

# London WRG News



Bob and Taz cleaning up the brickwork (Derby Canal, Ed Walker)

**Issue 60 December 2004**

# From The Editor

London WRG seem to have spent the last few months frantically moving house, Sal and Andy have moved to Shepherd's Bush (see page 10 for the new address for T-shirts) Gilly has moved to Reading and I have finally given up being a student and found paid employment in Didcot (new address on page 11). The upsets caused by the moves are the main reason why this issue is later than I had planned but it did give the chance to include the latest details on Cavalcade and the New Year Camp (more below). Details of the other major events at the beginning of next year are also in this issue including a booking form for the BCN cleanup.

**Ed Walker**

## **New Year Camp**

There have been a few changes in the plans for this years new year camp – firstly, due to a lack of suitable work the site has been changed to the Cromford canal (subject to permissions coming through). The work will involve the slash and burn of a good half-a-mile's worth of prime scrub and the accommodation will probably be in the same hall we used for the recent London WRG dig. The leader for the week is Moose with James Butler as his assistant and Maria as Cook. If anyone is interested in going (and I am assured that everyone is welcome) then please book on either *via* head office as usual or by contacting Moose directly, please use the mobile number if trying to contact him after 23<sup>rd</sup> December:

e-mail: [moose@wrg.org.uk](mailto:moose@wrg.org.uk)  
mobile: 07961922153

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

## **Canalway Cavalcade**

The theme for next years Canalway Cavalcade has been announced and it is "Trafalgar" – so get your thinking camps on, as we need to win the decorated boat trophy back! All the usual bank holiday fun and games will be occurring, the London WRG stalls will need volunteers, the annual LWRG curry trip will happen on the Saturday night and the beer tent will need propping up. Due to a number of reasons KESCRG are no longer going to supply the site crew for this year's event and Moose has stepped into the breach (again!) to run the work camp for the event. So if a large bloke threatens to break your arms don't say you haven't been warned! More seriously I know moose will be looking for a lot of help with that weekend so if you have a spare moment I'm sure all help will be gratefully received. Further details of the arrangements for Cavalcade will be in the next issue.

## **Care Of Your Moose**

Still on the subject of Moose a website has been brought to the editor's attention that answers many of the questions we have been asking for many years like: "Is it okay to feed Moose?" "No. It is illegal and very dangerous." and "Are kids safe around Moose?"

<http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/aawildlife/agmoose.cfm>

Thanks to Richard Cool for spotting this one, he'll be the one following the "What if a Moose charges?" advice at the next dig.

## **Websites**

Some useful websites for London WRGies:

<http://www.timlewis.org.uk/Wrgpage1.html>  
Tim's photo site

<http://www.wrgforestry.org.uk/>  
The new WRG Forestry site

<http://www.cromfordcanal.org.uk/>  
Friends of the Cromford Canal site

## Derby Canal, 31<sup>st</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2004

I shall start with the ‘Thank You’s’, to Harri T for all the cooking, shopping and clearing up, to Marcus for helping out with the ‘technical’ stuff and local liaison, to Stella and Graham for looking after us so well over the weekend. Hot bacon butties and burgers on site – what a way to treat your visiting work parties. It was so nice to have them join us on Saturday evening, too. Also to all who came to the dig.

The dig was sheduled for the Wey and Arum when I agreed to organise, but as so often happens, it got changed to the Derby Canal, Borrowash Bottom Lock to be precise. LWRG hadn’t worked on this Canal for many, many years, and then not in this location. The canal runs around the back of Borrowash between the houses and the railway. The Top lock has been buried under a grassy knoll, but the Bottom lock is open to the vagaries of the weather and the local ‘oaks’ so our work for the weekend was to tidy up the site, lay some bricks for the wing wall and point up some of the chamber walls, with the longer term plan that the wing walls, in particular would be completed for the winter, whilst efforts were put into other parts of the canal.

