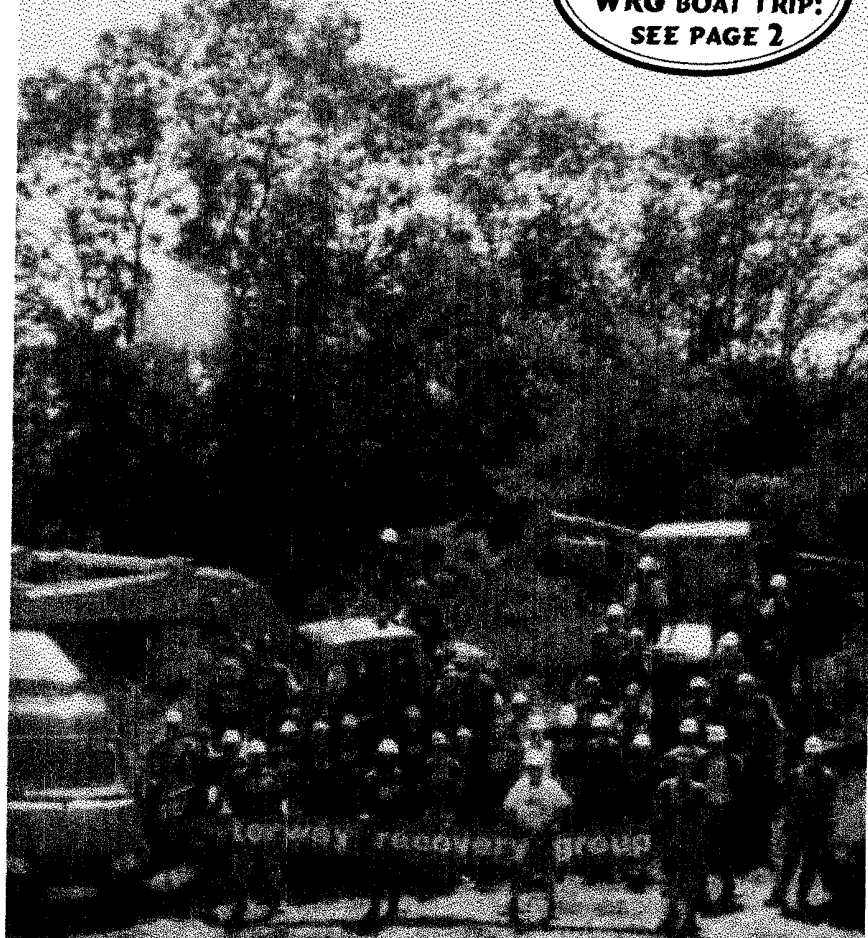


London WRG News

No 34 June 1997

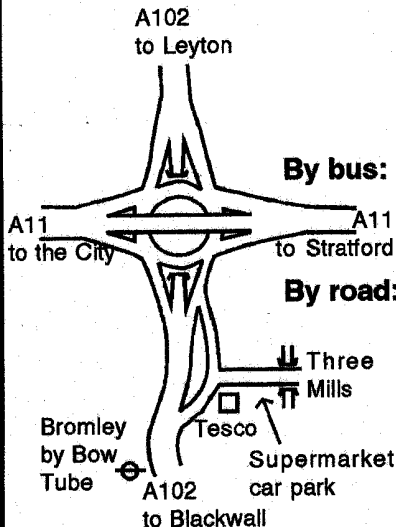
**BOOK NOW FOR
THE 1997 LONDON
WRG BOAT TRIP:
SEE PAGE 2**



Some of the trainees and some of the kit that they were trained on at the WRG Training weekend in Lichfield. (Martin Ludgate)

Don't delay! Book now for the 1997 London WRG Boat Trip

- WHEN?** On Wednesday June 25th
- WHAT TIME?** Boat departs at 19:00, returns at 23:00
- WHERE FROM?** Three Mills, Bow, London E3
- WHERE TO?** Up the Lee Navigation to Leyton and back
- HOW MUCH?** £6 including buffet
- HOW DO I BOOK?** Send the form to Lesley (address on page 7)
- WHAT DO I BRING?** Depends what you want to drink!
- HOW TO GET THERE?** **By Tube:** Bromley by Bow (District), cross main road by subway outside station, go North i.e. away from railway, turn right into side road (Three Mill Lane) past Tesco supermarket and over canal bridge.



