes of Nigel & Chris, Quiet Richard and Nic, Dr.Ed, Kate and I trogged off in Ed's Landie to do a spot of bonking. Seven interpretive signs in all were to be erected, and all of them in different locations. The first set of three at Grove involved a long walk with lots of heavy stuff (have you tried walking further than a few yards with a post-bonker?) and getting rained to within a millimetre of our own skins in the process. I couldn't face humping the bonker all the way back down the towpath but remembering that all derelict locks contain at least one shopping trolley, I rescued one such supermarket runaway, piled the tools into it, and pushed them all back to the ring road.

Further recipients for bonkery included one site on the edge of Grove where to quote our written instructions, "access has been arranged [to a factory premises where an internal road ran straight down to the canal] – just ask the security man at the gate and you will be allowed in". It hadn't, and we weren't! Out came the OS and the other way 'round was found. We decided not to risk trespassing on a piece of land which would have brought us straight to where we wanted to be and instead parked the Disco up carefully next to the public brideway and dragged the tools and signage down via the path. Imagine our surprise when we returned to find a note on the windscreen berating us for parking on private land. We laughed 'til we stopped, I can tell you.

After that thankless task, there were two more locations on the edge of villages requiring signs and both of these were easy. We returned to site to find that tea-things and lunch had just departed, inexplicably, towards the accomm. Therefore, so did we. But there was a catch, in the form of a telephone call from MKP with a "can you just" job. Site had run out of lime. Quick sandwich and a brew poured into travel mugs and we were off again to Swindon with no idea whether any of the DIY shops would stock lime. Oh, why must builders' merchants close early on Saturdays? Is there a business opportunity here? Well, not even Wickes stocked it. To be fair, Focus was looking good until the assistant came back with a building line; he'd misheard me. We purchased a bottle of lime cordial, this being the closest to hydrolated lime we could get, and returned to base camp just in time to no longer be first for the showers. Cue tales from those who had worked on the main site: much quick covering of the fresh brickwork and sheltering under the nascent bridge 'ole, it seems.

My favourite Saturday-night-on-a-dig dinner (ie. lasagne, pre-prepared by Harri T) followed all this nicely. No real ale in the pub did not follow dinner nicely. I for one will bring my own beer and stay at the hall when I visit Watchfield in future as it seems the Bleak House has a serious rival in the uselessness stakes. Still, we did have fun playing 'guess what that's a picture of' from the other end of the pub from the artwork in question.

Sunday started with breakfast, cooked by James, who is entirely capable of doing this on his own. We trogged to site and investigated the mud. The project was found lurking within it, as were several piles of materials. Mike had cut steps into the slope to stop people sliding into the new brickwork and even these were starting to become slopes by lunchtime. The weather was reasonable but only by comparison with the previous day and to be fair, puddling was much easier. I had a good go before realising that Hurricane Bob and Elanor were puddling their way to full-on war, so I waved the white hankie and made tea.

Eventually, everything was tidied up and our stuff taken back to the accomm where Jimmy B & Co repacked the trailer and MKP attempted to distribute the usual several half-finished bottles of milk to anyone who would take them.

## Working Party Reports

I took Kate to Swindon station and we arrived strangely early (perhaps I have finally found the right way in!) for her train to Caerydd. On the way home, I did not overtake James or MKP, so they must have had smooth journeys too!

One last (but not least) thing: before I left Watchfield, Di asked me to include the Wilts & Berks' big thanks for all the progress made by London WRG, et al, in this report. I reciprocated thanks with specific regard to cake.

*See you at the Bonfire Bash, said Mk2 8-)*



Brickwork in progress (Nigel Lee)

# London WRG

## 1/2 AGM

### Minutes

LWRG Half AGM on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2006

#### Future Weekends

- 30<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October. It was decided that this weekend would be on the Wilt & Berks. Martin Ludgate has arranged that Mike Palmer will be leading and the accommodation will be Watchfield Village Hall.

- 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October. To be the Wey & Arun with Nigel Lee leading. The boat ride is doubtful because there may not be enough water. The accommodation will be Kirdford Village Hall. There is a query on whether the van will be available because a camp starts that weekend, Martin Ludgate is to check at the WRG Committee Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

- 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> November. This is the Bonfire Bash, booked through WRG. It is at Grantham and Mitch Gozna is organising. There is a query re permissions for work but there is alternative work possible if this remains a problem.