We had a good turn out of LWRGies from around the country, (Northeast, Wales, South West, Essex as well as London). Jon celebrated the sale of his boat and the imminent arrival of his child by providing sausages (!) for the weekend. Added to those already bought, we had sausages for breakfast, cold in sandwiches for lunch, sausage casserole for dinner, sausages for breakfast and sausage sandwiches for Sunday lunch. I’m not sure who took the rest home!!

While the scaffolders played Meccano with the scaffolding poles and planks, the rest of us started the chamber clearance and cutting back the ‘jungle’ around the access slope to the chamber. This gave us access to the wing walls and we started on the necessary clearing up of the loose brickwork prior to the rebuild. It was interesting rebuilding a wall that not only curved away, but curved back as well.

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# Working Party Reports

Some of us worked on smaller holes in the brickwork while others pointed up. The chamber was cleared on rubbish, with care taken over rescuing the local fauna, depositing it in a safer place.

We stayed at Shardlow Village Hall, with a large car park and sports field alongside. It was also conveniently situated close to at least three pubs, within easy walking distance, some alongside the canal.

As I said before, this was the first time LWRG had worked on the Derby Canal for some while, but I hope it won’t be as long before we are back.

**Allan Scott**



Harri T building the lower wing wall (Ed Walker)

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# Working Party Reports

## London WRG and WRG North West on the Hereford & Gloucester, 2-3<sup>rd</sup> October 2004.

This weekend was notable for a number of unusual features. Unfortunately, however, a prompt arrival of the minibus at Waterloo was not one of these features. (the driver blamed it on a large traffic jam called West London) This delayed our departure to the point where it appeared highly unlikely that we would reach Herefordshire before pub closing time. However this didn't matter, because one of the unusual features of the weekend was that we were staying in a village hall with no pub within walking distance, so there wasn't a pub for us to not arrive in time to not miss last orders at...

Another unusual feature was the reappearance after a long absence of Rick A (who has been off sick) and Matt (who was paying a flying visit from Australia). But back to the bus journey...

On leaving the A40 at Over (where?) we chose to take a scenic route across Gloucestershire and Herefordshire (Oh, all right, we took a wrong turning) but eventually arrived at Yarkhill village hall at about 11.30pm. Incidentally, we couldn't help noticing on our wanderings through the countryside that every single village we passed through (and there were plenty of them) boasted not one but AT LEAST THREE inviting-looking hostelrys with real ale aplenty, traditional open fires all ablaze, sounds of conviviality issuing forth from within etc etc. OK I exaggerate a little, but it did seem rather like that as we thundered along the country lanes, hell-bent on reaching the only pub-free village in the county. Are we really to believe that not a single one of these other villages has a village hall that we could have used instead?

Another unusual feature of this dig was that it was to be a joint weekend with WRG North West. Unfortunately nobody seems to have told WRG North West so they didn't turn up. No, that's unfair - despite most of NW finding that they couldn't make it that weekend for various reasons (we have that effect on people) Bob and Liz Dewey were at the accommodation by the time we arrived and stayed for the whole weekend, while John Hawkins (probably the most south-easterly person in WRG North West, and living proof that the north really does start at Watford) joined us for Saturday.

Over a couple of cans of beer / slices of toast / cups of tea etc, Marcus (dig organiser) explained the plans for the weekend. It appeared that yet another unusual feature of this particular dig was to be that most of us wouldn't be working on a canal at all. We would be using various machinery to build a cycleway somewhere not far away from where the towpath might have been when it was by the canal, when there was a canal for it to be beside. I think. Meanwhile another team were to be working within walking distance of the accommodation, fixing a damaged culvert under the canal.

