

From The (New) Editor

Due to Martin being extremely busy at this time of year with Navvies and the canal camps booklet I have (foolishly, some would say) taken on the job of editing London WRG news for this issue at least. But do not despair, Martin will still be writing regularly here and will be a strong force behind the scenes. If anyone has comments, suggestion or (even better) articles then please contact me.

On to more serious issues and the Christmas period is almost upon us, and this means that it is the London WRG / KESCRG Christmas party on Saturday 5th December at the Cosgrove village hall. Our own Christmas party will be on Wednesday 16th December. Further information on all these events is available later on in this issue. Onto next year and apart from the usual collection of digs we have the Young's brewery trip, again more details later on.

Well I think that's enough from me for one issue, see you at the Christmas party!

Ed Walker.

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“Navvies” Assembly

Volunteers required for an evening of stapling, stuffing, sticking and beer tasting. Yes that time has rolled around, its Navvies assembly again. As the 1999 canal camps booklet will be going out with this issue more work than usual is required so any help will be gratefully received. Just turn up at the Canal Museum in New Wharf Road, London N1 (near Kings Cross station) at any time from 19.00 on Tuesday 22nd December.

Wanted: Bar Staff

To help run the real ale bar at the London WRG / KESCRG Christmas Party. Must be able to work hard, pull a decent pint and wear the costume to full effect. Anyone interested please contact me before I volunteer you!

London WRG Merchandise

Yes, coming soon is the brand new range of London WRG gear, a new T-shirt design and also hard hat and car stickers. Definitely what the best-dressed navvy will be wearing next year!

For all the latest information don't forget to check the London WRG web site:

www.danevans.demon.co.uk/lwrg

The most up to date canal restoration web page anywhere!

Brewery

Trip

London WRG Finally Organises Brewery Trip

To mark fifteen years of drinking in a Young's Pub, and to finally disprove the theory that London WRG can't organise a booze up in a brewery, we are organising a tour of Young's Ram Brewery in Wandsworth.

- Date: Saturday 30th January 1999
- Venue: Ram Brewery Visitors' Centre
The Brewery Tap
68 Wandsworth High Street
Wandsworth
SW18
- Time: Meet in the Brewery Tap pub by (or before) 3.30 pm to go on the 4.00 pm tour.
- Cost: £5.50 (£4.50 for students/pensioners)
- How to get there: The Brewery Tap is in Wandsworth High Street, 5 minutes walk from Wandsworth Town station (four trains an hour from Waterloo, journey time 12 minutes). Nearest Underground station is East Putney (District Line).
- Afterwards: I expect we'll have another drink or two in the Brewery Tap before going on in the evening to Dan's housewarming party! Ask Dan for details.

Beer has been brewed on the site for more than 400 years and as well as seeing how the beer is made we will get to see the 19th century beam engine and the shire horses and drays which are still used to deliver the beer locally. And of course we will get to drink some of the stuff as well.

If you are interested in coming, please let Alison Smedley know. You will need to pay a deposit of £1, and unfortunately if there are more than 10 of us the brewery will want all the money up front, which means committing yourself by getting the money to Alison by the 16th January.

Alison can be contacted by:

Telephone 0181-691 7215,

E-mail asmedley@doh.gov.uk,

By old fashioned Royal Mail to 54 Hyde Vale, Greenwich, SE10 8HP,

Or in the Doggetts Coat And Badge pub at every London WRG drink!



London WRG Christmas Party

It's that time of year again, the shops have started selling Christmas presents, the decorations are coming out and it is my pleasant duty to let you know that the annual London WRG Christmas Party is nearly upon us. This year Aileen Butler has volunteered to hold the party and it will be on the evening of Wednesday 16th December, starting at about 7.30pm. All the usual events will happen like the London WRG awards ceremony (who will get the back seat driver award this year?), a slide show, good food (more of Martin's infamous garlic bread?), lots of beer, a bottle raffle and possibly the chance to see the previously-unreleased footage from the incomplete 1997 WRG Panto video. All this and much, much more! It should be a brilliant night so add the date to your diaries now!

