

Navvies 45



**waterway
recovery
group**

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Vacant STILL!!

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from the Editor

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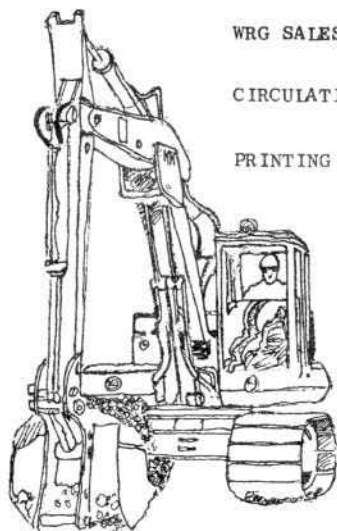
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COMMENT

No.45 October 73

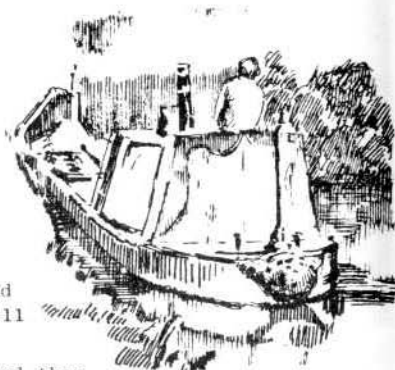
Regretfully, a rather more serious issue than usual, but there is so much at stake now, we have to use all available space upon the important (in our minds at least) issues.

Wandering about a fair bit of the system recently by boat, I came across several discouraging trends - the most obvious of which was the alarming rate of deterioration of the state-owned waterways - presumably a short sighted attempt to reduce deficits. Happy little adventures like the Bridgewater and Disley breaches will I am sure become common - place if the current trends of neglect continue. Gate paddles becoming a national curiosity, gates quins and cills leaking water in a most abandoned fashion despite impassioned pleas to "save water now" side ponds reduced to the status of watercress (or worse) beds; sophisticated hydraulic dredgers working slow time, at enormous bonus rates, feeding (with luck four mud hoppers resulting in only about 80tons of mud in suspension being moved per day (a good day!)), and even more frightening in its own way the attitude of the "main users" towards their environment

Yet with the computer at Willow Grange generating a white heat processing a few thousand boat licences and working out wages for the ever decreasing number of employees involved in the actual work. Expensive, large and virtually unused boats used for cosy "canal inspections". Costly, complicated and irrelevant experiments with hydraulic paddle gear (much of which is non standard, resulting in repair problems); Glossy multi-coloured free handouts glorifying the achievements of the administration and the like, really make me wonder who decides the priorities.

G.K.P

Next time



MOST GROUPS

27-28th October

DROITWICH DIG

Although we are not going to show in this column individually, the Groups that are expecting to attend the Droitwich Dig - please assume that YOUR Group will be attending.

See elsewhere in this issue for up-to-date details and then fill in the form enclosed with this issue - send it to your local Organiser - or if in doubt to ROD PAWSEY at 13, Milford Gardens Wembley, Middx. Please bear in mind it is VITAL that we know of your intention to attend in good time - without this knowledge we cannot hope to lay on adequate work, accommodation or food, so please fill in and post the form soon.

A few days before the date detailed information will be sent to you, this will contain travel, work, feeding and accommodation details.

We have a special request from JEFF HOLMAN that all members of the Surrey & Hants Canal Society who wish to attend should contact him.

LONDON W.P.G

NOVEMBER 17-18th
DECEMBER 1-2nd

A WELL KNOWN DERELICT CANAL IN THE SOUTH
" " " " " " " "

For the remainder of the year it is the intention of the Group to concentrate on on a canal, which for political reasons had better remain nameless for the time being. As the initial stage of restoration - ie whilst it is gathering momentum, will be the most critical, it has been decided to throw all our resources in this direction.

As the canal is not exactly a million miles from London, there will be scope for both weekend and one day workers, so please could we have a big turnout on all four days. Full details from NIGEL STEVENS

EREWASH CANAL PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 27-28th
NOVEMBER 24-25th
book now with MICK GOLDS for a useful trip to a waterway which must be open by 1974
NOVEMBER 11th

DROITWICH DIG
CHESHIRE RING
EREWASH CANAL

Work will be at the Great Northern Basin, concreting cappings on the basin retaining walls. Please contact MICK GOLDS for further details.

NORTH LONDON RESCUE COMMANDO

OCTOBER 27-28th
NOVEMBER 10-11th & 24-25th
DECEMBER 8-9th

K & A CROFTON FLIGHT

Work is now proceeding upon the clearance of Lock 56. Contact RICHARD TRIM

KENNET & AVON CANAL TRUST - DEVIZES & PEWSEY BRANCH

4th SENDAY IN EVERY MONTH

PEWSEY WHARF

Please meet at Pewsey Wharf at 10.30am, for towpath levelling. Contact GERRY TOWNSEND

STROUDWATER CANAL SOCIETY

FIRST THREE SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER

RYEFORD DOUBLE LOCKS

The work will be digging silt from the upper lock chamber and rebedding coping stones. Start 10.00am. Grid ref. 156-819/047

OCTOBER 27-28th

DROITWICH DIG

FIRST THREE SUNDAYS IN NOVEMBER

BOWBRIDGE

Preparation work for dragline clearance Grid ref. 156-854/044

SUNDAY 24th NOVEMBER

WINSON GREEN LOOP

An away working party with the B.C.N.S

Full details of all above programme from PETE SWALLOW

SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS IWA

October 21st

OLD STRATFORD ARM

OCTOBER 27-28th

DROITWICH DIG

Please support (for a change) the above programme - it is vital that more members of the branch turn out to do their bit. Contact ANDREW CAVELL

SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL SOCIETY (Montgomery Branch)

SATURDAY 20th OCTOBER

REDNAL

Tree felling by Rednal Bone Works - saws and slashers needed.

SUNDAY 4th NOVEMBER

WELSHPOOL

No details at present

SATURDAY 17th NOVEMBER

REDNAL

Details as October. Full information from DAVID SMITH or TONY BYRNE

BIRMINGHAM CANAL NAVIGATION SOCIETY (BCNS)

All work parties depart from Gas Street Basin, Birmingham at 9.30am

OCTOBER 14th

TITFORD CANAL OLDBURY No.4 POUND

OCTOBER 21st

THAME VALLEY CANAL - STONE CROSS

OCTOBER 28th

DROITWICH CANAL - DROITWICH DIG

NOVEMBER 4th

STRATFORD CANAL - SOUTHERN SECTION

NOVEMBER 10th-11th

WINSON GREEN (SOHO) LOOP -

NOVEMBER 13th

TITFORD CANAL - No.5 LOCK CHAMBER

NOVEMBER 25th

WINSON GREEN (SOHO) LOOP - with Stroudwater C.S

DECEMBER 2nd

THAME VALLEY CANAL - as October 21st W.P

DECEMBER 8-9th

DROITWICH CANAL at SALWARPE

Full details of above fixtures from GRAHAM TURNER

KENNET & AVON TRUST BATH & BRISTOL BRANCH

OCTOBER 27 28th

DROITWICH DIG

Contact ALEC TILLEY at 6, Greenfield Road, Westbury on Trym, Bristol. Bristol 621500

SUNDAY OCTOBER 21st

(10.30am Lock 11 Widcombe, BATH LOCKS

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 4th

10.30am CLAVERTON PUMP - CLAVERTON

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 11th

10.30am LOCK 11, WIDCOMBE FLIGHT - BATH

BATH & BRISTOL BRANCH...continued

10.30am LOCK 11 - BATH
10.30am CLAVERTON PUMP

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 18th

Further dates for your diary:- December 2nd, 9th, 16th & 30th.