By bus: Route S2 or 108 (Blackwall Tunnel bus) to Tesco Bromley by Bow.

By road: Take 'Blackwall Tunnel' exit from roundabout under Bow Flyover (where A102 Blackwall Approach crosses A11 Bow Road), left into Hancock Rd before you actually get onto the main road, left by Tesco into Three Mill Lane and park in Tesco car park.

Please reserve me place(s) on the London WRG boat trip at
£6.00 per person (cheques payable to Lesley McFadyen)
Name(s) _____

The Annual General Meeting

Many thanks to all of you who turned up for the AGM on April 30th.

As usual, the main business of the meeting was to decide the dates, venues and organisers of our working parties for the rest of this year, and you will see from the dates list on page 7 that we seem to have more-or-less achieved this.

By the time you read this Edd Walker will have tried his hand at leading a London WRG weekend, and by the end of the year Dave Charlton and Matt Taylor will have had a chance to demonstrate their prowess in this area.

We planned some social activities, including an evening boat trip on June 25th (see left) and a barbecue (provisionally) on August 7th.

We discussed publicity / recruitment and agreed that we should do something for the IWA National Waterways Festival at Henley (more next time) and that the editor should write more about us in 'Navvies', and produce an up to date London WRG leaflet.

We then decided what to spend all our money on...

Firstly tools: we decided we needed more bricklaying tools (I have since bought a long level, another scutch hammer, a bolster and wire brushes), some loppers, mattocks with heads that don't come off, long-handled slashers and one of those saw-on-a-stick things.

Secondly catering, and I am pleased to say that our kit has now acquired an on-site tea-making facility, plus not one but *two* toasters!

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Annual General Meeting

One final item in Lesley's notes from the meeting has me slightly baffled about whether we were talking tools or catering at the time:

"Garlic crusher? Possibly wrecking bar. Tim to investigate..."

I know we managed to snap the old garlic press on a stubborn bit of garlic, but surely there's no need to be quite that brutal, is there?

We then had to come up with some ideas for how to raise cash for all of these things, plus the cost of insuring the van for the summer.

T-shirt sales are not a huge source of income, but we have probably sold over 100 of them over the past few years, so they must have brought in a bit of money as well as publicity. We are therefore planning a new design of T-shirt - all will be revealed in due course!

We agreed to run the tombola game at Little Venice (it raised around £150), and possibly at Henley, and we hoped that our social activities - while not primarily intended as fund-raising events - would be able to make a modest surplus.

Finally, we agreed to accept the generous offer of a small trailer for storing our kit in in Aileen's garage and for taking it with us when there isn't room in the van.

Working Party Reports

Thames & Severn Canal: May 17-18

Our second visit this year to the Thames and Severn Canal saw us carrying out various 'finishing-off' jobs on Wildmoorway Lower Lock, which is now nearing completion.

Most of the scaffolding was removed from the lock chamber. This process was enlivened by the fact that there was about 6ft of water in the lock, and it was impossible to see what was at the bottom. Congratulations to Matt for finding out which one of the uprights was attached at the bottom by a swivelling joint. Hope your finger gets better soon.

The container that used to be by the lock has been moved down into the field, which gave us two jobs - (1) landscape the lockside where it used to be and (2) build a ramp so that we can get stuff in and out of it more easily in its new location.

We also filled 237 sandbags (we counted them all), used them to build up the dam across the lock tail and lugged a pump down to the dam, in a futile attempt to pump out the lock chamber. Oh, well.

All in all, not the most exciting of work, but all useful (with the possible exception of the pump-lugging) and it all brings us a little closer to finishing this lock and moving on to the next one.

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Wey & Arun Canal: June 14 - 15th

After some mix up with who exactly was expected to turn up at Waterloo for this dig, we finally set off and were informed that the electricians in NUH were shot (again!), so push starts would be required all weekend.

After arrival and meeting up with the rest of our motley crew it was just a case of adjourning to the Foresters for a swift pint. Two hours later we finally made it back to the hall having found out that the work-site had changed...

After an excellent breakfast we left for Baldwin's Knob Lock where the new back pumping system required some work.

While Aileen carried out the artistic work of painting the recycled pipework BW green, the rest of us fixed the burst output pipe and tested the pump. Then the pipe trench was filled in while the foundations were laid for the back pump waterfall.

