

London WRG News



Issue 66 April 2008

Pulling tyres out of the Wednesbury Oak Loop (BCN Cleanup, Tim Lewis)

From The Editor

Spring seems to be trying to arrive at last (although it snowed in Didcot today!) and we are finally leaving the scrub-bashing season – we seem to have spent a lot of time scrub bashing over the past few months as the dig reports in Navvies and herein testify to! We should be getting back to more constructive work over the next few digs and of course there is Canalway Cavalcade to help run (see page 14 for further details).

This edition of London WRG News was produced with the help of Facebook as a source of photos - very handy!

Ed Walker.

WRG Training Weekend

The annual WRG training weekend (10-11th May) this year will be on the Lichfield Canal, all the usual equipment (excavators, dumpers, vans, trailers) will be available for people to learn on and there is also the possibility of a chipper course and tractors. If people are interested in the weekend then please get in contact with Ali Bottomley (*aliwomble@fsmail.net*) to book on. The cost will be £15 for the weekend or £5 for a day and I'm sure Martin will be heading up in the van if people need a lift from London.

WRG Race Night

On Saturday evening at the training weekend the semi-annual WRG Race Night will be on again, helping to raise money for the restoration of the Droitwich Barge Lock – more information at:

http://www.wrg.org.uk/race_night_2008.htm

London WRG Awards 2007

The London WRG Awards for 2007 were announced at the London WRG Christmas party, the results were:

Driving

Special mention to:

James and Ed for getting their vehicles on site at any opportunity

James for continually tying his Discovery to trees

Martin for training enough people to drive vans so he doesn't have to

Ed for failing to notice that he'd reverted back to "learner" status

The winner - James for sinking Ed's Discovery in a puddle of mud

Catering

Special mentions to:

Lasagne for appearing on so many digs in close succession

Liz for using the smoke alarm as an alarm clock (with snooze function)

The winner - Frank for volunteering to cook breakfast so regularly

Lame Excuse

The winner - Moose for making himself lame

New Recruit

Special mentions to:

Helena

Mel

Adrian

The winner - Sophie for infectious and multi-directional enthusiasm, and fantastic literary and artistic contributions

Leadership

Special mention to:

Liz for organising a dig in the most publicised "blue tongue" area of the country

The winner - Ed for offering to lead a dig, then deciding that he couldn't go and after getting someone else to agree to lead it he then decided that he could go after all

Hereford and Gloucester Canal, 17-18th November 2007.

As we went together, we thought we would write together, so all the stuff in italics is from Krzysiek and the rest is me. For me the weekend started with the usual 7pm (depending on London traffic) pickup from Waterloo, however for Krzy it started with packing whereby he was *full of worries, unsure of what to expect and scared but excited*. Whereas I was just trying to organise him a pair of boots or Wellies; trainers just weren't going to cut it. Our thanks to James for the Wellie loan *as without them I would destroy completely my normal boots*.

Four hours after pickup (actually at 7.45pm) I was wondering if a dig so far away was really the best one to choose to introduce Krzy to WRG, but then I am a Northerner still and hadn't actually realised how far it was until told that the aim was "before midnight", very reassuring. However with the combined driving skills of Martin, Sophie and Mel we made it with 8 minutes to spare (*most of this time spent at traffic lights*), though the slow service at Burger King did its best to prevent this. There we met the rest of the group, *all were very nice polite and friendly*.

The rest of the evening, or very early morning was spent in relaxed chat about such wonderful topics as "animals I have accidentally killed", John I feel is a danger to the animal kingdom. We were still one member down at this point, our esteemed leader Dave Miller, whose car had decided it wanted to stay home this weekend. By Saturday morning he had convinced it otherwise and was on his way issuing instructions to save him an egg sandwich for lunch.

During breakfast the local, Chris, joined us; he was a very nice and well organised person (unlike certain other locals I could mention). On site the first thing we did was to create two groups, one for tirforing and one for cutting the trees. At the beginning I helped tirfor the stumps but as that work was not constant I decided to join the second group as I hadn't enough clothes and started to feel cold.