Details from BRUCE OLEMAN "Dinas" Bathampton Lane, Bathampton, Bath. Bath 5220

SCOTTISH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

20th-21st OCTOBER

FORTH & CLYDE CANAL

The work will be in the Glasgow Area - no other details available at the moment, but contact RICHARD DAVIES

NARROW BOAT TRUST

27th-28th OCTOBER

CANCELLED

There will be no working party at Norton Canes this weekend as most members will be going to the Droitwich Dig - individuals, please make their own arrangements.

24th-24th NOVEMBER

NORTON CANES docks

Working party as usual. Contact BERNARD HALES.

Droitwich Dig 27-28:10:1973

Arrangements are proceeding tolerably well - Accommodation has been fixed up at nearby Witton Army Camp for the weekend and Friday night - this has 12 rooms, hot water and clothes drying facilities as well as all the usual mod cons.

Plant is in the process of being booked, and catering arrangements well under control - it is hoped to have tea and drinks available on site throughout the entire working party, an eight station radio network has been booked and control facilities are being arranged in a field at the Porters Mill end of the site.

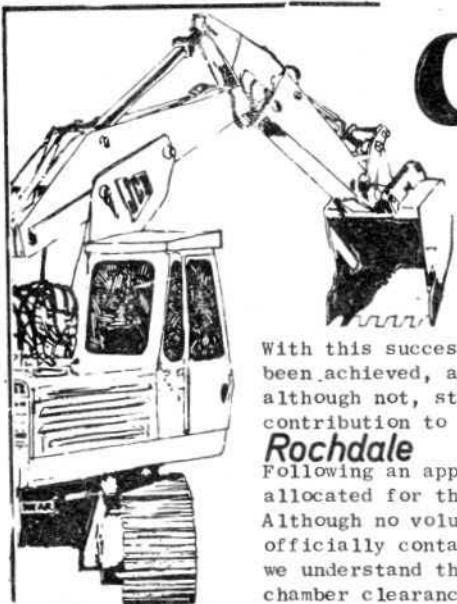
A coach has been arranged to pick volunteers up from Droitwich Station and to ferry the crowd to and from the accommodation, site and pub. Car parking near the site is possible - with care.

Although a certain amount of trouble has been experienced with certain landowners in the area who refuse to admit the inevitability of the restoration, which will cause certain difficulties with plant movement and spoil disposal, but we are confident this can be overcome. It is vital however, in view of the tense political situation in the area, that no reason is given to the locals to cause a fuss about the aftermath of our work - we must leave the site looking better than when we came.

Your help is needed - please take the weekend off and attend, but please, please let us know you are going to attend by filling in the enclosed form.

GKP

CHESHIRE



Bridgewater

We are happy to announce that the Bridgewater Breach was successfully opened to navigation on 24/9/73 and, apart from a few minor leaks and a bit of spit and polish to be attended to, all is well.

With this success, one out of the five "Ring Targets" has now been achieved, and in this I now include the Disley Breach, which although not, strictly speaking, on the Ring, makes an important contribution to the water supply thereon.

Rochdale

Following an apparently fruitful meeting, £45,000 has been allocated for this restoration by the owners of the canal. Although no voluntary working party representatives have been officially contacted (the IWA were represented at the meetings) we understand that we have been "volunteered" to assist with the chamber clearances. The Bridgewater Dept. of the Manchester

Ship Canal Co. Ltd. have been given the job of gate replacements and as soon as their estimates are known, the Rochdale Canal Company Engineer will be in a position to allocate money in respect of the other works necessary, including our tasks. One consolation here is that we understand that the gates will come out at an alarmingly fast rate, so some sort of navigational prospects are still hoped for by April 1974.

Lower Peak

Progress on the flight, both from a voluntary and BWB point of view, is slowly showing signs of progress, and continues "on schedule". We await with interest the testing of some of the chambers, many of which have now received their pressure-grouting treatment and other scheduled works. The opinion has been expressed that unless the scheduled work is followed up by more lock works and pound dredging, then the flight will remain a weak link in the Ring, but I reserve personal judgement until the result of the test-fillings are known.

The Lower Peak dredging programme tells another story - behind schedule. Many factors have caused this, and we would definitely like to see a bit of "extractum digitum" in this field.

Disley breach

Practical action is still awaited, contracts, tenders, estimates, etc. are still flying and we hope to be able to report a start in the next Navvies.

Madness

It has now been confirmed that either one or two weeks after the Ring is reopened a man-made breach will occur in the Hyde area lasting about six months. This is for the usual Canal curse reason of Motorway "progress". My limited powers of expression necessitate nothing further to be said.

For Ashton Canal report, please see separate article.

Pete Stockdale

RING

waterway recovery group

Work Camp

The WRG Summer Work Camp has happened - and if you missed it, here's my exciting little tale about it.

In the four exciting weeks of the camp, held again on the Southern Stratford Canal, we tackled (and won?) three main jobs:- Piling, repainting a flight of locks and rebuilding a culvert, plus bridging it.

If you ever wish to see real manual work, watch (or help) the WRG piling. It seemed to go on for ever and was very tiring, especially in the latter weeks as it got hotter and hotter. The work was done above lock 51, just above Stratford, because a field, owned by Stratford Council was getting wet because of seepage. Therefore these piles were knocked in to prevent leakage, though they were only four feet long, that was enough. About 250 piles were smashed in by sledgehammer, and, in a small way I suppose it was 'enjoyed'.

An artistic part of our number spent some of the four weeks repainting the eleven locks of the Wilmcote flight very prettily and also clearing dense undergrowth surrounding the locks and lock approaches. These were the two under-lying jobs of the camp and our main showpiece was the culvert at lock 35. Though more man (+ woman) hours were probably spent on these first two jobs.

The original brick overflow culvert tunnel had been opened out during the 1963 restoration for two-thirds of its length but it was still as it was built for the rest where it went under the foundations of a farm bridge over the canal. The farm track had to be kept passable for obvious reasons and that meant that we had to build a bridge over the culvert when we had opened it out. The culvert was utterly clogged up under the bridge foundations and so had flooded the nearby field to about three feet deep, and, as unblocking was possible, work was rather necessary.

The field was drained and the earth and trees covering the tunnel were dug out, the tunnel roof was smashed out, firstly with sledgehammers and later (when hard reinforced concrete was struck) with a jack hammer. Then a new floor was cast with a discharge above water level, hence enabling easy unblocking. The walls were built up with traditional con-blocks and on top, for the farm track a concrete roof was cast and built up to its proper level with pretty con-block sides. This job took about three weeks on-and-off, and was finished just before we left. A few other jobs cropped up during our stay and these were dealt with "In our stride".

