

# Navvies 46



## News release

Press and Publicity Office, Melbury House, Melbury Terrace, London NW1 6JX 01-262 6711  
26th November 1973

PRI/163

### SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

The British Waterways Board were advised today that the Secretary of State for the Environment has given his Consent to the promotion by the Board of a Parliamentary Bill giving them power to carry out improvements to the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation.

The Scheme, estimated to cost £2.4m, envisages improvements to the length of the Navigation between Doncaster and Rotherham, and when completed, will enable the passage of 750 ton barges as far as Mexborough and 400 ton barges as far as Rotherham. At present the carrying capacity of the craft using the Navigation to Rotherham is limited to 90 tons. Following a detailed market survey carried out by the Board and INBUCON, the Board have obtained written assurances from a considerable number of customers that once the waterway is improved, they will offer no less than 950,000 tons of traffic to the Board and the carriers for quotation. This exceeds by 200,000 tons the figure required to break even on the Scheme.

Commenting on the Secretary of State's decision today, Sir Frank Price, Chairman of the Board, said:-

"I am delighted to hear from the Secretary of State that he has given the Board consent to obtain powers to carry out the Scheme. I am told that it is not unusual for State-owned enterprises to be given enabling powers in the first instance separate from powers required to borrow the necessary money. I have no doubt whatever that we shall convince the Secretary of State that once we have the powers, we ought to have the money.

The Secretary of State's decision is particularly appropriate at this time when the Country is facing difficulties in the supply of fuel oil. It has already been pointed out that in terms of fuel consumption the Board's commercial waterways are much more efficient than roads for freight transport. The number of tonne-miles per gallon for waterways is 250 compared with 58 for roads. These figures speak for themselves. I think I can say that the Secretary of State has given my Board and those who use the waterways for freight transport, new hope for the future. It is quite obvious now that H.M. Government has not closed

waterway  
recovery  
group

Restoration and Development

LONDON WPG NIGEL STEVENS  
52, Redcliffe Square,  
London SW10. 01-373-7234

LONDON WPG - LOCAL  
ROD PAWSEY  
13 Milford Gardens,  
Wembley, Middlesex.  
01-902-8642

MIDLANDS-EASTERN MICK GOLDS  
73, Sudbury Avenue, Larklands,  
Ilkeston, Derbys Ilkeston 78042

MIDLAND WPG - WESTERN  
Vacant STILL!!

SOUTH WEST WPG  
Vacant

N.EAST MIDLANDS WPG MIKE BRIGGS  
29, Beech Hill Drive, Mansfield,  
Notts. Mansfield 21396

S.EAST MIDLANDS WPG ANDREW CAVELL  
20, Furze Field, Bedford.  
Bedford 51646

S.E. MIDLANDS - CAMBRIDGE ALAN ROWE  
21, Lancelot Way, Fenstanton,  
Hunts. Slepe 8522

N.EASTERN WPG MALCOLM BASSETT  
79 Southway, Beechford, Horsforth,  
Leeds 18. Horsforth 3346

N.WEST IWA-MANCHESTER SECTION  
ALAN TAYLOR, 8, Westbank Road,  
Withington, M/C.20 061.445 3571

SOUTH WALES WPG VAL HICKIN  
Robinscroft, Ross Road,  
Ledbury, Herefordshire.

SCOTTISH IWA RICHARD DAVIES  
45 Oakfield Ave, Glasgow G12  
041-331-1941

SURREY & HANTS C.S. JEFF HOLMAN  
22, Willow Green, West End,  
Woking, Surrey. Brookwood 3034.

BUXWORTH BASIN-IWPS P.J. BUNKER  
"Gorse-side", Cartledge Lane,  
Holmsfield, Nr. Sheffield.

COVENTRY C.S. ROY PARKER  
29, Southbank Road, Counden,  
Coventry. Coventry 594171

DROITWICH CANALS TRUST IAN BRUCE  
49, Cloverdale, Stoke Pound,  
Bromsgrove, Worcs. Bromsgrove 31101



## Organisers

CALDON CANAL SOC. ROD BUTTERWORTH  
Woodlands, Rudyard. Leek, Staffs

CALDON CANAL SOC.-MEMBERS MIKE THOMPSON  
50 Old Eaton Road, Rugeley, Staffs.  
Rugeley 4926

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Stone 2645

S.U.C.S.-WELSHPOOL TONY BYRNE  
30, The Bentlands, Benthall, Brosley  
Salop. Telford 882385

STAFFS & WORCS. C.S. WALLY WALDRON  
The Lock Cottage, Wheaton Aston, Staffs.  
Wheaton Aston 870714

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45, Hunts Road, Stratford-on-Avon,  
Warwicks. Stratford-on-Avon 2663

LANCASTER CANAL TRUST DAVID SLATER  
163 St. Albans Road, Lytham St. Annes,  
Lancashire.

EREWASH CANAL P & D.A. MICK GOLDS  
73, Sudbury Avenue, Larklands,  
Ilkeston, Derbys. Ilkeston 78042

POCKLINGTON C.A.S. DAVE DUKE  
The Caravan c/o Village Farm, Thornton,  
Nr. Melbourne, York.