London WRG News

Working Party Reports

Before he moved however he did make the earth move for me and so the tirforing innuendo began, leading to James and I reaching climax without noticing and a variety of threesomes. Due to a lack of strops we began to tirfor using a strop of unknown capacity, since it was in the kit we assumed it was 4 tonnes, the same as the tirfor. As it snapped flinging me and Martin to the ground we decided that we might be wrong. The hope remained that it was just that point on the strop that was weak so we put a knot in it and stated again (can you guess what happened next?). With the whole strop now agreed to have a load bearing capacity of less than 4 tonnes we binned it.

As we didn't have enough strops of known capacity we hijacked a nice thick piece of cable from the local groups stock, this did have a capacity of over 4 tonnes, lots more in fact as we added a hook that in some way doubles the tirfors load to 8 tonnes (I did know how but have forgotten). Unfortunately this did shorten our tirfor cable as it was doubled up so we had to extend it using James' Landrover (capacity for being stretched not much more than a 8 tonne force from the creaking noises it was making) anchored to a really big tree and aligned by the tirforing process slowly shuffling it sideways before starting to move the stump. Once our four trees were dealt with we packed up tools and went to supervise the others.

At the other site I worked constantly and enjoyed it a lot so when the time for tea break came I was a little bit disappointed and surprised. I had gotten used to a single break during the day for lunch, which was often at about 3 or 4pm (at work). After the break we returned to work and Chris showed me a couple of tricks and gave me some advice so that the work went very smoothly until I decided to climb a tree (Tim described it as running up the tree to me).

Page 3

Working Party Reports

After work at the accommodation we were serenaded by Krzy on the piano as we relaxed and waited for supper. This was a casserole brilliantly cooked by Martin, which was followed with the provision of a very tasty WRG tart and a variety of beverages. Talk of the evening was shockingly canals and trains (especially which stations were built on a curve) though John also provided a detailed description of how to put down a rabbit or guinea pig humanely with a single blow to the head, slightly more tasteful than the previous evening but I was beginning to detect a theme in his choice of subject matter. The accommodation throughout was lovely and warm, so warm in fact that I woke up in the night and had to REMOVE layers of clothing, totally unheard of.

On Sunday morning Chris took us to see his hand dug hole in the ground where the lock used to be. Unfortunately all the stonework is gone so everything has to be inferred from changes in soil texture. Afterwards we returned to scrub-bashing, grateful for the fires as it was windy and rainy and we were all freezing, so freezing in fact that during lunch we decided enough was enough and to pack up and go home straight afterwards. This turned out to be an excellent plan as rain soon turned into sleet and by the time we packed all the equipment at the accommodation back into the van sleet turned into snow.

Our thanks to Chris the local for being so organised and to the accommodation caretaker for banning us from cleaning as he thought we should head off home and warm up. Thanks also to all the volunteers for work on site, cooking and driving. We had a really good weekend, though Krzy hasn't contributed in a while as he is fast asleep. Men are useless, forward the girlie takeover of LWRG!

Helena Howarth & Krzysiek Rosiecki



How to stretch a car - LWRG style. (Tim Lewis)

Chelmer & Blackwater Canal, 12-13th January 2008.

Conversation with my boyfriend, ahead of the Chelmer & Blackwater dig:

Sophie: “Darling—Do you fancy coming away for the weekend? We’ll probably sleep on the floor of a church hall and spend every daylight hour doing hard, dirty manual labour. On the plus side, sometimes it doesn’t rain.”

Darling: “Actually I’m busy that weekend.”

Conversation with my friend Rachel, ahead of the Chelmer & Blackwater dig:

Sophie: “Rach? Do you fancy coming away for the weekend? There will be men.”

Rachel: “Ok.”