After lunch the work-site was moved to the Onslow Arms where a silt-trap had to be bricked and the start of the boat-trip car park had to be laid using digger, dumper and vibrating roller.

This work continued for the rest of the weekend with Ian and Allan doing the brickwork while Matt, Martin and I concentrated on plant operation.

All in all a good weekend was had by all and especially good from my point of view as the suggestion of a student surcharge on the food was not introduced this time.

Edd Walker
Page 4

Remember the article in issue 33 describing an unsuccessful search for canals in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Zanzibar and anywhere else beginning with 'Z'? Well, in a determined attempt on this year's London WRG 'Lame excuse' award for non-attendance on digs, Rupert and Alison are continuing their quest...

From our foreign correspondent

Kathmandu, 22nd April

Dear Martin and fellow navvies,

After our dismal failure to find any canals in Africa, we thought we'd try another continent...

In the Southern Indian state of Kerala, we spent three days exploring the system of canals known as 'the backwaters'. Mostly built as drainage channels to reclaim surrounding land, they form an extensive network for navigation and irrigation. Some are the width of the Grand Union, others are as wide as the Thames, and in some places they open out into huge lakes. *The highlight was going through a lock!* There are also lift bridges, wharfs, small boats carrying cargoes such as rice straw, and a very cheap local ferry services (a 2½hr journey cost 10p) on large wooden boats.

We also found an abandoned canal with a guillotine gated lock in Madras, which was called the Buckingham Canal! This seemed to be part of a longer route known as the Eastern Coast Canal. In Calcutta we found another canal with evidence of a lock onto the Hooghly River under re-constuction.

Now we are in Nepal, prior to joining an organised trip into Tibet and across China. Our regards to everyone, and good luck for all the summer camps, digs and rallies.

Alison and Rupert Smedley



The owners of 'Fulbourne' kindly let us use it for our entry in the pageant of boats at London IWA's Canalway Cavalcade, held at Little Venice over the May Day bank holiday weekend.

The theme this year was 'Roses and Castles', so rather than something boring involving traditional narrow boat decoration, we commemorated the Wars of the Roses, with the crew in string 'chainmail', armed with bowsaws and arrows, battling it out between two large cardboard castles ('York' and 'Lancaster') and red and white roses everywhere.

Unfortunately, it isn't easy to steer a boat when there is a castle wall stopping you moving the tiller (especially if you are sword-fighting with a blunt machete at the same time) so we had a couple of slight mishaps and by the time we got back to Little Venice our castles looked like they had been 'in the wars', and the crew were looking rather battle-scarred. But never mind, we still won the prize for the best volunteer / charity boat, and £100 which we gave to the Jubilee Appeal to replace the WRG van fleet.

Next Time Out

Lichfield Canal: July 5-6

Our next working party will be the first for London WRG on the Lichfield Canal.

What is referred to as the 'Lichfield Canal' is part of the original main line of the Wyrley and Essington Canal from Horseley Fields Junction in Wolverhampton to Huddlesford Junction near Lichfield on the Coventry Canal.

This canal became part of the Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN) and the level section from Wolverhampton to Ogley Junction near Brownhills is still open. However the heavily-locked (30 in 7 miles) section from Ogley to Huddlesford was abandoned in 1954, and it is this section that the Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust are restoring as the 'Lichfield Canal'.

It will not be an easy restoration: parts have been filled in and built on since closure, and this - combined with the need to cross new main roads - means that several diversions of the canal and new locks will be necessary.

However, the restoration is seen as worthwhile both in its own right and because it will encourage more use of the under-used northern sections of the BCN. Those locks that remain appear to be in reasonable condition, and we will be working on Lock 18: the first to be restored, and now nearing completion.

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Montgomery Canal: July 26-27

We haven't had a London WRG working party on the Mont for a while, and we probably won't be having another for some time, so make the most of this opportunity to help with the finishing works on Aston Locks, ready for the re-opening this Autumn.

London WRG Barbecue: August 6th

We hope to be able to organise another barbecue on the canal side outside the London Canal Museum, probably on August 6th. More details will follow in the next London WRG News.

IWA National Waterways Festival Henley: August 23-25

This event takes place on a different site each year, and this year it is in Henley, so the four groups involved in the 'Dig Deep' initiative (a joint scheme involving ourselves, KESCRG, BITM and NWPG in co-ordinating their efforts on certain restoration projects in the southern half of the country) are putting on a display. In addition we will probably be running the Canal Names Tombola game, to raise some money for London WRG. More next time.