- 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November. Almost certainly on the Wey & Arun and if this is the case to be led by Allan Scott.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Christmas Party dig with KESCRG. Eddy Jones is organising for KESCRG. Martin Ludgate is to co-ordinate the van numbers and to contact KESCRG re the tickets.

- 26<sup>th</sup> December to 1<sup>st</sup> January. This is the Christmas Camp, booked through WRG. To be at Grantham with Dave Hearnden and Paul Shaw to lead.

- 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> January. Potentially to be at Cromford with plenty of scrub-bashing to keep warm. Liz Wilson to lead (and have her birthday, cake to be supplied).

- 27<sup>th</sup> January. This is Mike Palmer and Jude Moore's wedding, so no-one is digging this weekend.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> February. This is to be a Dig Deep date with David Miller leading.

- 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> February. The AGM is to be held, probably at Lichfield with Elanor Napier leading.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> March. This is the Barndance weekend.

- 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March. The Birmingham Canal Navigations cleanup is booked through WRG with Aileen Butler organising. Martin Ludgate is to co-ordinate the van numbers.

- 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April. This was suggested as a dig, to be led by Martin Ludgate who will be celebrating 25 years of digging. Site is yet to be decided.

- 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> May. This weekend is the Canalway Cavalcade weekend. Dave Hearnden asked to borrow the LWRG kit for this event and no-one at the meeting had any objections.

- 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May. This is the Training Weekend, booked through WRG and lead by Ali Bottomley.

- 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> May. This is to be a Dig Deep weekend organised by Richard Worthington.

#### Future Dates

It was decided that the dates of weekends after May should be as follows:

- 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> June.

- 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July.

- 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> August.

- 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September, including half AGM.

- 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September.

- 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> October.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November, Bonfire Bash.

- 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November.

- 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> December.

## Acquisitions to be done

2 x strimming helmet – Ed Walker to get from Screwfix.

2 x 3 tonne shackles for tirfor – Ed Walker to request George Eycott to buy.

10m 3 tonne extension cable – Ed Walker to request George Eycott to buy.

Stihl Saw Water Kit – Ed Walker to buy, this is not to be considered part of the Stihl Saw when the Saw is lent out.

Food Crates – It was suggested that we acquire more robust replacements. Martin Ludgate to ask KESCRG for suggestions.

Stuff Sacks, 1 for plates and 4 for bowls – Maria to buy.

Eating Knives, 1 dozen – Lesley McFadyen to buy.

Flamethrower – Rachael Banyard to be reminded but if this is not successful Mike Palmer to be asked.

Plasters and any other First Aid items – Lesley McFadden to buy.

Earplugs – Lesley McFadden to buy.

3 x 2' levels – Tim Lewis to buy from Screwfix.

Sandwich Boards – these are ready to have signs put on. Martin Ludgate to create laminates to put on them and to liase with Dave Hearnden and Tim Lewis.

Ammo box to contain tirfor kit has been suggested.

## Fundraising

Generally the fundraising is done at the Canalway Cavalcade and the Barn Dance. It was decided that this was sufficient and it is not necessary to fundraise at the Inland Waterways National Festival. Martin Ludgate is to put the instructions for running the Tombola on the LWRG website. For the Canalway Cavalcade it will be necessary for someone to fill in the relevant form.

# London WRG 1/2 AGM Minutes

## T-shirts

Tim Lewis to organise this, taking over from Sally Nutt.

## Recruitment

Decided that the current level of recruitment should be maintained.

## Mailing List

There has been a query about the automatic reply function on the mailing list. When discussed in the meeting it was decided that it would be left as it is, the assumption is that people will use the WRG forum for chat.

## Signing on at digs

This was discussed and it was decided that it would be appropriate to discuss this on the LWRG Mailing List before making a decision at the AGM.

## Health and Safety

Re Risk Assessments – It was agreed that the Volunteers Health & Safety guide should be used for general Risk Assessments with additional Risk Assessments for any particular risks.