I admit the above is a precis of the conversations I had with my nearest and dearest but suffice it to say that Darling still refuses to believe scrub bashing can be a better way to spend his weekend than watching football in a pub in Chiswick. Luckily my mate Rachel has more balls and she dragged her friend Jane along as a birthday treat. I hadn’t met Jane before the weekend but I thought that if this girl’s idea of a treat is coming away on a WRG weekend, I thought we’d probably get along like a house on fire.

Friday

“The accommodation isn’t normally this good”, I feel obliged to tell them both as we are shown around the Haybarn. A sizeable barge kitted out with a kitchen and large social room, the Haybarn is basically a floating scout hut, albeit a rather superior one. Downstairs are 8 snug little cabins with bunks and insane luxuries like pillows and showers.

“Yeah, we don’t usually get beds or anything,” Martin chimes in, worried they’ll think WRG weekends are cushy.

“Or hot showers,” says James, trying to sound tough. The honour of WRG men is under threat! If the new girls think it’s always this luxurious on a London dig, they’ll go home and tell everyone WRG men are pansies.

London WRG News

Working Party Reports

“Usually we work until about midnight and then we all shelter under a dock leaf and share a small packet of mini cheddars for supper,” pipes up Tim, who’s noticed there are new girls on this dig who may well be Up For It.

Luckily London WRG’s reputation for extreme hardiness is saved when the sewage system backfires and the ladies’ showers start flooding with ‘solid matter’. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief (but not through their noses). London WRG’s reputation is restored!

“It’s not poo, it’s mud!” insists dig leader Helen, before Elanor heroically cleans it up.

Once we’ve established that the accommodation for this dig is far, far superior to anywhere else we’ve ever stayed, been or heard about, ever, we go to the pub to celebrate our good fortune.

Saturday

The next morning we stroll along to site, which is on a tidal canal which joins the Blackwater estuary at the little fishing village of Maldon, famous for supplying the famous Delia Smith with her famous Maldon Salt. Which, if you haven’t tried it, is very like normal salt but 6 times more expensive.

After digs such as the poor old Wendover arm where the canal’s fallen into such disrepair that it’s really just a dry ditch, it’s good to see a happy, healthy and functioning waterway which is obviously a real local asset and well-used.

On the Chelmer & Blackwater, the canal not only fulfils that most basic of criteria (being a hole with some water in) but it’s obviously well-used and well-loved. In fact, it’s ticking along quite nicely without WRG’s help: on this dig we’ve just been draughted in to do some hairdressing.

Working Party Reports

The moorings are choked with craft and the overgrown banks are lined with little sheds that you could maybe call summerhouses if you were in a generous frame of mind.

When I was growing up my Dad used to have one such shed, which he used for the purpose of avoiding my mother. In this manner they avoided divorce and serious violence. I can see that the Chelmer and Blackwater sheds serve a valuable social purpose for the domestic contentment of the Maldon saltworkers. After all, if the towpath's so overgrown that they lose access to their sheds, divorce may become unavoidable. If they're too busy divorcing to make Delia's salt, Delia won't be able to write her cook books and then where will the nation be? With no-one to teach us how to boil eggs, we'll be catapulted back into the dark ages and be forced to sit around in the dark gnawing raw meat. Goodness only knows what will become of Norwich City.

Mindful of this threat to civilisation as we know it, London WRG set to with the loppers. Entire hedgerows fell under the assault of our bowsaws, a legion of blackthorns were despatched; passing visitors from California saw our bonfires and wept. 11 o'clock came and went with shrieks of horror: the gas had blown out and tea was nearly 22 minutes late.

"Of course, normally we have tea on the dot of 11," Helena assures Rachel and Jane.

Worse still, we've forgotten to pack the biscuits in the brew kit. As it's her birthday, we let Liz walk the mile back to camp in search of our custard creams. Too late we realise we should have sent someone else along to make sure Liz didn't eat them all on the walk back.