The cycleway team arrived at the worksite at Aylesford on Saturday morning and set to work levelling the path, laying a layer of road planings on it, flattening it and trying not to knock too many high voltage power lines down with their excavators. We didn't actually knock any down at all, but one who will remain nameless managed to dig up a sign that said 'danger buried cables' and something that looked suspiciously like a buried cable (although 'buried' was something of an exaggeration - it was all of 3" underground), which put an end to work until a cable detector could be found. Meanwhile (so I am told) the culvert team discovered that 'walking distance' to their work-site was a little further than they'd realised. (In fact by that measure, perhaps there is a pub within 'walking distance' after all.) They also discovered that the work involved in fixing the culvert was a little more extensive than expected, but at least they spent the day finding out exactly how much more work it would be than we'd expected, so the group that gets to do the work know what they're in for.

We didn't go to the pub on Saturday night either (I told you it was an unusual dig) but instead stayed in the accommodation where we were fed a sumptuous repast of bangers and mash and some interesting vegetables (Thanks to Liz, helped by Marcus), washed down with some rather unusual pear wine (thanks to the caretaker). Staying with the 'unusual dig' theme, our evening was enlivened by Dippy Claire asking what the Falkirk Wheel was and being shown by Richard Cool and Matt, who used cardboard, two beer cans and a pencil to make a working model. We celebrated Marcus's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday with a 'boob cake' supplied by local H&G chap Martin. (quote from Richard: "You don't need that knife, there's usually a clip round the back that you can undo...") and the presentation of a 'Danger: noxious gases' T-shirt from Nigel. And the most unusual feature of the evening was that Tim Lewis didn't arrive just in time for dinner. In fact he didn't arrive at all - but we were joined overnight by Sal & Andy who were moving house that weekend but somehow managed to incorporate a trip to Herefordshire into the logistics of the move.

Coordinated excavator driving (Nigel Lee)



## Working Party Reports

Back on site on Sunday, the team who'd been working on the culvert on Saturday joined us at Aylesford. To make up for the fact that they'd actually been working on the canal on Saturday, they were sent to work even further away from it on Sunday, clearing a section of hillside ready for a wheelchair-accessible path to be installed. Meanwhile the cycleway team had acquired a cable detector by some dubious means involving David Penny. One theory was that he'd been wandering around the county waving a live power cable around, waiting until he heard a detector somewhere go 'bleep', but it transpired that in fact he'd simply scrounged one off the first road-works team he could find. Anyway, armed with the detector we could carry on laying the cycleway, making sure that any levelling needed in the vicinity of cables was done by raising the ground rather than by excavation. We didn't quite complete the job before the rains that had threatened to wash us out all weekend finally arrived resulting in a slightly early finish, but we didn't leave too much work for the locals to finish.

Martin Ludgate

# Working Party Reports

## Cromford Canal, 20-21<sup>st</sup> November 2004.

WRG's London contingent have thoroughly enjoyed their foray north to scrub-bash on a short section of the Cromford Canal. Arriving at the Newlands Inn (always rely on WRG to find a pub) on the morning of Saturday 20th November they were swiftly briefed by working party leader Marcus before heading down to the work site for the day: the short section of canal between the culverted Newlands Bridge 34 and the eastern portal of Butterley Tunnel.

The trees had overgrown the short isolated section of towpath (in some cases quite severely) and covered the culvert bank up to the main road but by the time the light (and BBC cameraman) had gone all this had been cleared and a "good to excellent" bonfire created.

The equipment used ranged from bow saws and Tirfors (for pulling stumps) to chain saws, one of which was wielded by a newly qualified lady, who (I am reliably informed) is NOT to be argued with! [Alison later stated she'd had her chainsaw certificate for 2 years! - Ed] Some small stuff was chipped and some of the logs went out by rail, on the 2' gauge Golden Valley Railway which runs from the Midland Railway Centre to the back door of the pub – surely the best terminus any railway could wish for!

Reactions from the group were almost unanimously favourable: the accommodation's good, the beer's cheap (but then again, you could say that of almost anywhere in the country compared to London) and there's plenty more in the way of scrub and trees to clear - so much so that a much larger work site has been identified for a Christmas / New Year Camp, subject to the relevant permissions being forthcoming.