During the camp, transport was provided, as it happened, in the shape of the WRG Bedford Bus, which suffered from very bad stomachache. This meant we got a bit restricted when it needed its Alka-Seltza tabs. (or a new head gasket), but after spending some money on various bits, and some tinkering by amateur "mechanics" (maniacs) the van only got headaches here and there (mostly there) and was put back on its wheels.

In the latter weeks, a well designed and painted WRG board brought in quite a lot of donations from boaters and passers by - £26.21p. Unluckily £12.11p was spent curing the van. But the rest was divided up, by request of the workers, into three

More Cheshire Ring



ASHTON

The restoration of the Ashton Canal is now getting into top gear. Since my last report the floating dredger between locks 3 & 4 has completed its work and has produced a good average depth of 4ft. on the long pound. In the meantime a second floating dredger was delivered to Kershaw Lane above the top lock, and to date has succeeded in dredging from Audenshaw to a point at the edge of what was the Ashtac site near Guide Bridge. Ahead of it is a long slog to Ashton through some of the worst obstructions the canal has to offer. However, in the past few days the first dredger has been brought up by road to join it (together with a combined force of six mud hoppers and two tugs), and it is rumoured that BWB will use the two together to drive a way through to Ashton. Two landbased dredgers have been operating full time for the last few months - producing depths of 5ft + in places.

The volunteers have been hard-pressed over the last four months, and could not have fulfilled their commitments without the aid of those visiting working parties who now know the feel and the taste of Ashton Canal mud. At the moment we are digging out a large bridge hole which BWB cannot reach with the dredger. The mud is 4ft deep in places and we are using 2ft. gauge railway track and skips to remove the spoil. For the frustrated railway enthusiasts amongst us this involves a turntable and a steep incline up to towpath level along which the trucks are hauled by a barrow-hoist via a clever system of cables and pulleys. Given another few months it is hoped that most of the major jobs for the working party will have been completed.

However, the Cheshire Ring is far from re-opened. Since restoration on the Ashton began we have looked anxiously at the situation on the $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile link through Manchester via the Rochdale Canal. As you will no doubt be informed elsewhere in 'Navvies' a decision was finally taken last week and restoration of the canal will begin shortly. From information available it would appear that volunteers from the PFCS will

Stratford

Checkout

Reading in the waterway press of the tremendous problems that are encountered by the average boat in getting down the Southern Stratford Canal beyond Wootton Wawen, I decided recently to test this out and took a large Woolwich unconverted narrow boat down the canal.

Despite great expressions of dismay from everyone Wootton Wawen was reached with no problems (other than from one pound where the water was down). Beyond the odd lock, we did have a few difficulties the pound between that lock and the top of Wilmcote - but not much worse than the average cruiseway and pumping the bilges to raise the boat up a few inches from its normal draft of 3'3" enabled us to navigate the rest of the pound to Wilmcote Top Lock - here we found that a board on the weir had been lifted, which accounted for the missing water.

Wilmcote Locks all worked well - no problems at all until we reached the notorious Lock 44, which we used with great care, knowing that "Chiswick" had never been there in all its 30 odd years of life. A few turns on the bracing chains, and we were through. The rest of the flight and into Stratford was very easy indeed - only marred by the odd paddle rack that had run completely out of its start when dropped.

Despite the relative ease with which this large boat made the journey, we did see smaller craft, flushing themselves in and out of locks and generally throwing water away - which must account for the main water problems encountered by others.

In conclusion, a fair number of paddles need to be refitted, several gates and cills need attention and the pound between the Odd Lock and Wilcote Top needs piling, to enable the water level to be raised without leakage - apart from this, I really cannot see what all the fuss is about.

GKP



HARECASTLE

has fallen in again. It is rumoured that one or two boats managed to get through after it was opened the first time, it would have been better, however, if the remains of the first fall had been removed from the canal bed first.

THE WEIR

at Weir Brake on the Upper Avon is now being built - it appears to have no visible means of financial support.

MANY THANKS

to those of you who were so kind as to add an extra donation to your "Navvies" sub. this last month. It has helped greatly with the magazine's finances.

AFTER

Droitwich Dig the WRG press will be moving to new & improved premises in West London. Due to the volume of waterway work scheduled for the machine, we have a great need for trainee printers. Offers of help, please, to Mike Day (address page 3).

NOVEMBER

issue of 'Waterways World' will contain an article by Crick Grundy on the problems of maintaining the Southern Stratford Canal

INTERESTED

in taking on the job of Midland IWA Working Party Organiser? Why not confuse the Secretary by offering.

RUMOUR

has it that a certain canal in the South of England will have about half its length acquired by a county council, with the promise of the rest being acquired early in 1974.

PRESS DATE

for the next edition of Navvies (No.46) will be 25th November.

THANKS

to Geoff Christie and Harvey Cooke for financial assistance in purchasing a replacement pickup and another 12 seat minibus.

droitwich!

The Droitwich Canals - the Barge Canal running from the town to the River Severn, and the Junction Canal running from the Worcester & Birmingham Canal to the town - have been derelict for over 40 years, and were abandoned in 1939.

The Droitwich Canals Trust has been formed with the intention of reopening both canals to form a 22 mile cruising ring with the Worcester & Birmingham Canal and the River Severn. The local council has been very cooperative and have spent some quite considerable sums on ensuring that no further obstacles are put in the way of the restoration. These works include a new road bridge, paying the difference in cost between a 3ft. diameter and 16ft. diameter culvert under a lowered railway bridge, and dredging to original depth nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the Canal.

The Trust has been set up at the instigation of the Midlands Branch of the I.W.A., some of whose members have been actively campaigning for restoration for very nearly twenty years, with the more recent support of the Worcester-Birmingham Canal Society. Droitwich Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council have both given financial assistance with the legal costs of the Trust, and both have the opportunity, along with other local Authorities, of being represented on the Trust's Council. It is pleasing to see that most of these options are being taken up.

The plan of campaign is to lease the Canal lands from the present owners, the Borough Council, to whom they were conveyed by the Abandonment Act. This will be at a nominal rental, and will mean, incidentally, that the Trust will be landlords of a handful of people who live in, or farm, Canal property. We are therefore assured of a steady income!! (Not a great amount)

The initial efforts will be aimed at restoring the Barge Canal, to get get boats into Droitwich from the River Severn, and then to tackle the Junction Canal, which is a little more difficult as the result of some of courses having been sold off. The two main obstacles to the restoration are the M5 and the Worcester-Kidderminster road (the A449), both of which have been embanked across the Canals. The M5 has, fortuitously, a 7ft.lin. wide culvert through it carrying a stream, and with a judicious

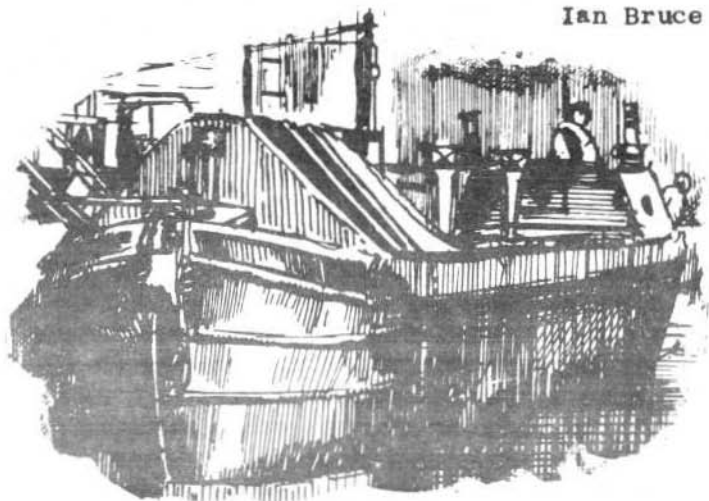
selection of water level, there is headroom of about 8ft. In the case of the A449, the easiest solution is to lock down into the River Salwarpe, and use its course instead of the last quarter mile of the Canal.