Rachel and Jane seem to be enjoying themselves and they're making matchsticks of the hawthorn hedges. It's always difficult to describe to 'folk back home' what it is that so appeals about these digs – it's often hard to explain to your loved ones why you go away from them so much at the weekends – and it was a relief for me that these visitors understood and appreciated what it was that keeps me coming back. WRG for me is a community that you opt into – it hard to reconcile it sometimes with your permanent community back home. Later I realised that I'd been a bit nervous about bringing people from my 'real life' into my neatly-compartmentalised WRG existence. Would they understand? I think the only parallel situation must be bigamy.

By mid-afternoon we've made one hell of a dent in the foliage lining the bank side. Married men start sneaking back to their sheds clutching broken clocks and fused toasters ('I'm going to my shed to get this fixed, dear'). Some of them feel guilty and join in the scrub clearance and their overexcited dogs are soon running about clutching sticks.



London WRG are starting to flag though. “I’m so OVER scrub bashing,” declares Helena, who had a week of it over the New Year. Even WRG Tart and self-confessed canal-addict Martin is bored of brush cutting. Never mind guys, soon the season will be over. We knock off as the light fades and scramble for a space in the boat. It’s a difficult balancing act even with the Burco as ballast. “We can either take Moose or 3 other people,” says Tim at the rudder.

Back at the Heybarn, the delicious cooking smells from the galley are managing to mask the appalling smell of sewage still emanating from the ladies showers. Mel’s cooking cottage pie and two sorts of crumble, so whilst she’s busy in the kitchen we toast Chad and Ellie’s recent engagement and admire the engagement ring. As it’s Liz’s birthday, her dad joins us for dinner and later we have a cake.

“Essex WRG would all be in bed by now,” Frank says wistfully at 10.30pm.

“Please may I join Essex WRG?” I yawn. Later there are heroic efforts to drag ourselves to the pub but this amounts to very little and all four bunks in my cabin are full by 11pm.

Sunday

Mel overcomes her horror of mushrooms to cook us a slap-up breakfast. We’re on site at the crack of ten to recommence our annihilation of the foliage. Midmorning we’re joined by a man in his eighties who strips down to his pants for his daily swim in the canal. We manage not to titter as he dons a pair of clogs to wander the towpath surveying our work.

“Apparently they’re thirty years old but he had to get them repainted last spring,” Helena informs us.

Later that day we’re astonished to find we’ve done all of the work we had scheduled. Some bloke from Essex water pops along to say ta very much and...er... would we mind tidying the place up a bit now seeing as we’ve made such a mess of it?

Right: New recruits Jane and Rachel have a break (Tim Lewis)

Left: Choose your weapon (Tim Lewis)

Working Party Reports

We redouble our efforts to burn everything we’ve cut down and cut the tree stumps right down to the ground like we should have done in the first place.

By the time the light fades the bank is transformed. Reluctantly we take our leave of the Haybarn which is now bobbing enthusiastically on choppy waters, reeking of sewage. We all agree it’s been a brilliant dig and the newbies seem to have enjoyed it immensely. I can honestly say the Heybarn provided the best night’s sleep I’ve had in a long time. Highly recommended for other groups – so long as they don’t mind a bit of poo.

Sophie Smith



Working Party Reports

Wendover Arm, 2-3rd February 2008.

For the first time ever I am first to arrive at a dig - just goes to show that Birmingham must be very central! James and I set up camp in the Robin Hood pub after failing miserably to find the accommodation - the Scout Hut in Tring. A cosy corner of the pub becomes increasingly populated by wrgies. The most cunning amongst the crowd get a lift back to the accom leaving the rest of us to stumble back home (well back to the hut). The good news for those who walked back was that the toaster had been unloaded and had been put into operation!

After breakfast we leave for site - this weekend we have the luxury of not having to make sandwiches (and even get treated to homemade flapjack at tea break) - thanks Rowena and Suzie!