**Brian L Dominic**

Stump pulling on the embankment (Ed Walker)



Our first outing for 2005 is to the Wey & Arun Canal on January 15th-16th. "Do we never learn?" I hear you ask incredulously. Well, yes, I do know all about the canal that's had more winter work parties cancelled due to too much water than all the rest of the waterways network combined. (If only they could save it up till summer time they wouldn't have a water supply problem!) But we are assured that there has been some excellent progress with the the swingbridge (we managed to land the crappiest dig on what has basically been a successful project) - so much so, that they reckon the work's reached well above the highest possible flood level so whatever the Sussex Monsoon throws at us, we'll be OK. The swingbridge is now installed, and we'll basically be carrying on rebuilding the abutments with some bricklaying (including the interesting curved bit that the bridge closes against) plus some concreting and maybe the odd bit of scrub-bashing too. Ed is your London WRG organiser for this weekend.

On February 5th and 6th we're off to the Uttoxeter Canal (that's the new name for the Caldon, cos we're going to restore it back all the way to Uttoxeter now!), and while we're there, we'll be holding our London WRG AGM on the Saturday evening. We've decided that as more people come on our digs than our socials these days, we'll hold the AGM at a dig instead of a social. (I'm sure we decided the exact opposite about 15 years ago!)

## Next Time Out

So please make an effort to get along to this one, even if you can't come for the whole weekend. Andi will be dig organiser as it's the nearest dig to Newcastle. (somebody should tell her it's the other Newcastle...)

Then on the 24th-25th we (provisionally) return to the Cromford Canal where we had our first (and successful) weekend recently. Moose will be organising this one. Then only a fortnight later on March 12-13 it's the BCN Cleanup which this year is on the Walsall Canal near Ocker Hill. See page 9 for more on this one, and please do send off your booking form. On April 2-3 we return to Lichfield (no organiser booked yet: turn up at the AGM and volunteer... or don't turn up at the AGM and find out you've been volunteered...) and then on April 23-24 it's back to our favourite canal, the TBA....

**Martin Ludgate**



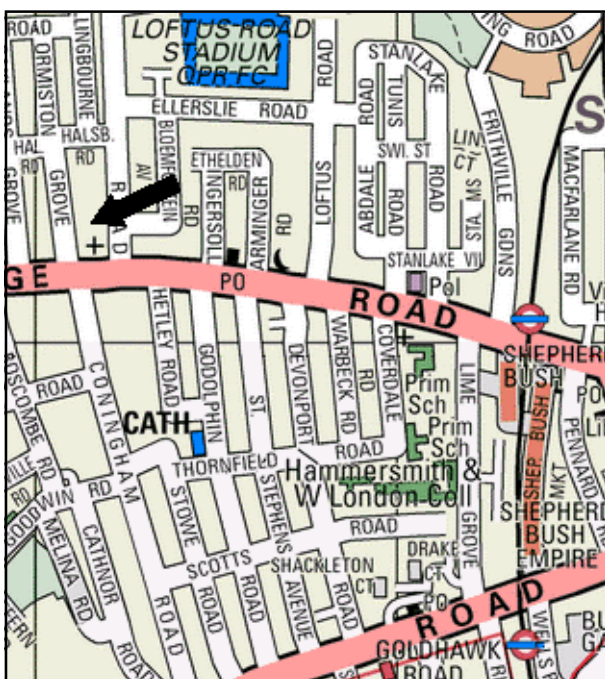
Haybarn swing bridge in position, site still above waterlevel despite the rain! (WACT website)

# LWRG Xmas Party & Barn Dance

The London WRG Christmas party is almost upon us again. This year Sal and Ansy have graciously offered to hold the party at their new flat and it will be on the evening of Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December, starting at around 7.30pm.