The initial working party - October 27th and 28th - will have many side effects other than the work actually done on the Canals. It is part of a carefully planned publicity campaign, which includes a public meeting, to inaugurate the Trust and make it known to the residents and industrialists of the area, for it is here that we hope to raise the cash for restoration. We hope that a very well known and senior politician will declare the Working Party open by moving the first shovelful.

The actual work to be carried out is the clearance of the lock chambers and channel over a distance of about half a mile along the Ladywood flight of locks. A fair amount of mechanical plant will be in use, but as always, a lot of manual effort will be required to move spoil into the reach of the heavy plant, and to clear lock chambers. We hope that the use of pumps for the whole of the previous week will get the mud to the right consistency for easy shovelling, although in general, there isn't too much water in the Canal at this point.

Please give us your support again - large numbers will impress the locals far more than any of our propoganda, and of course, all the usual facilities will be provided!

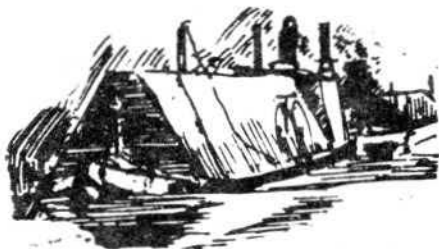
Ian Bruce



be asked to dig out all 9 wide locks on the length through the city centre. Those of you who know this canal will realise the immensity of the task - and it must be completed before April next year if the Cheshire Ring is to be a reality (consider the problems involved in clearing the wide lock underneath Rodwell Tower office block - normally in total darkness with no road access of any type.) This will need a consistent supply of navvies working in top gear for long periods - again we need your help! It looks as though it will be a long cold winter.

D.L. Brown

PRINTED T-SHIRTS	"Go to work on a canal"	(1)	
	"I'm a dirty weekender"	(2)	
	"Give me a hand"	(3)	
Sizes (1) S.M.L	(2) & (3) M.L	....	..... 70p + (10p p&p)
IAPEL BADGES	"Go to work on a canal"		
	"Use your canals"		
New designs ...	....	....	..... 5p + SAE
BLUE BALLPOINT PENS	PRINTED Peak Forest Canal Society Ltd		
7 different colour barrels	....	.....	5p + SAE
PRINTS of Rochdale Canal Co, notices			
Set of three ...	....	....	..... 50p inc P & P
LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL CRAFT by G.Wheat	.....		50p + 5p P& P
PRINTS from the above book (B & W postcard size)			
Set of five ...	....	....	..... 20p + 3p P& P
PORTRAIT OF THE GRAND CANAL of Ireland.			
by Gerard D'Arcy	....	....	.....£1.00+10p P& P
From Peak Forest Canal Society Ltd. Sales Dept, 4 Bridgelea Rd, Withington, Manchester M20 9FB			



LETTER

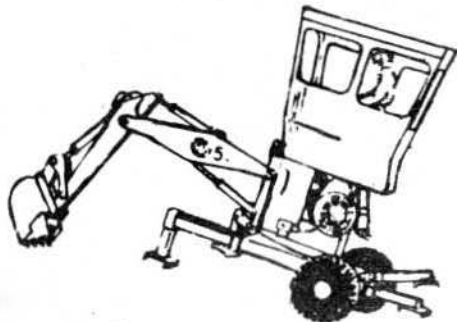
Sir, IWA General Office
Odd, isn't it? You spend your time at all hours writing, telephoning, chatting, pressurising about the waterways; think it better to concentrate on that rather than spend the greater part of one's time on writing magazine articles; naive enough to think that if people consider I.W.A. isn't doing what they want they might think of asking us before rushing into print implying we're sitting on our backsides twiddling our thumbs.

In fact, the author of "Draglines" ("Navvies" 43 piece about water shortages) would have been told, if he had asked, that (a) we have told BWB that bank protection is more important than dredging; (b) have asked which side ponds they intend repairing (they said "some" would be put back into use this year; they all ought to be); (c) how much reservoir dredging they have planned since the water shortage crisis arose last Autumn; (d) ditto pumping back systems; (e) told them about badly leaking lock gates causing water loss; (f) asked how much of the £ $\frac{3}{4}$ m. extra Government grant this year is being allocated to general water shortage problems (above not necessarily in order of importance but busy trying to limit the proposed increase in costs of loading barges in Hull Docks, get the "Daily Express" to do an article on the limejuice boats and the "Sun" on the Upper Avon).

John Dodwell
General Secretary

Communications with those you expect to support you is just as important as "confidential negotiations".

Editor



Tring Section Scheme....

" Work will be commenced at Lock 49 at Northchurch and proceed Northwards to Lock 24 at Soulbury. Included in this length of canal are 34 Locks, 25 Bridges, together with 4 important reservoirs, namely, Tringford, Marsworth, Startopsend and Wilstone. "

" The works involved are:-
26,000 piles to be driven, walled, anchored back, covering a length of 9,000 metres.
5,000 metres of collapsed stone waterway walling to be rebuilt.
850 square metres of bridge and lock brickwork to be rebuilt.
3 lock chambers and 2 bridge arches to be repaired with "gunite" finish.
4 new pairs of lock gates to be built and installed.
1,000 metres square of lock and bridge brickwork to be re-pointed.
16,000 metres of hedge to be layed and cut.
10,000 metres of growth overhanging the canal to be cut and cleared.
80,000 square metres of scrub on canal banks and reservoirs to be cleared.
Dredging will be carried out in the channel where necessary. " (sic(k?...Ed))



Tring Comment

In view of the present economic situation both as it affects the country generally and also the financial state of the canal system administered by the Board it is difficult to reconcile the expenditure of £200,000 on one scheme which is not an emergency.

If the Board wishes to prepare a perfect length of canal it is surely not necessary to close such a long length, as the desired effect could just as easily be shown over say a three mile length. It would also seem that the logical place to expend money on such a scheme would be on a summit level which would also increase water capacity.

However if the scheme goes ahead as planned the following questions need satisfactory answering if canal users are to be safeguarded and the work be cost effective.

LABOUR Are the Boards own labour to do this work? If so will normal maintenance work suffer? It makes it pointless if one section is made perfect whilst two or three others get worse, and what level of maintenance will the section receive upon completion of the scheme?