We meet up with the locals at site compound who explain that the work will involve pumping water over the temporary bund, digging a manhole cover out, scrub bashing, cutting and bending rebar and erecting some formwork and shuttering on one of the mooring bays. After sorting out which tools would be needed we all travel over to the main site. We divide up into groups and disperse along the towpath.

Moose and the scrub bash team (Maria, Purple Fairy, Stuart, Alan, Bob, Richard and Tim) get to work on the first bonfire. Moose is first to fall victim to the gloop after taking a tumble and getting plastered in the stuff.

The locals spend the weekend driving excavators and tracked dumpers along the canal bed digging out loads of the mud. Helena, James and I are on pump duty which involved splashing around (or crunching around after we had broken the ice!!! - yes the weekend was a tad chilly) in what looked like an enormous spillage of Frappuccino.

Our day involved using lots of technical skills - namely the ability to “sloosh” rhythmically to encourage all the gloopy water nearer the pump. Helena and I had several “out-of-wellie” experiences. Mine involved me scrambling up the bank in my socks leaving my wellies stuck in the mud which had to be dug out later and Helena’s ended up with her washing her feet in the icy cold canal under the bridge. We return to the accom where those of us covered in clay attempt to get clean - slightly tricky when the wash basins aren’t big enough even for hands - a bucket (after cobwebs and inhabitants had been removed) served the purpose well enough.

The evening’s entertainment was the AGM, which seemed to pass by relatively quickly (Farleigh the Bear having decided to keep his opinions to himself) and painlessly (large quantities of beer and Pringles having been consumed).

Left: reinforcing and shuttering assembly (Tim Lewis)

We were joined by Kate and Bobby for a lovely dinner of chicken pie and mash followed by chocolate sponge and chocolate sauce. Later some of us watch the Waterworld DVD and some energetic souls walk to the pub.

On Sunday the pumping team were out of a job so we (joined by Bobby and Krzysiek and later by Sleepy David) volunteered to bend the rebar into the formwork needed for the mooring bays. The locals have developed a unique system for this, however, unfortunately, some of the pieces of the necessary bending frame had been dismantled and scavenged for another job so our energy turned to burning the brush at the end of the site compound and filling in the ruts in the roadway with barrows of rubble.

Krzysiek, James, David and Olly focused on cutting the rebar to size with bolt cutters whilst I decided to race them with the Stihl saw after said saw had been abandoned for inefficiency reasons. Whilst the Stihl saw was not quicker than blokes with bolt cutters at first as soon as the blade started to warm up soon there was no contest: the cutters were abandoned and we took it in turns with the Stihl saw produced three large piles of rebar for the pipework capping.

Working Party Reports

Back at the other site I gather that there was another enormous bonfire and a team did a great job on completing the formwork and shuttering before a concrete pour on the Monday morning.

On return to the accommodation the tools and equipment were sorted into different vehicles and we all went our separate ways. Despite the traffic jams and with the help of the AA required for Rowena's car we all got home safely.

Melanie Parker

Below: Waiting for canal traffic to pass (Martin Ludgate)



Working Party Reports

Wilts and Berks Canal, 23-24th February

The dig is barely over as I write this, but what else is there to do on a Piccadilly Line train from Earls Court to Manor House? Well there is the option of worrying that cramming my newly acquired loaf of leftover bread into a bag with my site boots is going to lead to boot shaped bread, but that's beside the point.

The weekend was an all round success and I enjoyed it immensely so I would like to start with a massive thank you to James for leading, to Rachael for finding us plenty of work, to Di for cooking dinner on Saturday night and to Mel, Nigel and James for dealing with breakfast (including waffles for all – excellent idea). Finally thank you to everyone else who made it a highly enjoyable and very productive weekend.

The weekend started early for Mel and James who put in a couple of hours work on Friday afternoon. They then moved on to the Foxham Inn for dinner with the other early arrivals whilst waiting for the rest of us to turn up. For some reason running to the pub seemed a great idea to the males of the party leaving Mel tottering along in her boots. However they got their comeuppance when they were left queuing at the pub door waiting for it to open. Once everyone had gathered we began to wend our way back to the hall for tea and toast before bed.