Please inform either Martin or Lesley (contact details on page 11) if you are intending to turn up so that the amount of food required can be catered for. The cost of the evening will be £6.00 (money collected on the night) to cover the buffet, this does not include drink so please bring your own. Anyone interested in helping with the catering please contact Lesley.

Sal and Andy's flat is a little hard to find (the address is The Studio House, 1A Bloemfontein Way) but if you walk along Uxbridge road from Shepherd's Bush and turn right into Bloemfontein Road you will see what looks like a shop access road immediately on your left. Go down this track and follow it round to the right behind the houses – The Studio House is immediately on the left. A map is below.



## The Barn Dance is Back!

In order to raise funds for the London Waterway Recovery Group and Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group we are repeating the barn dance that we organised last year.

Once again we have booked live local band Tumble-down Dick who play mainly English music with Irish fiddle and the odd Scottish tune chucked in for good measure. There will be a cash bar, raffle and other games. Tickets are £10 each and this includes a fish and chip supper.

The dance will be on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> February at Benson Parish Hall, Oxfordshire (halfway between Reading and Oxford), doors open 7.00 pm, music from 7.30 pm and we'll finish at 11.30pm. Directions will be sent out with the tickets and will be on the WRG website. Tickets have to be purchased in advance so that we can order food.

To order your tickets send an SAE to 'WRG/KESCRG Barn dance, Dr and Mr Williamson, 79 Oakley Road, Chinnor, Oxfordshire, OX39 4HR'. Please enclose a cheque made payable to 'I Williamson', a contact telephone number and state if you need a non-fish meal (probably vegetarian pancake rolls). We'll also be selling tickets at the London WRG/KESCRG Christmas party.

At the moment I am trying to organise village hall floor style accommodation but as we went to press I don't have it confirmed. As soon as it's confirmed it will be on the website and on the London WRG and KESCRG mailing lists (details of local B&Bs will also be there)

This was a really good event last year, which is why we're doing it again. We've got 120 tickets to sell so if your friends and family like a bit of dance then please order them some tickets – it's open to everyone (and if dancing is not your thing then come along for the real ale at the bar). How about tickets as Christmas presents? – beats socks and ties.

If you've got any questions then please ring me on 07989 425346 or email [helen\\_gardner@hotmail.com](mailto:helen_gardner@hotmail.com).

**Helen 'BushBaby / WRG Wear' Gardner**

## Book now for the BCN Cleanup 2005

Following the slight disappointment at the poor quality and small quantity of rubbish found in the Wyrley & Essington Canal at the 2004 BCN Cleanup, British Waterways have promised us a great improvement next time. The 2005 event will be based close to BW's Ocker Hill premises, and we are assured that all their staff have spent the last year filling the canal with all rubbish, just so that we won't be disappointed when we turn up to clear it all out again on March 12th-13th....

# BCN Cleanup

**But seriously, folks...** The annual Birmingham Canal Navigations cleanup isn't just about having fun trying to outdo each other for the most bizarre object or the largest amount of trash pulled out of the cut. It's also a vitally important exercise in trying to keep these fascinating canals open in the face of indifference by some of the local folks who see them as simply a handy rubbish tip, and the inability of BW to spend more than the minimum on maintaining them due to government constraints.

The Cleanup takes part in a different area every year, and this time it's the Walsall Canal between Ocker Hill and Darlaston that'll get the treatment. And although we are assured that there is much more junk in the canal than we found last time - especially in the fifteen bridge-holes on this length - if we run out before the end of the weekend, there's also the first part of the Tame Valley Canal to tackle. And as usual the event will be supported by the local branches of the IWA, the Birmingham Canal Navigations Society, and British Waterways who will provide work-boats and rubbish skips.