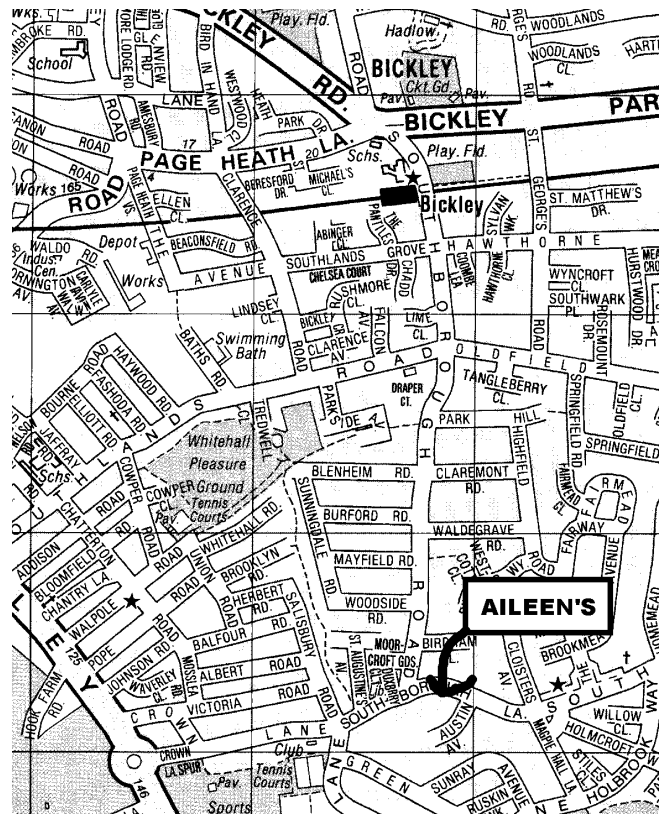
Please inform either Martin or Lesley (contact details on the back page) if you are intending to turn up so that the amount of food required can be catered for. The cost of the evening will be a measly £5.50 (cheques made payable to Lesley McFadyen) to cover the delicious buffet, this does not include drink so please bring your own (or contact Martin if you are interested in a share of a polypin). Anyone interested in helping with the catering please contact Lesley. Some overnight crash

space is available but please inform Aileen well in advance if you need this.

Aileen Butler's address is:

Flat 2,
184 Southborough Lane,
Bickley,
Kent.
BR2 8AL
0181 467 1292

The map shows where the nearest train station is (trains run from Victoria):



Lichfield (Wyrley & Essington) Canal: 23rd-25th October 1998.

It was slightly windy and a little drizzly when twelve London WRGies met in Lichfield on the Friday night. The weather was obviously just practising because by 7.30 a.m. on Saturday it had perfected the art of "chucking it down horizontally". It was a very unenthusiastic bunch that made it to the Tamworth Road site by 9.00 a.m. John Horton (the local organiser) was nowhere to be seen so at 9.05 a.m. we got back in the van! A few minutes later John turned up - he'd been at Darnford dealing with the crane and lorry that had appeared early. Unfortunately much of the planned work at Tamworth Road required a lack of rain so he set us off on lock clearance and brick cleaning.

When the canal was closed someone decided to run a storm-water drainage pipe through all the locks, fill them in with gravel and demolish a couple of feet of brickwork and stone off the top of the locksides. The canal society are using some coping stones and quoin stones from another lock to restore this one. The rest of the lock wall hasn't been completed yet so the two quoin stones already in place (one above the other) are on their own - slightly resembling Stonehenge! The crane and lorry were being used to move another stone weighing about 3 tons from Darnford to Tamworth Road. By mid-morning most people were cold, wet and quite happy to sit in the van drinking coffee made with lukewarm water and watch the crane put the stone in position. Gas would have helped on the coffee front!

During the coffee break John thought of some work at Darnford that could be done in the wet, after many phone calls to WRG board members we established that Ed really was authorised on JCBs and so Adrian, Ed, Rupert and I set off. Meanwhile back at Tamworth Road a large sheet of tarpaulin had been made into a shelter across the lock, enabling the brickwork to be done.

At Darnford the four of us collected the JCB and three dumpers from the farm and trundled across the fields in a 'Wacky Races' style procession. The JCB dug out the cut and the dumpers transported the soil to the other end of site, constructing the banks of the canal at that end. It was very cold, wet and windy and dumpers don't give very much protection from the elements, so we were glad when we stopped for lunch. After trailing round Lichfield for an hour in Adrian's warm car we

Working Party Reports

finally found somewhere that sells Calor gas. We were thoroughly warmed up when we got back to Tamworth Road for food and were keen to get back to work because it really was quite good fun.

The others, however, had had enough, packed up and headed for the showers. This was a good move because suddenly the sun came out and there were blue skies!

We had a productive afternoon in the mud and knocked off at about 5.30 p.m. There was time for a shower and a swift half before tea - pork casserole with the usual London WRG garlic bread, followed by Rupert's special surprise: trifle with lashings of sherry. Thanks to Alison and Rupert for a splendid meal. We had a pleasant evening in two pubs and guess what? We got wet on the way home as well!

With an extra hours sleep and the eggs refusing to cook we didn't make it on site until gone ten; however, the weather had greatly improved and so we were able to do some constructive work. The four of us carried on at Darnford until lunchtime whilst the others carried on with the lock clearance and reparation of the lock walls. After lunch we all worked together at Tamworth Road and after tea break we all watched Rhys do the work!

Despite the weather we had a fun weekend: we shifted lots of mud at Darnford, a second coper was put in place at Tamworth Road, the lock is nearly empty, we mended a few big holes in the brickwork (as well as making some more), and we installed scaffolding in the lock tail so that rebuilding work can begin.

Thanks to Rupert and Alison for organising and cooking and Lesley and Ed for doing breakfast on the Sunday, and finally John and Jan for the local organisation and the cakes.