Thames & Severn: date not known

This would have been on September 6-7, but Maria and Clive have most inconveniently decided to get married then, so we'll probably try to move it to either the weekend before or the weekend after.

And finally...

Sorry about the poor print quality of the cover photos. Please Give generously to the Editor's New Printer Fund.

London WRG Dates List

Working Parties: Transport available Friday evening; meet outside Burger King at Waterloo station; normally at 19:00 but may be earlier or later depending on distance. Contact Tim Lewis, Martin Ludgate or Lesley McFadyen for details.

Date	Location	Organiser
05-06/07/97	Lichfield Canal	Dave Moore
26-27/07/97	Montgomery Canal	Tim Lewis
06-07/09/97	Thames & Severn DATE MAY CHANGE	Dave Charlton
27-28/09/97	Hereford & Gloucester: Dig Deep	Ian Little
01-02/11/97	Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal: WRG reunion dig	
22-23/11/97	To be arranged (Wilts & Berks?)	Aileen
06-07/12/97	Buckingham Arm: Xmas with KESCRG	Matt
17-18/01/98	To be arranged: probably a Dig Deep project	

Note: working parties marked 'Dig Deep' are carrying out work on projects where work is being co-ordinated under the Dig Deep Initiative, a scheme involving ourselves and three other mobile canal restoration groups (NWPG, KESCRG and WRG BITM). Current Dig Deep projects are: Thames & Severn Canal at South Cerney; Droitwich Canal; Wey & Arun Canal at Loxwood; Hereford and Gloucester Canal at Oxenhall.

Social Gatherings: Wednesday Night, normally 10 days before each dig i.e. July 16th etc. at the **Founders Arms**, Bankside, London SE1 (on the South Bank, 100 yards East of Blackfriars bridge.) about 19:30 till 23:00. **Note that on 25th June we have a boat trip on the Lee Navigation instead of the usual social.**

Other Events:

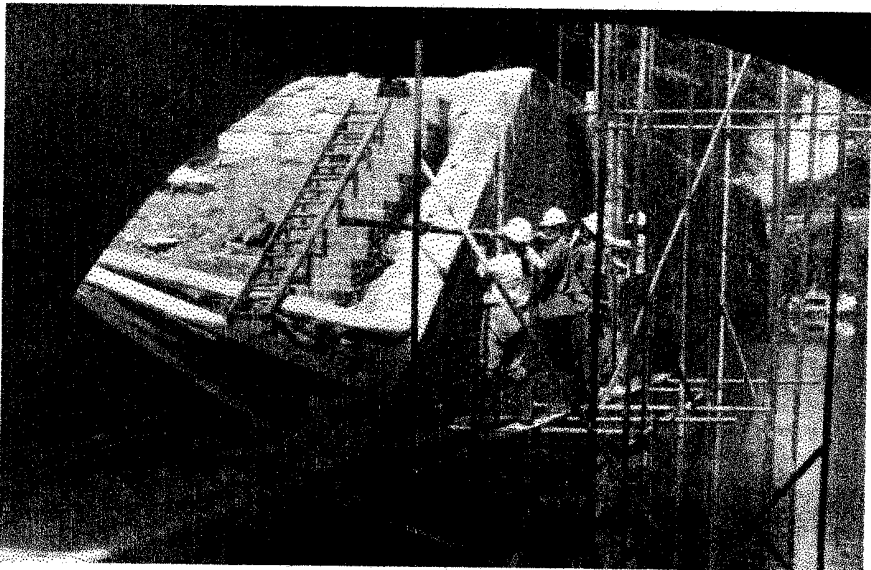
17/06/97	'Navvies' magazine assembly at the London Canal Museum
25/06/97	Evening boat trip on the River Lee Navigation (see p2)
06/08/97	Barbecue (date and venue to be confirmed)
23-25/08/97	IWA National Waterways Festival at Henley

Who to contact:

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Enquiries Lesley McFadyen (same address as Martin Ludgate)



Above: Thames & Severn: removing scaffolding from the almost complete Wildmoorway Lock. Below: London WRG's Yorkists and Lancastrians at Canalway Cavalcade. Photos: Martin Ludgate