Overnight accommodation is available for Friday and Saturday nights (details in the next issue and on the WRG website) but people are welcome to just turn up for the day. For more information - or to offer to help with the organising the event - contact the WRG organiser **Aileen Butler** on **07703 567764**. **And to book on for the weekend, simply fill in the form below and send it off today!**

### waterway recovery group

in association with BCNS, BW and IWA

I would like to attend the **2005 National Canal Cleanup** on **Mar 12-13** on the **BCN**

Forename: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Any special dietary requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

~~Require~~ accommodation **Friday night / Saturday night / both nights**

I enclose payment of £ \_\_\_\_\_ (pay 'WRG') for food (£10 for whole weekend; £2.00 for each meal)

Do you suffer from any allergy or illness, such as epilepsy or diabetes, about which we should know, or are you receiving treatment or under medical supervision for any condition? **YES / NO**  
(If yes, please attach details)

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 **National Cleanup bookings, WRG, PO Box 114, Rickmansworth WD3 1ZY**

# London WRG T-Shirts

## Order Form

**T-Shirts (Front: Design) : £8**

**Sweatshirts (Front: Design) : £15**

**Long Sleeved T-Shirts (Front: Design) : £10**

**Polo Shirts (Back: Design, Front: Sm WRG logo) : £13**

**Hooded Sweatshirt (Bk: Design, Ft: Sm WRG logo) : £21**

**Colours: Red, Black, Navy, Green, Grey,  
Purple (T-Shirt or Sweatshirt Only). (Design White)**

**Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL**

What?	Size?	Colour?	No?	Cost?
<b>Total Cost:</b>				

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Delivery Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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(Orders will be distributed at Socials/Digs where possible)

**Please make cheques payable to Sally Nutt**

**Please send completed form to Sally Nutt, LWRG T-Shirts,  
The Studio House, 1A Bloemfontein Way, London W12 7BQ  
(07764 902863)**

# London WRG Dates List

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

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

**Working Parties:** Transport available Friday evening in the London WRG minibus; meet by the post box outside Costa Coffee at Waterloo station; normally at 19:00 but may be earlier or later depending on distance. Contact Tim, Martin or Lesley for details.

Date	Location	Organiser
15-16/1/05	Dig Deep on the Wey & Arun	Ed Walker
5-6/2/05	Uttoxeter Canal, Froghall	Andi Kewley
26-27/2/05	Cromford Canal (TBC)	Moose & Maria
12-13/3/05	BCN Cleanup	Aileen Butler
2-3/4/05	Dig Deep on the Lichfield	TBA
23-24/4/05	TBA	TBA
14-15/5/05	Dig Deep on the Basingstoke	TBA
28-30/5 or 4-5/6/05	TBA	TBA
25-26/6/05	Dig Deep on the Mon & Brec	TBA
16-17/7/05	TBA	TBA
6-7/8/05	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. 4<sup>th</sup> January, 25<sup>th</sup> January, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 22<sup>nd</sup> March etc. at the **Star Tavern** (upstairs room) Belgrave Mews West, behind German Embassy on Chesham Place, from about 19.30 till 23.00. Extra Social 10<sup>th</sup> February (Battersea Beer Fest).

#### Other Events:

14/12/04	London WRG Xmas Party	-
26/12-1/1/05	WRG New Year camp, Cromford Canal (TBC)	Moose & James Butler
5/2/05	London WRG AGM - at Uttoxeter dig	-
19/2/05	LWRG/KESCRG Barn Dance	Helen Gardner
30/4-2/5/05	Canalway Cavalcade, Little Venice	-
7-8/5/05	WRG Training weekend	Centrally Booked

#### Who to contact:

London WRG Co-ordinator: Tim Lewis, 5 Herongate Road, Wanstead, London E12 5EJ

Phone: 020-85300425

E-mail: [tim@timlewis.org.uk](mailto:tim@timlewis.org.uk)

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Cycleway laying on the H&G (Martin Ludgate)



Well, Dippy Claire won't forget what the Falkirk Wheel is again (H&G, Martin Ludgate)