It is to be added to the Leaders guidelines that they ask the local co-ordinator if there is a Health & Safety assessment and where it is kept. Also that they ask if there are any unusual jobs planned for the weekend.

**Elanor Napier**

# Dig Deep Update

Many of London WRG's weekend digs are planned as part of something called Dig Deep – which is a co-ordinated approach to organizing volunteer work between ourselves and four other mobile groups (KESCRG, NWPG, WRG BITM and Essex WRG) on certain nominated projects. The idea being that if between the five groups we can offer a project (say) eight weekends and a week's camp over the course of a year, that makes it much easier for the local canal society to plan the work, and therefore to commit their resources to it in terms of providing materials and plant, in the knowledge that they will have enough visiting volunteer labour to finish the job. And that, in turn, means that we get to work on some interesting construction projects, and to see some real progress over the months as all the groups visit in turn.

In recent years, we have supported projects in this way on the Wey & Arun, Wilts & Berks, Mon & Brec and Lichfield canals. We are currently planning our work for 2007, so here's the latest info on what we're likely to be up to over the next 12 months. Quite a lot of lock rebuilding work, by the look of it...

After many years of projects receiving Dig Deep support on the Wey & Arun – Bignor Bridge, upgrading of the Malham and Rowner section, Haybarn Swingbridge and most recently the Loxwood new lock and Brewhurst Lock rebuild – the Wey & Arun Canal Trust finds itself in a position of not being able to provide us with a Dig Deep project. This is no fault of WACT's. It's just that the Loxwood project is approaching its final phase – reinstating the B2133 road crossing – which will be a job for professional contractors, and require some serious fundraising by WACT to support it. So volunteer-based construction projects on the Wey & Arun will be taking a bit of a back seat, as WACT's resources are committed elsewhere.

However we won't be staying away from the Wey & Arun entirely. We've still got one more dig on the current project at Brewhurst to go (an extra one scheduled for 18-19 Nov), we hope to schedule a dig on the Wey & Arun working on whatever jobs they happen to have available (provisionally on 7-8 July 2007), and we are hopeful of further Dig Deep projects there in the future.

Meanwhile our support of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust's project to restore the Seven Locks flight continues. Lock 3 is finished, work on Lock 4 is well under way, some initial work has been done at Lock 2 (the one with a road across it to make the job more interesting!) and we will be back there on 3-4 Feb and 19-20 May 2007

Another site where the Dig Deep groups have been active is Tamworth Road Locks on the Lichfield Canal, where the lock chambers of Locks 24-26 are being (or have been) rebuilt, along with the pound walls in between them. Unfortunately the continuation of this work has recently been in doubt, due to a combination of personnel changes on the Canal Trust and an unexpected need to commit some serious sums of money to ensuring that a new road under construction makes provision for future restoration of the canal – and it was not clear whether there would still be enough in the budget to keep volunteer work going. The good news is that KESCRG report a successful weekend work party there recently, and that the Trust is hopeful of being able to support continuing work at Tamworth Road (basically they reckon they can afford to keep us supplied with bricks and mortar!) The Dig Deep groups are therefore going to support this with several weekend work parties over the next year (whether or not we formally adopt it as a Dig Deep project), and London WRG has one pencilled in for February 24-25. And it looks like one of the main jobs will be rebuilding the offside wall between locks 25 and 26 – which is currently part of somebody's garden.

Finally there's the Mon & Brec in South Wales. Despite the delay in permissions to work on the Fourteen Locks flight, the canal society has found enough other work to keep us busy on locks on the Crumlin Arm between the main flight and the junction with the Main Line near Newport. And it looks like they'll continue to have enough good work for us for next year – so London WRG will be visiting on 9-10 June and 8-9 September.