NORTH LONDON RESCUE COMMANDO R. TRIM  
6, Eastwood Road, Muswell Hill,  
London N.10. 01-444-9339

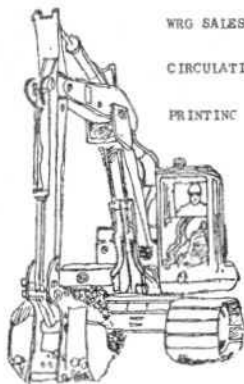
STROUDWATER C.S. PETE SWALLOW  
1, Billbrook Road, Hucclecote,  
Gloucester. Tel.: 67585

NAVVIES is published by the WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP and is available to all who are interested in promoting the restoration, maintenance and development of inland waterways in Britain

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from the Editor

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## COMMENT

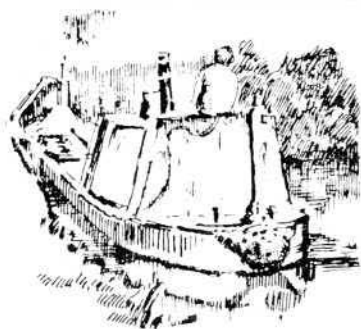
THE age of shortages is upon us, fuel, power and even paper - which probably explains why this issue is two weeks late appearing, unfortunately with our limited purchasing power (not to mention storage space) we are unable to guarantee that this will not occur again. We have also been warned of impending increases in the price of paper and print materials, which will make our position even more uncertain.

Continuing this tale of woe, I need not remind you that we are in the throes of a fuel shortage - this unfortunately is likely to hit our work rather hard as the essence of our success is mobility and without adequate fuel - at the right price - the future is more than a little uncertain. At present it looks as though we shall all have to limit our area of operations pending clarification of the situation, which may explain a possible lack-lustre impression to be gained whilst reading "next time out". In the meantime I would ask any of you who are attending working parties in your own transport to ensure you give lifts to as many other volunteers as possible, or even come to some arrangement with other mobile navvies with respect to vehicle sharing.

And now the good news... The Government has graciously allowed BWB to seek the finance to put it's Sheffield & South Yorkshire modernisation scheme into operation and a funded survey of the scheme to use the lower Grand Union as a transport bye-pass for the London conurbation has been initiated by BWB and the Greater London Council, more about this inside, but I would like at this point out that these developments are possibly the result of the work put in by that shining star in the IWA's firmament, the Inland Shipping Group...it just goes to show the value of knowing what you want, as opposed to pseudo-diplomacy/appeasement.

Finally, as this is the last issue of 1973, I would like on behalf of all the organisers like to thank you all for your devoted hard work, help, and encouragement during the past 12 months. I have the feeling 1974 could bring about some pretty major changes.

GKP



# Next time

## LONDON WPG

JANUARY 19-20th

Please see article elsewhere in Navvies. Contact NIGEL STEVENS

SUNDAY 26th JANUARY

To assist the Surrey & Hants Canal Society on towpath clearance at Barley Mow Bridge OS 169-777/537. Contact ROD PAWSEY or NIGEL STEVENS

FEBRUARY 23-24th

This is the last weekend of the winter maintenance project. Please come and help clear everything up and finish all that has been started. Transport & accommodation available. Contact NIGEL STEVENS.

## SURREY & HAMPSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 26th-27th

Come and help the successful towpath clearance and bridgehole clearing already started on the Hampshire section. Meet Barley Mow Bridge OS 169-777/537

FEBRUARY 2-3rd

See article elsewhere in this edition for details of the work on the canal, transport & accommodation provided - Contact JEFF HOLMAN

FEBRUARY 23-24th

Towpath clearance continues at Double Bridge OS169-777/520. Contact JEFF HOLMAN for more details.

## SOUTH EAST MIDDLESEX WPG

FEBRUARY 2-3rd

Full details from ANOY EAVELL but please register interest as soon as possible so that accommodation etc can be arranged.

23rd DECEMBER 20th JANUARY

Tree felling and clearance continues. Assembly point is the bridge just off the road from Old Stratford to Cosgrove. Turn right approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of Old Stratford from the A508. The bridge is visible from the road at this turning - access being via the bridge path approx.  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile on the right.

Support has been very poor lately - are YOU doing YOUR bit for the waterways in YOUR area ??

## KENNET & AVON TRUST - READING BRANCH

Sunday 13th JANUARY

Tree removal prior to dredging at Ufton Lock. Alder Valley Reading to Newbury bus service 2 departs Reading 9.15, 10.30 - alight first X roads past Three Kings Public House (2m W of Twale). Walk  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile down road, over level crossing to lock. Work starts at 10.00am. Contact DEREK BLAZDELL

## DROITWICH CANALS TRUST

FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAYS OF EVERY MONTH

Regular working parties on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in each month around the Droitwich Dig site. Pound clearance, brickwork repairs and towpath improvement. All kinds of work available - you name it, we'll provide it. Full weekends accommodation at fairly short notice available for other Groups who will be particularly welcome. Please warn IAN BRUCE who will fix everything.