On site the next day the task was simple, clear out the majority of the trees from lock five whilst leaving a row on both sides to provide shade for the bluebells. Whilst initially working at burning the trees we cut down I soon abandoned this fiery arena of WRG politics for the back of the lock where Mel and I claimed all cutting down rights. These rights had to fiercely defend against encroaching males who had set their sights on the biggest trees in our patch. Oddly they showed no interest in the surrounding shrubbery. Here conversation descended to the infantile level of “What species of tree would you be?”



Clearing the lock kept everyone, except Di and Rachael who were laying a wonderful fence, busy until the end of the day. This was helped by Bob replanting a tree he had cut down in the bottom of the lock and spending ages playing with another one. Just as we were supposed to be letting the fires die down Tim's flared up, as it traditional. As we sat watching the fires cool and wondering "What type of dog would you be?" we asked Rachael what tomorrow's task was to be. It was gratifying to see her face light up as midway through telling us that tomorrow's task included finishing off here she realised that we had in fact already finished!

Back at the accommodation after our productive day Di was preparing a fantastic meal of shepherds pie with chocolate sponge for dessert (officially the tastiest chocolate sponge I have ever eaten) whilst a gathering occurred around James' airbed discussing, amongst other things, "What sort of car would you be?" (That one was for the boys as they didn't appreciate picking which flower to be, though Nick did win with "Venus fly-trap"). Later we wondered if we could do a study about how camp dynamics change depending on the availability of comfy airbeds to sit on. There was an excursion to the pub by some but I stayed home and chatted with Nigel and James, whilst worrying that I had a tendency to adopt village halls as 'home'.

On Sunday the work was more varied. Mel and I started the morning burning some scrub from the field by lock five, planting a few Hawthorne whips and wondering "What type of fence would you be?" As for everyone else I think the teams went as follows: Kate, Digger, Richard and Jenny laid a broken brick track in the ruts in the towpath to allow easier vehicle access to site. Nigel, Bob and Rob joined the locals bricklaying in lock four. Meanwhile our esteemed leader James, along with Nick (when he wasn't bust sinking his ambulance in the mud by weighing it down with logs) and Adrian burnt the trees that had already been cut down at lock two.

Right: Kate and Bob tidying up (Martin Ludgate)

Left: Some trees are more obstinate (Martin Ludgate)

Working Party Reports

Groups varied throughout the day and in the afternoon the lock two team, with its additions, had a nice pot of tea by the fire. The fire was of course small and controlled; especially as its position, surrounded on three sides by canal, meant that it had limited potential for ever becoming uncontrolled.

Having finished all the work given we headed back to the accommodation to tidy up, with conversation fuelled by Mel's show stopping "What sort of lingerie would you be?" (apparently thigh high stripy socks don't count), before everyone headed off home. All in all a very satisfying weekend. Thank you once again to all the LWRGies and the locals for their hard work and enthusiasm.

Helena Howarth



LWRG AGM Minutes

Minutes of London Waterway Recovery Group Annual General Meeting on 02 February 2008.

Attendees:

Ed Walker; Martin Ludgate; Stuart Stone; James Butler; Tim Lewis; Allan Scott; Richard Worthington; Helen Dobbie; Bob Metcalfe; Phil Cardy; David Miller; Kate Penn; David Hearnden; Maria Alderman; Mel Parker; Elanor Napier (Minutes); Richard Thomas; Helena Howarth; Krzysiek Rosiecki; Oliver Revel; Mark Gribble; Farleigh the Bear.