PILING Is the steel piling to be painted first? Evidence shows they have a longer life when so treated. Stone walls only necessitate the lowering of levels on the particular section being worked on.

GUNITE A scheme of this magnitude would seem to warrant a more permanent repair than gunite which gets damaged both by water from behind and boats.

GATES The four pairs of gates referred to should be the annual replacement and not part improvement. New gates must be fitted with gate paddles and on past experience no doubt the new hydraulic paddles will be fitted on bottom gates. The arguments against gate paddles are cost of installation but balanced against installing hydraulic gear is not so. If an improvement, why do locks take longer to fill? and no provision is made for rapidly dropping paddles on hydraulic gear in an emergency - also spindles are of different size.

SCRUB Etc If the reservoirs are nature reserves, why clear all this amount of scrub and trees. It must be remembered that the reservoirs are primarily for the supply of water to the canal and reservoir deepening and cleaning out must come before birds etc.

DREDGING Which is not quantified in the scheme should be to original depth above and below locks and to a stated depth through the rest of the section. Bad places which need attention are Bridges 115 to Grove Lock; Leighton Bridge Turn; the 'S' bends south of Bridge 109; From Bridge 126 to below Lock 37; Bridge 134 Tring Cutting; Inside turn immediately before Bridge 118; Bridge 123 and Northchurch Pound.

TOWPATH According to the scheme this will be regraded and surfaced, the surface material is not specified but Tarmac is not welcome as it is unsightly and will also attract motorbikes etc.

Much concern is expressed by users about bollards - summed up there should be two bollards on each side above and below locks. The large bollards on the lockside should be left and replaced where needed with the same type, a lighter one would pull out.

If the scheme is to be more than just a dressing, the weirs should be adjusted to run water off the summit without going to waste. Side weirs should be 3" above lock spillways which should run via the side ponds if possible or around the locks rather than through paddle holes or over bottom gates. At present water is run from Marsworth towards Leighton but goes to waste over weir between locks 34-35.

Painting should be carried out in the traditional style, black and white to lock gates, swing bridges, but not brick bridges. A white line around edge of lock would be useful.

Now that the stoppage programme has been published showing a 20 week total stoppage during winter 73-74 it is very difficult to reconcile this length of stoppage with the work being done. No stoppage is needed for scrub clearance or towpath surfacing, sheet piling or dredging, in fact the water level will need to be kept up the more plant and material about. Stoppages are necessary for new gates and lock repairs in some cases, but usually single line traffic can be operated through bridges whilst scaffolding is up. Ten days stopped with eight days open would be an acceptable time to allow commercial traffic, hotel craft, hire craft and also private craft needing to go to dock or repairs etc. as well as the considerable amount of private cruising now done in the winter. The canal could be closed from dusk to dawn during the clear periods if necessary. The stoppages as listed rule out any working of boats i.e. retail coal trade and there is no alternative route to London as Bell Weir is being rebuilt on the Thames.

Although the Milton Keynes stoppage list has not yet been published it must be hoped that the stoppages are not allowed to overlap the opening periods of the Tring section. As the Board charge contractors for crossing the canal when they lose nothing, surely Hire Boat Operators and Commercial Traders should have redress against the Board when a canal is closed for almost half the year. Private owners mooring in the area should have a claim against the Board for licence and mooring fee rebates.

Finally we would refer the Board to the Annual Report 1972 which stated in Para.108 "the fact remains however, that the needs of the system outweigh the resources available" and in Para.123 stating that only 9.01 miles of piling was completed on the whole system "because of the additional effort on other forms of maintenance the mileage completed had to be confined to lengths where there was a risk to policy".

In view of these statements the question must be asked - Why this length?

N.Hill & D.Warren

WRG Work Camp...continued

parts. One third going equally to the WRG, The Upper Avon Scheme as they have hardly any money left to finish with; and finally £4.70p to the National Trust to help their finances.

The accommodation and eating was as usual at Lowsonford Village Hall, the food being of trad. working party quality (V.Good) all congratulations to the various cooks and masqueraders. The local tavern prospered over the month as each night and lunch-time, a delegation was sent out to make sure that the pub was always offering decent cooled booze.

The second WRG work camp was another astounding success with numbers ranging from 27 at its peak to 8 in the last week. The success was aided by good weather (like last years camp) and a very friendly crowd of people, and if you, YES YOU! didn't come, I trust I shall see you at the next camp... why suffer from Spanish Tummy, Flies and Vast Expense when you can come to the WRG work camp for only 50p per day.

NICK WRIGHT

freightways of tomorrow?

by IAN BREACH
reprinted from
New Scientist

One of NASA's biggest headaches at the end of the 1960's was in solving the problem of how to transport larger and larger pieces of hardware from manufacturers around the country to the launch area at Cape Kennedy. Too heavy to be airfreighted, too big to go by road or rail, some of the space vehicles eventually arrived by the oldest transportation system of all - by water: they came on the wide, deep and commodious inland water ways of America, which now has more than 25,000 miles of navigable canals and is exploiting them as never before.

Using modern barges, often in a flotilla of many individual units and fast developing the network by canalising rivers and improving existing channels the US is today carrying over 500 million short tonnes of its goods and produce on the Federal and New York State canal networks. But though that represents a 25% increase in total weight over the figure for 1960, the proportion of freight taken by water has remained fairly constant over the years at about 14%. At a time when the developed countries' transport mix is so closely under scrutiny for environmental and resource reasons, it is vital to ask whether the canals could take significantly more than this share of the burden, and - if they could - whether they would be materially easing our problems.

If energy efficiency alone were the criterion and current trends in transport growth and availability/price of diesel and low grade motor spirit were to be continued, the canals of the world would receive high marks. Eric Hurst's study, done for the Oak Ridge National Laboratory a little over a year ago, threw up the following comparisons for modes of inter-city freight transportation.

	tonne-mile/gal	Btu/tonne-mile
Pipelines	300	450
Waterways	250	540
Railroads	200	680
Roads	58	2340
Airways	3.7	37000

Pipeline transportation already accounts for more than a quarter of the total freight "traffic" in the US measured in tons carried: it has its obvious attractions as well as limitations, and it is one of the transportation systems likely to benefit massively from multi-national operations in Europe.

Measured in tonne miles, however pipelines in America transport only 17%: similarly with canals, the net tonnage proportion of 14% is reduced to barely 9. By contrast trucking tonnage accounts for a surprisingly meagre 10% - but generates a tonne-mileage figure of 22.5%. It would seem that heavy goods vehicles are generally transporting fewer loads longer distances - by a factor of up to 3.5. The conclusion is borne out by British experience: the tonnage carried by water is exactly twice by proportion, the route-mileage share. Apart from this statistic, sadly, the figures defy unravelment: the D.O.E and the B.W.B tabulate on different bases in any case, but even on conversion produce irreconcilable data; PEP in London and the European Commission in Brussels respectively treble and double inland freight percentages for waterway. Allowing for the discrepancies, though it is clear that the movement of goods by canal is a much more deliberate and purposeful affair than by road. The use of container does not seem to have brought about any increase in overall system efficiency: indeed, it may be concealing a worsening situation. Unplanned, haphazard load movement is difficult to

FREIGHTWAYS OF TOMORROW...Continued.

detect and plot on a national scale, though it is obviously easier when open trucks present themselves for visual inspection.