### PEAK FOREST CANAL SOCIETY

As explained elsewhere, the maximum effort has to be put into the work to be done on the Rochdale Canal to get it open by April 1974. The maximum help is needed NOW. Please contact DAVID BROWN as soon as possible.

### BCN SOCIETY

December 16	Oldbury No. 4 Pound	TITFORD CANAL
January 6	Winson Green	SOHO LOOP
January 12	Stone Cross	TAME VALLEY CANAL
January 13	Stone Cross	TAME VALLEY CANAL
January 17		STRATFORD CANAL
January 20	No. 6 side pound	TITFORD CANAL
January 27 (Provisional)	Bromley Basin	PENSNETT CANAL

### NORTH LONDON RESCUE COMMANDO

January 12-13. 26-27. February 9-10. 23-24 K&A CROFTON FLIGHT  
Clearance of towpath and canal bank to provide machinery access. Also chamber clearances on locks 56 and 57. Contact Richard Trim

### KENNET & AVON TRUST - PEWSEY SECTION

4th Sunday every month. We have now started work on the locks at Froxfield on the Wilts/Berks boundary. Meet at OAKHILL LOCK (No. 68) 10.30 a.m.  
Contact Rob Chalmers, Swindon 27523.

### STROUDWATER CANAL SOCIETY

First 3 Sundays in December

Meet Bowbridge 10.00 am prior to proceeding to AMBERLEY to strip and recondition the Priestman Cub Dragline. Please bring appropriate equipment i.e. scrapers, wire brushes, gunk, stillsons, wrenches, socket sets, etc.  
Boxing Day Ryeford Locks STROUDWATER CANAL

Morning only, tree clearance. Grid ref. 156-819/047

January - first 3 Sundays Bowbridge STROUDWATER CANAL  
Silt clearance, hopefully with our new dragline. (Grid Ref. 156-854/044)  
Contact Pete Swallow.

### WEY & ARUN CANAL SOCIETY

Northern Section

Every Sunday - see notice board by road at Run Common near Cranleigh  
Grid Ref. 033419. Contact Alfred Cook.

Southern Section

December 16th & 30th, January 6th & 20th.

At Paplands Farm, opposite Bat & Ball Inn on B2133 near Wisborough Green.  
Grid Ref. 065272. Contact Angus Mackintosh.

### CAMBRIDGE SECTION

9-10 February	Maintenance work	STRATFORD CANAL
9-10 March	Fenatic III	WELL CREEK BASIN

A final clearance before the cut is filled ready for the gathering of boats in June.

### SCOTTISH IWA

We hope, in the new year, to make an early start after the "freeze" (temperature, not political!). Apart from the usual "campaign" - type tarring up, we hope to try and rebuild a bascule bridge on the "navigable" stretch of the Forth & Clyde Canal near Bowling. Slipways will feature in the new year's work programme - there are 4 sites where we may be able to build these. Please keep in touch, it's bound to be worth it. Contact RICHARD DAVIES

### BATH & BRISTOL K&A TRUST

30th December (Sunday)	10.30am	CLAVERTON PUMP
SUNDAY 13th JANUARY	10.30am	WIDCOMBE FLIGHT
SUNDAY 13th JANUARY	10.30am	CLAVERTON PUMP
SUNDAY 20th JANUARY	10.30am	WIDCOMBE FLIGHT
WEEKEND 26th-27th JANUARY		STRATFORD BLITZ
SUNDAY 3rd FEBRUARY	10.30am	WIDCOMBE FLIGHT
SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY	10.30am	CLAVERTON PUMP
SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY	10.30am	WIDCOMBE FLIGHT

CONTINUED OVER

SUNDAY 17th FEBRUARY 10.30am

WIDCOMBE FLIGHT

For All working parties at Widcombe contact ARLAND SHAWE TAYLOR, for the Stratford working party contact ALEC TILLEY AT 6, Greenfield Road, Westbury-on-Trym, tel. Bristol 621500. For Claverton Pump working parties contact DEREK DUDDEN at 26, Durban Road, Patchway, Bristol or ring DAVID RIVERS AT Keynsham 621500

GRAND UNION CANAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2-3rd

STRATFORD CANAL

Please come if you can to help on this vital project. Contact JIM WRIGHT

MIDLAND IWA

FEBRUARY 9-10th

STRATFORD CANAL

Anybody and everybody in the Midland area required this weekend to help on a "local waterway" contact MICK GOLDS.

DROITWICH CANALS TRUST \*\*\*Additional

16-17th FEBRUARY

STRATFORD CANAL

Our first "away" working party - a large turnout please. Details from IAN BRUCE.

GRANTHAM CANAL RESTORATION SOCIETY

6th JANUARY

WOOLSTHORPE LOCKS

Probably a general clearance, meet at the usual time at the double bridge which also crosses the railway. Contact CHRIS BATES

\*\*\*NOTE - if the fixtures for your Group do not appear in this section, it is because we have not received details - nag your organiser.