Apologies:

Nigel Lee; Elizabeth Wilson (Suzie Pounce and Rowena Gaskell cooking)

Dig Details:

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Leader/Joint Groups</u>
23 rd /24 th February 2008	Wilts & Berks Canal	James Butler
15 th /16 th March 2008 DD	Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal	Tim Lewis
05 th /06 th April 2008	BCN Clean Up	114/Aileen Butler
26 th /27 th April 2008 DD	Cotswold Canal	David Miller
03 rd /05 th May 2008	Canalway Cavalcade (London)	David Hearnden
10 th /11 th May 2008	WRG Training Weekend	Alison Bottomley
31 st May/01 st June 2008	Chesterfield Canal	James Butler/North West
28 th /29 th June 2008	Wilts & Berks Canal	TBA (No van)
02 nd /03 rd August 2008 DD	Cotswolds Canal	South West? (No van)
06 th /07 th September 2008	Sussex Ouze/Lichfield	Moose/Mel Parker (1/2 AGM)
27 th /28 th September 2008 DD	Cotswolds Canal	Elanor Napier
18 th /19 th October 2008	Ipswich & Stowmarket Canal	Ed Walker
01 st /02 nd November 2008	Bonfire Bash (Chelmer & Blackwater Canal)	Central Booking
22 nd /23 rd November 2008 DD	Basingstoke Canal	Maria Alderman
06 th /07 th December 2008	Wilts & Berks Canal	KESCRG?
10 th /11 th January 2009	TBA	TBA
31 st January/01 st February 2009	TBA	TBA
21 st /22 nd February 2009	TBA	TBA
21 st /22 nd March 2009	BCN Clean Up	114/Aileen Butler
18 th /19 th April 2009	TBA	TBA

Kit

Tim Lewis - Funds in the bank account are sufficient for current needs.

1 manure fork	Ed Walker
2 long handled slashers	Ed Walker
6 lighters	Maria Alderman
1 kitchen scales	Maria Alderman
Brushcutter service	Ed Walker
Tirfor certification	Ed Walker – George Eycott
Bag for hard hats	Maria Alderman
6 hard hats	Ed Walker
6 pairs welding gauntlets	Ed Walker
Flame thrower container	James Butler
Stainless steel spades	Ed Walker to investigate.

Publicity

Tim Lewis – There are plenty of recruits at the moment so a drive for recruitment is not required. General agreement of the above.

Tim Lewis – Current publicity is articles in Navvies and the London WRG news and the content on the London WRG website.

Events

Barndance 01st/02nd March 2008 – this includes the Leader Training on Saturday and a WRG board meeting on Sunday.

Mike Stevens Memorial 04th March 2008 at the London Canal Museum, Tim Lewis to confirm time. The social for the next dig is postponed until 11th March 2008.

Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice 03rd/05th May 2008.

Theme for the weekend is “Fun time on water”. LWRG is to do Tombola/publicity stand and possibly help with the human fruit machine. Half the proceeds LWRG get will be donated to the Droitwich Barge Lock Appeal.

Maria Alderman will book the Market Stall. David Hearnden asked to borrow the catering kit for the weekend. There were no objections.

LWRG AGM Minutes

WRG Training Weekend 10th/11th May 2008 - Those interested in acquiring skills for the weekends are to contact Alison Bottomley ASAP.

Martin Ludgate will organise minibuss transport from Waterloo Station if required.

For those interested in First Aid training, David Hearnden has forms for applying for support.

Tim Lewis' Birthday Bash 21st/22nd June 2008 - 50th birthday party.

Visit to Waltham Abbey's Ex-Gunpowder Works – Allan Scott to investigate possibilities.

Any Other Business

Paperwork For weekend leaders the paperwork to send to WRG Head Office are the insurance form (filled in on the website) and a list of people present on site for each day. For unusual work a Risk Assessment should be completed.

Emergency Contact Details, Tim Lewis and David Hearnden are to design a form including contact and medical details to be kept in the van and only used in emergencies.

Underage People attending digs who are under 18 and do not have parents or guardians with them create legal obligations. If necessary LWRG will seek advice from the WRG board. Leaders can ask new people if they are under 18 or over 70 in order to establish the legal and insurance situation.