My own research, conducted on the A1 five miles from the centre of London, indicates a fairly constant standard for open commercial vehicles - 1 in 3 travelling only partially loaded; 1 in 5 travelling empty; and 1 in 12 passing HGV's carrying similar loads in opposite directions (the price admittedly, of a free enterprise system as practised on the roads). Weighbridge returns from the cross-Channel ports show far more container trucks loaded below capacity than the overloaded ones which are rightly being pulled off the road. The road-haulage figures show, in fact, that the vast majority of freight carried by road in Britain consists of loads of between 3 and 5 tonnes taken fewer than 25 miles. Even for loads over 8 tonnes, the largest proportion is being trucked in this distance band - invariably in areas where there is a canal or a developable waterway capacity (and inward bound goods almost precisely equal those outward bound in all the economic planning regions). The question must therefore be whether a more rational general transport policy could be devised for the carriage of goods in Britain and if so, whether the canals could play a serious role within the policy.

A major change of attitude on the part of central government will be the first essential. It has promised a policy guideline on Transport for the autumn of this year: while one would not want to pre-empt such a welcome if late development by anticipatory criticism, the government is unlikely to attach much if any importance to waterways as part of Britain's transportation network. It has repeatedly turned down requests for aid to the BWS, insisting that proof of economic viability "in the form of guarantees" must be furnished before it can put up the money towards the cost of expanding and rehabilitating the canals. This is, of course, an illogical demand: no one who provides a service (and motorways are as good an example as any) can GUARANTEE that the service will be used and the yardsticks used to measure the "viability" in transport are demonstrably warped by the many pressures of special interest. It is not as though there was a shortage of waterway costings available to the government: it has for instance, declared itself "unable" to approve the BWS's proposal for improvement of the Sheffield & South Yorkshire Canal on the grounds of cost-effectiveness but a shrewd and quickly exploited study of costs not many miles away shows how wrong the D of E could be.

At Kottlingley in Yorkshire a barge-tanker operating company John Harker has been carrying 500 tonnes of oil from Hull to Leeds in single trips, using a crew of three and taking 16 hours over the journey. If the same number of men were to drive a series of 20 tonne road tankers, it would take 50 hours of continuous haulage to move same quantity. Esso which tried the canal scheme here, finally adopted it and reported a one-third cut in transport costs. Kenneth Gilbert project director for the Port of Toronto, has put the comparative extravagance of other forms of freight with canal shipment even more dramatically than Hurst: with bulk cargoes such as ores more than 100 tonne-mile per gallon of fuel have been obtained from vessels in the authorities operating area. Only the Rhine in Europe, could offer figures as good as these ones from the St. Lawrence Seaway, but at least they show a performance of 250 tonne/mile-gal. to be a realistic base.

What BWS must do, as British Rail has had to do, is to assail the government with more than pleas for survival. It must hammer home the comparative surface-transport cost for competing modes. The Sheffield & South Yorks proposal called for a total of £2.4 million to be spent on a stretch of water 35 miles in length, expanding and reconstructing it to take vessel systems of up to 750 tonnes: spent on highway building, the same sum would barely buy a mile and a half of open motorway and would

So you want to run a magazine ?

Navvies, under its original title of Navvies Notebook, first appeared in 1966. This first copy was distributed with "Windlass" (IWA London & Home Counties Branch magazine), 1500 copies being duplicated.

From this 70 subscriptions were received, but as production was too limiting on a duplicator, this issue and every subsequent one was litho-printed

Nowadays, 40 odd issues and seven years later, our print order is 2,500. To cut costs we now print this ourselves and, as we have always done, all the collating, folding and stapling is carried out by hand. Each issue is despatched by post, in envelopes addressed by Mr. & Mrs. Bull of Enfield. This couple have for several years addressed nearly 2,000 envelopes every two months by hand. Recently we have invested in an "Addressograph" type machine which does not suffer from writers cramp!

The statistics of each issue are now these:-

2,000 subscribers (therefore 2,000 envelopes to be addressed).

2,500 copies printed (the odd 500 are invariably sold).

15,000 sheets of paper, 30,000 impressions on the printing press.

2,500 collations, 2,500 folds, 2,500 staples.

2,000 envelopes to be 'stuffed' with "Navvies", 2,000 flaps to be sealed down.

£60 worth of stamps to be stuck on.

Each issue takes 40 editorial and typing hours, 12 printing hours, 30 collating hours - all done by voluntary labour!

Mike Day

Tomorrows freightways. . . .ctd

not cover the costs of half a mile of elevated urban freeway. Not only would operating costs be cut by 25 to 30% (on traffic estimated by independent consultants to rise from 500,000 tonnes to 2 million tonnes a year if the scheme went through) but the quantifiable environmental relief given to this part of South Yorkshire would be enormous. Most of the projected total traffic increase would come about in any case, much of it generated by British Steel's planned £23 million plant near Rotherham. If this were to go on the roads, the region would need not just one M62, but two - with double the hidden subsidies that presently close the gap between what road users pay and the cost.

To be continued Navvies 46

FOR SALE

Tee Shirts

White with black lettering 'I dig canals'

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Orders to Jim Woolgar, 56 Connaught Crescent,
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"If I tell you how it happened,
promise you won't laugh!"

WRGBank

Received since NAVVIES 43:

Embassy	11,215	Players	326	Belair	24	Crown Filter	180
Gold Bond	1,643	Players No.6	8,316	Carlton	856	Sterling	24
Sovereign	584	Players No10	357	Cadets	506	Guards	2,950
Kensitas	595	Virginia	64	Mild de Luxe...			35
Co-op	21	books		S & H Pink			17 books

The cash value of the above collection is an all time record of appx £60. For even with the Green Shield contribution removed to the "Smalley Excavator Fund" this total exceeds the highest previous sum raised. It represents a total to be really proud of, and once again proves what a tremendous boost your generous donations are to WRG funds. It must be reassuring to the organisers to know that they can rely on a regular income from the "Bank" to enable them to plan ahead with confidence.

Here are just some of those that contributed: - Ben Fradley, M. Oxley, Miss D. Barratt, A. J. Poskitt, Robert Russell, F. A. Bottomer, Chris Gardner, Robert Duntun, Graham Worthington, Margaret Sinfield, P. Pledger, John Hendon, T. Saquin, Freddie Stevens, David Kessler-Lyne, Paul Phillips, David Alexander, Howard Holt, Neville Reeves, Jean Heap, M. A. Jefferies, Jim Stevens, David Gibson, Don Frazer, Paul Boeuf, Christine Martin, Vicky Coghill, David & Tim Wallace.

Please try and keep up the impetus. If we can manage to maintain a regular sum of around £50 per issue, just imagine the boost this would provide for volunteers everywhere. So please keep sending in your contributions however small, it's really appreciated.