# WRG

WRG is growing at an alarming rate - when we started, restoration and voluntary work was very much a minority pastime in the waterway world - now it seems to be the in thing. The WRG is undergoing at this moment great changes to help us keep the whole thing going with the minimum of paper and the maximum of action - more about this next issue I hope. In the meantime it would probably be useful if you had a list of "Contact Men" to save the wastage of time and effort in redirecting your letters:

WRGPrint - all matters concerned with printing, both of navvies and any other waterway-type printing which may be needed. MIKE DAY  
11, Ashwood Avenue, Hillingdon, Middx. Tel. West Drayton 49801

WRGPress - Press and publicity of all kinds - FRANK HODGE at 99, Maze Hill, Greenwich, London SE.10. Tel 01.858-0263

WRGAgency - To redirect enquirers onto the sort of work they need and to put them in touch with their local Organiser. ROD PAWSEY  
13, Milford Gardens, Wembley, Middx. Tel 01.902-8642

WRGSales - Sale of prints, postcards and transparencies, books etc., by post JOHN FELIX at 74, Grange Park Ave, Winchmore Hill, London N.21

WRGStores - Sale of protective clothing, "T" shirts etc by post. JIM WOOLGAR at 56, Connaught Crescent, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey.

So please direct your correspondence to the right address & bod please - in the meantime please write on all other matters to the Editor, pending more specific tasks being allocated.

BY THE WAY - Consistently and frustratingly we are short of funds - we are desperately in need of someone who would be willing to act as a fundraiser and I would be very pleased to hear from anybody who might be willing to act in this capacity.....

GKP



# Take the plunge!

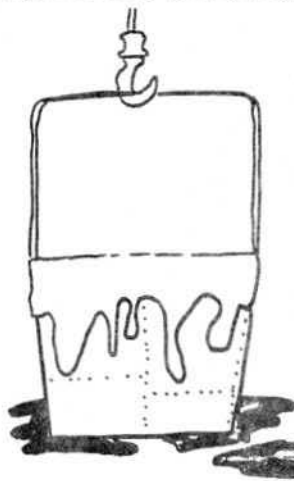
It is generally recognised that the hardest part about becoming a navvy is simply taking the plunge. This article is an attempt to sweep away some of the mystique and mythology about navvying and convince the 'virgin' reader that he, or indeed she, can become an active volunteer.

The basic ingredients of a weekend are the travelling, accommodation, food, other navvies and the job to be done. I work with the London group and we always have a fair journey. Most of us travel in the WRG Transits where it's easy for a first timer to meet the others. At the accommodation, with everyone sleeping in the same room, it is difficult not to get to know one another! As for food, London do eat well. 'Puffin', our cook, has to sort out requests before deciding what to prepare! The other navvies are drawn from every possible occupation: students, insurance, advertising, merchant-banking, electronics - we've even got our own cyto-geneticist - they all come for weekends to do something different, physical with a definite end in view.

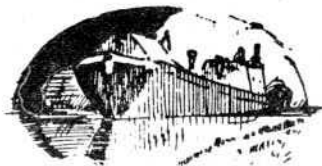
The most unpredictable thing about a working party is usually the work itself. Lock-chamber clearance is common but you might find yourself bricklaying, dumper driving, tree-felling, pile driving, mixing cement or working up scaffolding. It doesn't matter if you have no skills or particular aptitude, all you need is common sense and a will to work and 'muck-in'. You don't even have to bring tools. Except on rare occasions, everything is provided by the groups, from shovels to hydraulic excavators.

Now don't run off with the idea that unless you are a scaled down Charles Atlas or Tamara Press, we don't want you. We need everyone we can get, girls as well as blokes and you won't find a foreman cracking a whip. Nobody expects volunteers to kill themselves - all that is asked is that you do what you can.

What does the individual need? Very little - old clothes, sleeping bag, wellies, plate, mug, k.f.s. To this may be added an air-bed, gloves and waterproof. What does a weekend cost? Again, very little. Two breakfasts and one evening meal, all substantial with never a word of complaint, 50p. Travelling expenses are shared and rarely exceed £1 while Saturday night in the pub is usually governed by a 50p whip. This avoids expensive individual rounds. Lunchtimes are invariably ale & pub-grub so you can see, a weekend need not be expensive.



Finally, the crunch. Actually starting, phoning the organiser and saying "count me in". I know it's an awesome step - I never took it! I was shanghaied to Stratford by a sob story and a pleading voice, but with a current readership of "Navvies" of around 2,000, the organisers can't 'phone you all. So the next step is yours. 'Phone your local organiser, chat to him and take the plunge. Come on in, the muddy water's lovely.



# AROUND

## **BASINGSTOKE**

150 navvies from all over Southern England turned up for the first ever official working party on the Basingstoke Canal. This fantastic celebration resulted in the clearance of 2 miles (two miles!!) of towpath and a bridge-hole. There will be more working parties in the New Year - can we get the Hampshire half of the canal clear by Easter?

## **WRG CAMP**

After the enormous success of the 1973 camp, we plan to expand in 1974 to at least 2 sites. Nothing is fixed yet, but we are hoping to work on the Droitwich and to run our first camp abroad (in Scotland!) But we might include your waterway: if you have work to be done, let us know. All this depends on getting enough organisers: anyone who wants to help with this exciting project, please contact Nigel Stevens. (No promises, but we hope to pay organiser's expenses.) Early planning is vital: we must advertise the camp in January. If you think you may be able to help, please tell us NOW.