Sandwich Boards Still require words for detailing on the boards.

Self-Assessment for BW sites BW sites require a level of self-assessment from the organisation in charge or BW supervision would be required. None of the digs planned this year will require this. Tim Lewis will discuss this issue with Mike Palmer.



With Cavalcade fast approaching London WRG will need volunteers to help run the Waterways Name Game and to help decorate our entry in the decorated boats competition on the Saturday.

The theme this year is “Funtime on water” and Cavalcade runs over the May Day bank holiday weekend (3rd – 5th May 2008). If you are able to help at any point over those three days with either the work camp or fundraising (or even both!) then please come along!

A lot of the money that London WRG needs to run gets raised at Cavalcade and we are also raising money for the Droitwich Barge Canal restoration so it’s all in a good cause.

There will also be the traditional London WRG meal out on the Saturday evening which Liz Wilson has volunteered to organise. Details of this will be appearing on the LWRG mailing list soon or get in contact with Liz directly (liz@giantwasp.co.uk) if you are interested.

Ed Walker

Just an update on where we are for The Little Venice Cavalcade, as you all know and have marked in your diaries, but just in case the 3rd, 4th and 5th May 2008.

Same as every year for the last 4 years, I am after volunteers, to help me and a very small team, to run the Site and Services, so we can put up the Market Stalls, put out table and chairs, take traders to their allocated space etc. Also need a cook for the weekend, most to be catered for is 20 – 25 people,

Accommodation is slightly different than say at the National Festival, in so much that we use boats, I will be on site from Wednesday 30th April and the accommodation will hopefully arrive either the 1st or the 2nd, from Wednesday onwards suppliers will be bringing in such things as the marquees, tables, chairs.

Before people cry out no mention of beer, yes we are having beer, same as last year, should have 10 real ales, proper cider and other drink (wines etc). But I’m sure Site and Services will be involved with the Beer Tent somehow?

For those in LWRG involved in the Best Decorated boat competition. Just to make you worry a bit. I believe I heard another boat is joining to compete against you? Who have never entered before?

The theme for this year is FUNTIME ON WATER. Hopefully a very easy subject for LWRG to think about.

Anyone interested in helping please call me on 07961 922153 or even better drop me an email on moose@wrg.org.uk

Moose

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

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.

Dates	Location	Organiser
26-27/04/08	Dig Deep on Cotswolds Canals	David Miller
31/05-1//06/08	Chesterfield Canal with NW?	James Butler
28-29/06/08	Dig Deep on Wilts & Berks Canal	TBA
2-3/08/08	Dig Deep on Cotswolds Canals with SW	Martin Ludgate
6-7/09/08	Sussex Ouse or Lichfield & half-AGM	Moose or Mel
27-28/09/08	Dig Deep on Cotswolds Canals	Elanor Napier
18-19/10/08	Ipswich & Stowmarket Canal	Ed Walker
1-2/11/08	Bonfire Bash, Chelmer & Blackwater Canal	Centrally booked
22-23/11/08	Dig Deep on Basingstoke Canal	Moose & Maria
6-7/12/08	Xmas dig with KESCRG, Wilts & Berks	Centrally booked
10-11/01/09	TBA	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. 20th May, 17th June, 22nd July, 26th August, 16th September etc. at the **Star Tavern** Belgrave Mews West, behind German Embassy on Chesham Place, from about 19.30 till 23.00.

Other Events:

3-5/05/08	Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice	-
10-11/05/08	WRG Training Weekend	Ali Bottomley
21/06/08	Tim Lewis's “significant” birthday	-
23-25/08/08	National Waterways Festival, Wolverhampton	-

Who to contact:

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Above Lunch is getting quite civilised on London digs (H&G, Yarkhill, Tim Lewis).

Below WRG boat team prepare for launch (SHAG weekend, H&G, Yarkhill, Tim Lewis).