Helen Gardner (London WRG regular)

Working Party Reports

Thames & Severn Canal, WRG Reunion Dig: 5-6th November.

A good turnout by London WRG meant that we made our presence felt (particularly in the beer barrel area) at the annual WRG reunion. The work on the various sites was mixed, with the major job of the weekend being removal of bricks from under a bridge. Needless to say London WRG did not get involved in such trivialities, we were assigned the task of rebuilding a retaining wall at the top of one of the locks on the flight leading up to the Stroudwater side of Sapperton Tunnel. WRG central having been heard to mention that "London WRG are the best brick laying group we've got" which does not say much about the other mobile groups!

Saturday we had the pleasant task of removing a large number of copping stones from the canal near the worksite and generally preparing the area for the next days bricklaying. As only a small number of people could get to the site at one time a select bunch of us went on to remove the flotsam and jetsam from a stream that passes under the canal near the tunnel mouth. The more insane amongst us were seen to be swinging from a particularly rotten tree while sawing off its branches.

The evening celebrations proceeded in the usual way with Ralph's firework display, a excellent meal, hog roast and most importantly a real ale bar (which yours truly got roped into helping to run).

The next day dawned far to early for some people but we managed to crawl on site where we started to build the retaining wall. During the course of ground clearance the previous day we had found that one of the existing copping stones was dangerously unstable and so Dan built a temporary brick pillar to support it. The bricklaying proceeded to the usual mix of 2 parts brick layers to 7 parts audience. But despite this the wall went up quite swiftly and we only stopped when we run out of bricks. On the other end of the London WRG site the stream clearance was going well and the flow was much improved by the time we left.

All in all this reunion was definitely one of the best ones I have been on, the accommodation was good, the work interesting and the Saturday night party excellent.

Ed Walker

Next Time Out

Their was a Dig Deep meeting in mid-November and as a result we have chosen London WRG dig dates for the next year. The Kennet & Avon dates are provisional in that the entire project is provisional - it depends on BW getting their act together. If they don't, we'll most likely go to Lichfield, Droitwich or Wilts & Berks instead, as they seem to be the non-Dig Deep projects that have most use for visiting groups at the moment.

Letters

Lichfield & Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust Limited

The Royal Wolverhampton School,
Penn Road,
Wolverhampton,
WV3 OEG.

9th November 1998

Martin Ludgate,
35, Silvester Road,
East Dulwich,
London,
SE22 9PB

Dear Martin,

The Trust wants to thank you for all the amazingly hard work which was put into the work camp on 24th/25th October.. Excellent progress was made with the lock clearance, brickwork repairs and the moving of the scaffolding.

The Trust greatly appreciates all the efforts you make and looks forward to seeing you all again in the near future. We have mad great strides in the last two years but there is still a very long way to go and we shall need and appreciate every input we get.

Many thanks for all that you continue to do.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Kingshott
Hon Secretary to the Trust

London WRG Dates List

For up to date information check
the London WRG web pages:
www.danevans.demon.co.uk/lwrg

Working Parties: Transport available Friday evening in the London WRG minibus; meet outside Burger King 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
5-6/12/98	Xmas party dig with KESCRG, Buckingham Arm.	-
23-24/1/99	Dig Deep on the Basingstoke.	TBA
13-14/2/99	Dig Deep on the Hereford & Gloucester.	TBA
6-7/3/99	Dig Deep on Kennet & Avon (venue provisional).	TBA
20-21/3/99	BCN Cleanup (Wryley & Essington).	-
17-18/4/99	Dig Deep on Kennet & Avon (venue provisional).	TBA
22-23/5/99	Dig Deep on the Basingstoke.	TBA
12-13/6/99	Dig Deep on Wey & Arun.	TBA
3-4/7/99	Dig Deep on Hereford & Gloucester.	TBA

As all the digs are TBA's at the moment, volunteers would be very welcome to help arrange them.

Note: Digs marked "Dig Deep" are on projects where work is being co-ordinated under the Dig Deep Initiative, a scheme involving ourselves and three other mobile groups (NWPG, KESCRG and WRG BITM).

Social Gatherings: Wednesday night, normally 10 days before each dig i.e. November 25th, January 14th, February 3rd etc. at the **Doggetts Coat And Badge** pub, southern end of Blackfriars bridge about 19.30 till 23.00. We are usually in the bar just above bridge level.

Other Events:

16/12/98	London WRG Christmas Party, Aileen Butler's house.
22/12/98	Navvies assembly, London Canal Museum, 19:00.
30/1/99	Young's Brewery trip.
4/99	AGM (provisional).
1-3/5/99	Canalway Cavalcade, London IWA rally at Little Venice.
10/99	Possible Legoland trip.

Who to contact:

London WRG Co-ordinator Tim Lewis, 6, Downs Road, Enfield EN1 1PA.

Phone: 0181-367 6227

Enquiries Martin Ludgate or Lesley McFadyen, 35 Silvester Road, London SE22 9PB

Phone: 0181-693 3266

E-mail: editor@navvies.demon.co.uk