## **MONTGOMERY**

As most readers will know, HRH Prince Charles as Chairman of the Prince of Wales Committee has personally announced its first major action. Briefly this is to arrange for financial support from members of the Variety Club of Great Britain to enable seven miles of the Montgomery Canal to be restored as quickly as possible in the area of Welshpool.

This stretch runs from the dropped road bridge at Gallows Tree Bank to Four Crosses and includes six locks, four at Pool Quay and two at Burgeddin. Our initial intention is to start towpath clearance from Pool Quay top lock and work towards Four Crosses. In view of the amount of work involved, working parties will be held on one day in each weekend. If you are able to come along please phone David Smith, Stowe 2645 or Tony Byrne, Tel ford 882385 for further details.

## **KENNET & AVON**

The present limit of navigation on the Kennet & Avon at the Reading end is Tyle Mill swing bridge. Tyle Mill lock immediately above it is now being repaired by BWB while the unusable swing bridge will be rebuilt in 1974. Volunteer help will be needed during the next few months clearing overhanging trees from the channel above the lock. Some dredging is also required here. This will add one mile of navigable waterway to the present 8 miles from Reading. In addition during 1974 a firm of contractors will completely rebuild Towney and Padworth locks so that navigation will be extended a further mile to the fixed Aldermaston swing bridge. All this work will be paid for from K&A Trust funds.

## **GRAND UNION**

The Greater London Council and the British Waterways Board have jointly agreed to finance a feasibility study into the improvement of the lower end of the Grand Union Canal. They have appointed Inbucon AIC Management Consultants Ltd, to carry out the study which is expected to take six months to complete. The types of craft considered for operation on the improved waterway are IASH and BACAT, in addition to the existing Thames barges. The improvement envisaged by the Board, would enable barges of approximately 350 tons capacity to convey export goods from a terminal conveniently situated near the M1 Motorway, direct to ships loading in the Port of London and Tilbury. Imports would also be received for national distribution.

### **FOR SALE**

Lister Factory truck, 600cc J.A.P. engine - petrol (air cooled) - will carry up to 2 tons - solid tyres. Only two careful owners (B.R. and P.F.C.S.)\*\* Has been used on Ashton Canal towpath - Offers: David Brown, 45, Richmond Street, Ashton-under-Lyme, Lancashire.



# AROUND

MASS CANAL CLEAN UP - from our special reporter;

It would seem that WRG has competition for organising mammoth digs. On the Grand Canal in Ireland, a two-weekend dig organised by the IWA (I), Inchicore Residents Assn, Dublin Corporation, C.I.E (Irish type BWR) and An Taisce (Irish type National Trust) resulted in 230 forty loads of much being removed.

Dublin Branch of IWA (I) offered a prize for the most unusual object hauled out of the cut. Apparently these included a safe, complete with cheques and a shell minus cordite.

It would seem that there are several restoration projects being projected at the moment in Ireland. We will endeavour to keep you informed.

## CHESHIRE RING

Only a few short months now separate us from the target date of April 1st '74 for the re-opening of the Cheshire Ring. Yet what is the situation? On the Ashton Canal the two floating dredgers are halfway through the "Ashtac Site" and should be in Portland Street Basin before Christmas. Almost all the gates on the flight have been fitted, and the swing-bridges are expected shortly.

On the Peak Forest Canal, the Marple flight should be ready to schedule, while the dredging on the 8 mile pound to Ashton will enable passage (though probably not passing) of boats - please keep to the centre channel.

The overall situation for the Ring is however far from satisfactory. As reported in the last "Navvies" the Lower Peak will be severed by motorway construction just after re-opening - for an undetermined period of time. This leaves the restored Ashton Canal in isolation - cut off by a man-made breach to the South and by the so called "navigable section" of the Rochdale Canal through the centre of Manchester.

In December all voluntary work on the Ashton and Peak Forest Canals will cease - in order to be concentrated on this section of the Rochdale Canal. In co-operation with the Rochdale Canal Co., the combined team of volunteers will attempt to clear completely all nine chambers of the wide locks on the flight through the city centre. We have exactly 26 working days to achieve this. The large number of volunteers and expensive plant and equipment. Hire charges for cranes, lorries, pumps etc have already been estimated as £2,000, and therefore with the operation costing so much we cannot afford any mishaps. The plant is negotiated, and the organisation prepared. WHAT WE NOW NEED IS VOLUNTEERS. All local members have committed themselves to three months of hard labour. Volunteers will be wishing to help - they will be more than welcome. Accommodation will be provided for anyone brave/foolish enough to stay for the weekend.

EDITORS NOTE - I understand, that with the shortage of time and the severe restriction on travelling imposed by the fuel shortage, it is very unlikely that some of the more far ranging groups will be able to attend. So if you are living in the area, this appeal is aimed at YOU... If all Northwest and North East readers just gave one days labour each the problem would be virtually solved... IT'S UP TO YOU NOW. Contact David Brown who has been appointed Working Party Liaison Officer for the Rochdale Scheme.