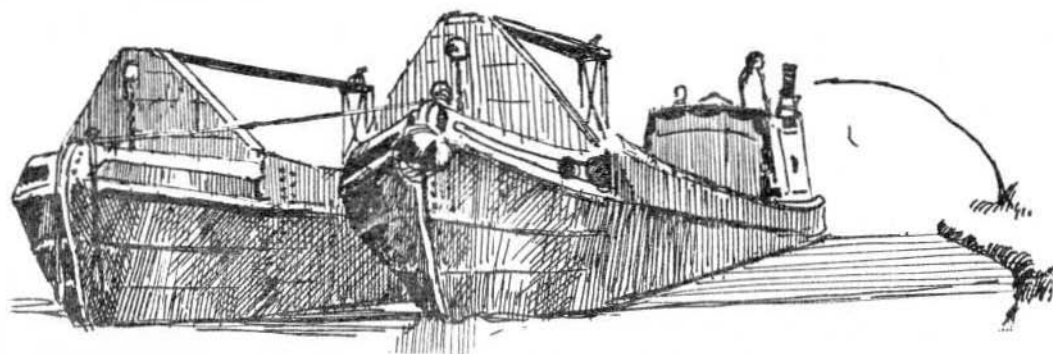
TARGET 2500

A bumper bundle of 120 books of Green Shield Stamps was the grand total sent in since Navvies 43. What an incredibly encouraging first response to our appeal. Thanks must surely go to our regular subscribers who broke into their own little hoard to give so generously to the fund. A big welcome also to all the new contributors who responded so wholeheartedly to the appeal by Hugh McKnight in 'Yachting & Boating Weekly'. Added to these were the results from appeals made at rallies, for although it may be true to say that we may not be able to maintain such a high intake - we have at least got the fund off to a good start at a decent rate of knots: Our thanks to:- John Gale David Hull, John Page, Chris van Schaick, Brian Walters, Charlie Appleton, Mrs Aubyn J. Arbuckle, "Carson" (of New Jersey USA) R. F. Cope, A. Downham, Charles Hadfield, Bob Rennie, Peter Harrison, Doris Richie, Chris de Wet & Barry Mursell.

So the scale has now reached the 220 book mark. What will it reach by Christmas? It's up to you.....

Send to Jim Fleming N.B Tom Ran, Canal Basin, Aylesbury, Bucks. NOTE Please omit the word "Bank" from the address on your envelope as it gives anyone who comes in contact with it the idea that it contains something valuable.





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Chest sizes: small, medium, large and extra large.

RAINMASTER SUIT

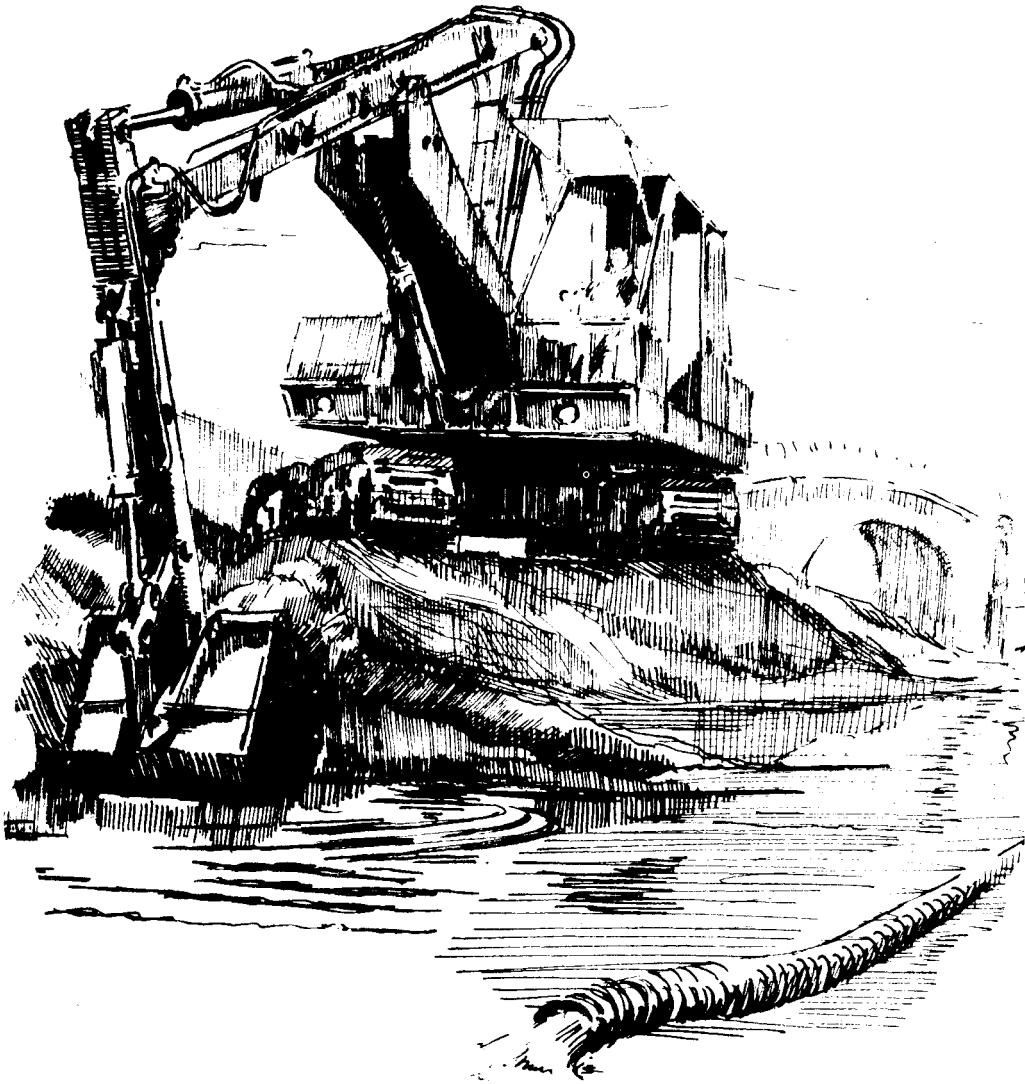
Waterproof vinyl suit. Hooded jacket, long sleeves, two front pockets with flaps, fully opening front with zip and press studs. Draw cords at neck and waist. Trousers have waist draw cord. Seams welded and overstitched. Yellow only.

Sizes: Small, medium and large £3.30ea

All above items offered at minimum prices without profit to WRG, therefore subject to change without notice. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Orders, please, to JIM WOOLGAR, 56 Connaught Crescent, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey - remittance with order. POs/Cheques to WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP. State size, colour, etc.

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Droitwich Digger



THE DROITWICH CANALS TRUST LTD

When the shareholders of the Droitwich Canal Company were celebrating its' opening two hundred and two years ago, little did they know that in 1938 all their work would be abandoned and allowed to fall into decay.

It would certainly stopped their merry-making if they had realised that after a further thirty five years of neglect, swarms of dedicated volunteers would arrive in Droitwich to start the work of re-opening one of Englands' loveliest little waterways.

On behalf of the Droitwich Canals Trust, may I welcome you all to our first working party and thank you for the work undertaken over the weekend.