**Martin Ludgate**

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

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

# London WRG Dates List

**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.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Organiser</b>
4-5/11/06	Bonfire Bash, Grantham Canal	Centrally Booked
18-19/11/06	Wey & Arun Canal	Allan Scott
2-3/12/06	KESCRG/LWRG Xmas Party, Basingstoke	-
13-14/01/07	Cromford Canal (TBC)	Liz Wilson
3-4/02/07	Dig Deep on the Wilts & Berks Canal, Seven Locks (TBC)	David Miller
24-25/02/07	Dig Deep on the Lichfield Canal (TBC, AGM Saturday night)	Elanor Napier
17-18/03/07	BCN Cleanup	Aileen Butler
6-9/04/07	Possible Easter Dig	Martin Ludgate
19-20/05/07	Dig Deep on the Wilts & Berks Canal (TBC)	Richard Worthington
9-10/06/07	Dig Deep on the Mon & Brec Canal (TBC)	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. 24<sup>th</sup> October, 7<sup>th</sup> November, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 23<sup>rd</sup> January etc. at the **Star Tavern** Belgrave Mews West, behind German Embassy on Chesham Place, from about 19.30 till 23.00.

#### **Other Events:**

24/02/07	London WRG AGM, Lichfield Dig	-
3/03/07	KESCRG/LWRG Barn Dance, Benson	Ed Walker
5-7/05/07	Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice	-
12-13/05/07	WRG Training Weekend	Ali Bottomley

#### **Who to contact:**

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# WRG Bonfire Bash

## WRG Bonfire Bash Grantham November 4-5

It's nearly that time of year again: the summer is sadly coming to an end and the nights are drawing in - what a horrible thought!!

Well we have something for you to look forward to: November is nearly upon us and that's the month of the Bonfire Bash!

Traditionally at the Bonfire bash we have bonfires! However we also use the weekend as a bit of a reunion for people who maybe haven't seen each other for a few months or in some cases years! It's a good place to catch up with your fellow navvies from the camp you were at over the summer, or to make new friends and work out where you're all going to go next year!

To that end, this years Bash will be back at Grantham where we went in 2004. We have two new sites and a familiar one from two years ago. The work is varied and involves improving the flow of water in a feeder that runs from Knipton Reservoir to the Grantham Canal. The 2007 IWA Trailboat Festival will be held on the Grantham Canal, and getting the feeder repaired should improve the water levels in the Canal ready for the visiting boats.

The feeder runs from the reservoir through the Belvoir Estate. The first section is open and is in need of a bit of clearance work, the sides of the feeder have also collapsed and are in need of repairing, and we will be putting in a cattle watering point. There will be some small excavator work to be done, and some dredging of the feeder bottom to clear debris from it. The feeder then disappears underground for about a mile and a half before reappearing.

The second site is a scrub bashing site at Muston Gorse Wood, at the other end of the feeder near where it joins the canal. This has a natural hedge boundary on one side of the feeder but the other side is overgrown with hawthorn and brambles; it also needs debris removing from it and in places some bank shoring up.

The third site is the one familiar to those of you who were at the Bonfire Bash two years ago when Adrian and Gav were at the helm. We will be working at Oddhouse Farm continuing the good work that we started there, and which the Canal Society has continued since then. We have about half a mile of canal to clear of trees from the canal bed, but also lots of tirdoring to take out the stumps.

In all, quite a varied type and amount of work. All you need to do is Volunteer for it!

The school we are staying in is St.Hughs in Grantham. It has a large hall and sports hall for sleeping in, also some quieter classrooms for those who don't want to stay up all night trying to finish the beer! It also has a brand new kitchen, and - best of all - lots of showers!!

**Did I mention the beer?** Now I've got your interest!! There will be the usual barrels of beer for the Friday and Saturday night - but in return I have a very small favour to ask! I am looking for some drivers of our WRG minibuses to go to and from the sites, also some excavator drivers and one person to help with booking people in and collecting money on the Friday evening, all offers gratefully received!! Just get in touch with me on the number below.

'Vulcan Dave' Bradford and I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible, it will be a good weekend with plenty of assorted work.

**Just fill in the form opposite and send it off today!**

See you soon

**Mitch Gozna  
07768525469**

**PS Full directions will be sent out to everyone who books - and will appear on [www.wrg.org.uk](http://www.wrg.org.uk)**

# waterway recovery group

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

## WRG Reunion Bonfire Bash 2006

I would like to attend the 2006 WRG Bonfire Bash on the Grantham Canal on  
November 4th-5th

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**



**Above:** Sal and Richard construct shuttering on the Wey and Arun (Suzie Pounce)

**Below:** Rebuilding a pound retaining wall (Lichfield Canal, Suzie Pounce)