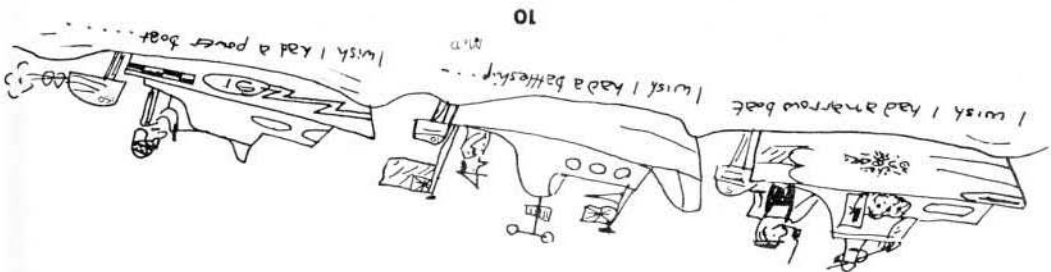
# In case of emergency

All the navies at the Drottwich Dig were impressed with the service that the Civil Aid Group gave in preparing the meals, sandwiches and hot drinks. You would also have seen Walter Lloyd, National Secretary of The Voluntary Civil Aid Service, with a white fur fez and a broad grin. Quietly and effectively they had gone into action providing services without which the dig of this size and type would not have been possible.

On Sunday afternoon, Walter explained to me a bit about Civil Aid, but he also said something that has great relevance to us, the type of work we do, and our position in the voluntary groups of this country. Now that we no longer have a full time Civil Defence Corps, it is up to the forces in times of emergency to do the donkey work, but, and this is where the problem arises however good the contingency plans, it takes time for the official organisations to come into operation. Volunteer groups can, if alerted quickly, do much valuable time-holding before the official machine grinds into action. Walter also pointed out that many of the natural catastrophes that arise in England involve water and mud! so it would be natural to use the services of volunteers who have had experience in handling these two materials, and where pumping and digging equipment can be obtained quickly in each area. Take for example two possible catastrophes: in London it will probably be ten years before we get our flood barrage, this means that one million people who live in London, at, or below Thames level, are at risk for this period. All it needs is a heavy downpour, coupled with high spring tides, and a sudden North Sea surge, and the rest can be left to the imagination. Or, as last year, cracks suddenly appear in a reservoir dam, and this time bursts! especially if due to heavy rain, crises happened in several places at once, the authorities would be impossibly stretched.

Perhaps then it might be a good idea for all our groups to find out who should be contacted in an emergency. To find out which volunteers would be prepared to turn out in an instance like this and, where they could be contacted in a hurry. I am not saying that this should take up more time or importance than our primary function, which is to restore waterways, but with a little effort on behalf of each group it could mean that we could offer a small and effective emergency assistance group. After all, this is something we have come to pride ourselves on that given a situation we can go to work with the minimum of organisation and fuss. The Port of London monitoring equipment can only predict an emergency four hours in advance, public warning is given at one hour in advance of crisis. Given even this limited notice it should be possible to assemble a group at a central point within three hours of warning. I think we ought to bear it in mind - surely we owe the Civil Aid a favour in return!

F.H.



**DCT** **THE DROITWICH  
CANALS TRUST LTD****A Registered Charity****Bromsgrove 31624**

The Editor,  
'Navvies',  
4 Wentworth Court,  
Wentworth Avenue,  
Finchley, London, N3 1YD.

49 Cloverdale,  
Stoke Prior,  
Bromsgrove,  
Worcs.  
B60 4NF.  
7th November 1973.

Dear Sir,

**Droitwich Dig.**

I have written personally to many of the Working Party Organisers to thank them for their truly magnificent efforts during the weekend of the Droitwich Dig, but just in case I missed any (due to G.K.P.'s list being wrong, I hasten to add) and also to thank those who came under their own steam, I would like to repeat my thanks in print for all to see.

The success of the Dig is self evident from both the amount of work done and the publicity received ( about equally shared between WPG and DCT). Local opposition to the restoration in general and the Dig in particular has been, apparently, collectively confounded, as to the best of my knowledge there have been no complaints whatsoever, about either the work or its aftermath. This is an amazing tribute to the discipline and dedication of each and every Navy who took part.

Work will now proceed steadily on the 1st and 3rd Sundays/weekends in each month, doing manual clearance and repair work, while the funds recover. Any visiting parties will be warmly welcomed, and accomodation and work can be arranged to suit most palates at short notice, although I must be warned previously for specialised work or accomodation.

Again, to whoever worked at the Dig, in whatever capacity, my sincere thanks, for a demonstration of this kind is perhaps the most valuable contribution that anyone can make at this stage of the restoration of the Droitwich Canals.



Ian Bruce  
Working Party Organiser

**Directors: R.M.Sinclair, N.Q.Grazebrook, S.G.J.Clover, R.Jolliffe, J.H.Vernon, C.S.Tabor,  
G.R.Andrews, I.Bruce, A.M.Grazebrook (Mrs), J.M.Sinclair (Mrs), D.M.Farrell.**  
**Registered England No.1132669**

**Registered Office: Lokrum, Copyholt Lane, Stoke Pound, Bromsgrove, Worcs., E60 3AY.**



# Droitwich Dig

Before and after at Lock 2. The 'new' towpath is the most obvious change here, together with the removal of obstructing trees.