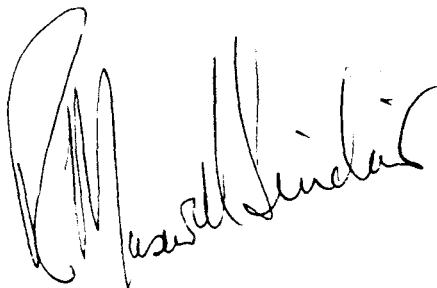
I hope you will enjoy yourselves on the working site, and in the evening celebrations, so much that you will all wish to come back again soon to Droitwich.

This sleepy valley is sadly lacking in amenities and we believe the young and old will benefit from the opening of a wide waterway with attractive towpath walks and very unspoilt scenery.

I hope that you will all have the satisfaction of being involved in such an exciting worthwhile project.

Thank you very much.

R.M.Sinclair
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.M. Sinclair', written in a cursive style.

Organisers Notes

The purpose of the Droitwich Dig is to get the full restoration of the two Droitwich Canals off to a good start - the site, one of the most difficult is also the most heavily locked on the entire canal - to clear this area by conventional means would be violently expensive - this is where you come in. It is imperative that we have the entire area cleared, and all-important - tidy, by the time we finish on Sunday. Please do all you can this weekend to achieve this aim.

Remember please - that there is effectively only one entrance to the site, this being by the Control Field, therefore the towpath (which was bulldozed out of virgin jungle only two weeks ago) is our only highway and communications link. At all costs avoid blocking it with rubbish, equipment or your belongings.

Also bear in mind that we don't want to lose any of you - even for a short time. Apart from being messy - it's inefficient so please take great care to stay away from heavy machinery and also the many power saws and slashers that will be in use this weekend. Likewise if you are using any of the equipment please treat it with care, responsibility and consideration. Absolutely no-one will be allowed to go down a lock if he/she is not wearing a safety helmet.

The site is being split-up into three parts (see diagram later) each containing one lock and the pound above it. Each of these sections will be controlled by a 'SITE MASTER' who will be in touch with 'Control' by radio. These 'SITE MASTERS' will in turn relay instructions to your 'Section Foreman' - please do exactly what he says even if the reason is not readily apparent.

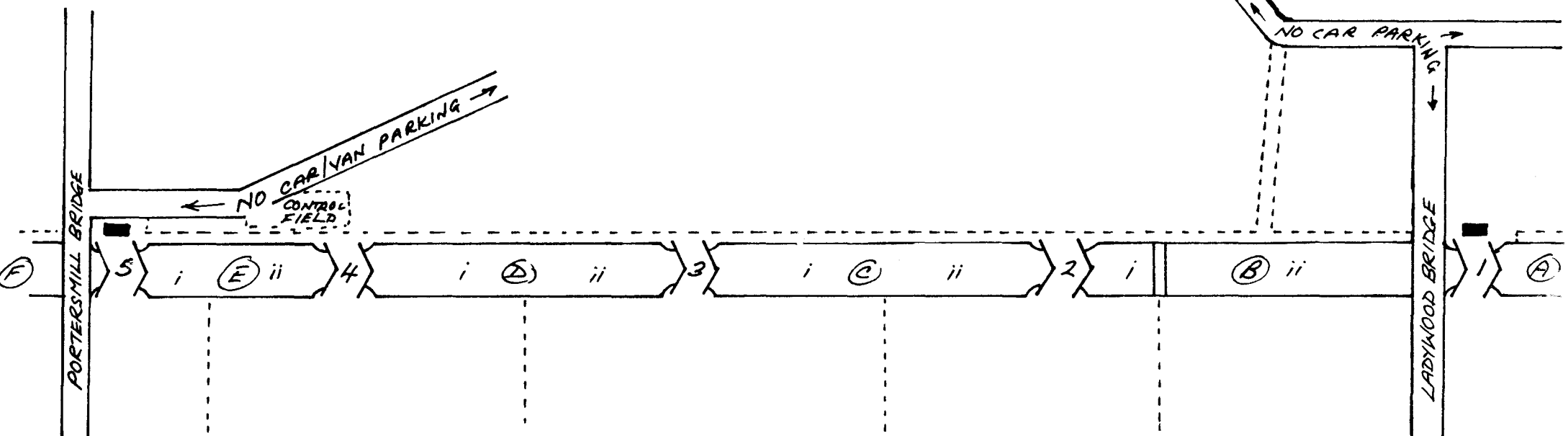
Also in the 'Control Field' there should be constant supplies of tea and refreshments - we regret the necessity of having to charge for your food, but funds are not available at this time to make this free. Beer will be available during the lunch break at 'Control'. Please do not go off site for lunch as the nearest place is at least two miles away. Here also will be found the basic toilet facilities - we hope you will understand the difficulties we have on a site such as this in providing basic requirements. The fire engine, by the way, that you will see on the 'Control field' is to provide a supply of drinking water.

SITEMASTER

Colin Emmett

Mike Day

Don Frazer



NAVVIES

FOREMAN

Overflow	Vendon	South East	South West	W.Bham C.Soc	Midland	North & N.E. Midland	B'ham P.FCS	P.FCS N. West	OVERFLOW	Spare
	Nigel Stevens	Alan Rowe	Alec Tilley	Pete Corall	Dave Cannon	Mike Briggs	Stan Thomas	Pete Stockdale	Andrew Cavell	

NOTES

Keep away from lock 5 - no work in immediate area

No work to be done this side of footbridge
undergrowth clearance only

↑ This lock to be cleared by the 1st lock team ft

All catering for this event is being organised and carried out by the National Voluntary Civil Aid who - as well as helping us - hope that the experience will be good training for them. Again, thank you for attending.

GKP

TIMETABLE

Friday 8.00 pm	Volunteer arrival preliminary booking-in
Saturday 8.00 am	Breakfast in accommodation (Friday's arrivals only)
9.00 am	First coach from Witton Camp to worksite
9.00 am	Booking-in post opens at Witton Camp for Saturday's arrivals
12.15 pm	Booking-in post closes and last coach leaves from Witton Camp to site.
12.30-1.30 pm	Lunch break for half the volunteers on site.
1.00-2.00 pm	Lunch break for remainder of volunteers
4.30 pm	Pack up, return all equipment to Control Field.
4.35 pm	First coach leaves for accommodation.
5.00 pm	First supper being served in accommodation.
Sunday 7.30 am	Breakfast in accommodation
8.15 am	First coach leaves for work site.
8.30 am	Booking-in post open at Witton Camp
12.00-1.00 pm	Lunch break for half of volunteers on site.
12.30-1.30 pm	Lunch break for remainder of volunteers.
3.30 pm	Cease removal of spoil from site and tidy up.
4.00 pm	Stop work and return all equipment to Control.
4.30 pm	First coach leaves for accommodation.

We would like to thank all those who have done a great deal of preparatory organising work for this dig, in particular IAN BRUCE who has shouldered most of the burden, but with honourable mentions for Peter Currell, Nick Grazebrook, John Felix, Rod & Sue Pawsey, Mike & Meg Day, Bill Lear and elements of the Worcs & B'ham Canal Society working party for helping sort out the site the weekends before the dig, and the National Voluntary Civil Aid members for catering services both off and on site.

droitwich and droitwich junction

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