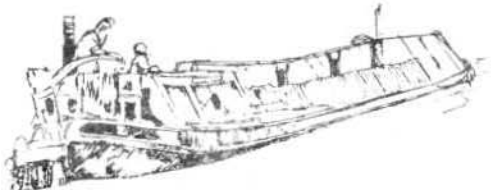
# Droitwich Dig

At Lock 4 the chamber was totally cleared, a start made on brickwork repair and the head and tail dredged by the Hy-Mac.



# Droitwich Dig

27-28-10-1973



Part of the excitement of being a volunteer is never knowing quite what to expect when one reaches site. This is especially true for a new site where we have never worked before, and despite the maps and pictures you may see beforehand it never seems quite the same as it is on the ground.

The Droitwich Dig was no exception, just to walk along the freshly cleared towpath for the whole length of about three-quarters of a mile was to see the extent of the operation we had taken on. For unlike Ashton, or the Southern Stratford, here was a dry bed; on one section someone had even grassed the bed over and planted willow trees. But just as on previous digs it is amazing how even the most derelict canal yields swiftly to the efforts of a number of volunteers and before eleven in the morning on Saturday, the dumpers had carried the hoists into place and towed the long-arm Smalley digger (which was undergoing site evaluation) to its station. Each team was working at its allocated stretch and as each coach-load of navvies arrived on site the numbers were swelled still further. By lunch-time, when all the volunteers had been checked in, over 400 volunteers were working on site. The marquee too had been erected quickly on Saturday morning and by 12 noon the beer was flowing freely with the navvies spilling out onto the grass outside, eating their lunches. The Voluntary Civil Aid van was also doing a brisk trade in sandwiches.

One of the things I find so enjoyable about a national dig of this kind is that it gives you a chance to see all the people you have met on the other digs, and the pleasure of laughing about the digs you were on together. Perhaps part of the pleasure is that like hitting your head against a brick wall, it is so nice when it stops and you can climb out of the lock and see the brickwork emerging from under the sea of mud.

It is difficult to get an idea of 400 people (580 at final check-in..Ed) until you are packed into the same bar together; admittedly it was a large bar, but it was definitely "standing room only" and perhaps because of this the evening went with a swing, finishing up with a Hokey-Cokey, now, that's something I can never remember happening at a working party before. It must show that we are becoming positively establishment.

And talking of the establishment it was a good weekend for press and publicity. Perhaps the best value for money was seeing the BBC reporter, in immaculate long suede jacket, struggling to get out of the muddy ditch where he had gone to deliver his report to the nation, as he crawled out leaving his boots behind, getting mud all over his trendy weekend clothes he was heard to remark "I think you are all, quite, quite, mad". Perhaps we are, but even the most vocal local "anti" had to agree by Sunday evening that he had seen nothing but good. Now all we need is the money and volunteers to get the job finished.

Frank Hodge

## Statistics

You might be interested to learn that the total plant line up for the weekend was 7 dumpers, 6 pumps, 3 hoists, 2 Jones KL15 cranes, 2 tracked hydraulic excavators, 3 wheeled hydraulic excavators and one Drott loading shovel. During the weekend (with help from Stan Thomas) you consumed 2,500 pints of bitter - unfortunately a count was not kept of the amount of draught mild or bottled beer, lager, or spirits....Ed

# freightways of tomorrow?

PART  
2

by IAN BREACH  
reprinted from  
New Scientist

It is impossible to spend £2.4m. on any length of road and bring about a fourfold increase in capacity - but even this hypothesis omits the fact that £2.4m. would buy road and road alone. It would not buy police and ambulance staff, maintenance equipment, labour and materials; it would not pay for motor industry imports, nor any of the multitude of charges incurred in road transportation which are not incurred on water. If true comparison were possible, my guess is that freight conveyed by inland waterway would cost the community as a whole at least five times less.

There are other environmental advantages to taking goods by water. One is that mentioned in the Toronto Report, which notes that the larger vessels produce 373% less pollution by volume, than diesel trucks (based on cargo carried). A second is that a waterway can transport far more freight, bulk for bulk, than the equivalent width of road (or rail) - thus making far lower demands on land. It is not important to have speed as a prime factor: continuity of supply is much more critical to the industries which - in an ideal world may be - would use the canals as a feeder network. There can be no question that the network exists in Britain the BWB has about 2000 miles of inland waterway under its wing (roughly two-thirds of the mileage that existed at the end of the great canal era 120 years ago). But only 350 of this is designated "commercial" under the 1968 Transport Act.

The waterways lobby - a large if not powerful group - has not been slow to point out that the one factor distinguishing this rather pitiful state of affairs from that on the Continent is money. Germany which carries rather more than a quarter of its goods by inland waterway, plans to spend £60 million annually for the next five years on various improvement schemes. Investment on a comparative scale is being made in Holland (66% by inland waterway), Belgium (29%), and France (31%).

By contrast the British waterways are in monetary limbo - nominally the responsibility of the State but run mainly by economically feeble private operators: it is probably precisely the situation the railways would have found themselves in today had they not been nationalised. Uneconomic (ie. low profit) lines would have been closed much earlier, much more widely, and with even less concern for the public interest than they were under Beeching. Rehabilitation of the canals, however would be a far easier job to tackle than any major restoration of rail services. A good basic grid exists - which serves most of the country's industrial towns and cities - and the technology has been brought up to date, particularly in the Netherlands and Germany, where scores of expansion and development projects are now under way. Politically, it would need a totally reconstituted authority, working and costed as British Rail and its Board is supposed to be.

How much more freight could the canals of Britain accommodate? It is not a straightforward question to answer, but with little or no development at all, the present system could accept three times more traffic, according to BWB figures. With only modest additional expenditure (like that involved in the South Yorks plan), it could bear between 8 and 10 times more. With investment of the sort being taken for granted in other European countries it is clear that the capacity could be hugely expanded, but only if that investment included the development of all the necessary linking facilities, the logical siting of new factories, in fact a whole new attitude to waterways that mirrored what is going on in the rest of the world.

Russia for example, has just completed a 3500-mile deep-waterway system in the European USSR and is planning to join it with the canals of adjacent countries and the proposed waterways of Siberia, the extreme north, and the Russian Far East. As Frederic Doerflinger, chairman of the Inland Shipping Group points out, Britain is separated from all this by a short, free stretch of water: in Europe, more new large waterways are being built than new railways "while we have shamefully neglected our waterways".



#### FREIGHTWAYS OF TOMORROW....continued.

Along with the improvement of the canals themselves has come the 20th century's answer to the narrowboat - the barge-carrying ship. Given the ideals of a large transhipment port, inland centres served by it, and navigable rivers or practicable canal courses, the picaback vessel is a natural component. There are now three such basic systems - LASH (Lighter Aboard Ship), Seabee, and the BWB's BACAT (Barge Aboard Catamaran). LASH was developed as a vessel design in which lighters can be quickly and easily loaded and unloaded by shipboard crane at the rate of four per hour (equivalent to 1400 tonnes of cargo). The ships themselves can operate independently of ports requiring no more than adequate depth of water, secure mooring, and room to swing.

More than two dozen LASH ships are now built or under construction, each one capable of carrying between 73 and 89 lighters. Once lowered from the parent vessel, the lighters are moved inland or to wharf by tug; linked together they can be incorporated with other barges in push-tows (in the West European canals they thus fit the 9.5m locks which take a continental standard barge of 1350t.)

Seabee, another commercial venture originating in the US, carries a mixture of containers, roll-on, roll-off vehicles and much larger barges - some 38 - 832 tonners. These are shipped and unshipped by an elevator which can handle two barges at a time. The well-known authority on waterways and canal hardware, Charles Hadfield, is unenthusiastic about Seabee, which he says "seems partially to have been designed for its military value". Certainly the barges are acceptable in only the larger Continental and Mississippi system locks.

BACAT has yet to operate. Designed for the BWB and to be registered at Grimsby, the first vessel is due to be delivered by its Danish builders at the end of this year. The ship carries 18 barges - 10 on deck and eight slung between its two hulls. Each barge can carry between 100 and 140 tonnes (depending on draught) and has the same dimensions as those now operating on the Sheffield & S. Yorkshire Navigation. Push-tugs and barges for use with the parent ship are also being built at the moment. One tug and three barges will work as a unit slightly less than 200ft. long and 15ft. wide, but the tug can, if necessary, push up to nine barges. Alternatively, the ship will carry 10 BACAT barges and three LASH lighters - making it possible to shuttle American, Continental and British freight.

The benefits of using barge-carrying vessels hardly needs spelling out, but physical flexibility, low capital and operating costs, and high energy-efficiency are obviously three of them. Any device which can directly link the existing canals of Britain - let alone an expanded network of the future - to the great trade-catchment waters of America and Europe must be a triumph: in this case it is one of great simplicity. The best triumphs always are. There are no revolutions in naval architecture, no new and untried handling equipment, no false "economies of scale". But Britain will not benefit greatly unless it is prepared to treat the canals as their potential warrants.

No one, even the BWB and the IWA, is saying the country's waterways can take all the freight off the road. But if the sums were done properly, they (and the railways) would be carrying very much more freight than they are now. By then we might also have rationalised our whole transportation policy and be reducing freight traffic, for as it is, we carry a whole lot of coal to a great many Newcastles.

This article first appeared in NEW SCIENTIST the weekly review of science and technology, 128 Long Acre, London W.C.2.



GEORGE! - How do you get PLASTIC off the TAR?





#### UPS-A-DAISY

In a recent speech, it has been said that in scheduling 23 more bridges on the "Remainder" waterways in Birmingham to be strengthened, the DoE have seen the logic of maintaining a navigable headroom over the waterway so that water-born maintenance can continue.

#### POSSIBLY

dangerous precedent set up, we hear, following a restoration-avid canal society's agreement to pay 10% of all bridge raising costs.

#### NEEDED

one the knowledge of the whereabouts of any available 20 to 40 h.p. outboard motor (in any condition). Required to bribe relatively tame mechanic who maintains WRG diesel transport. Contact Editor please.

#### BLEAK FUTURE

is in store for BWB as we understand that within the next 2 years practically all its good, experienced, and long-service staff will have retired... where are the new canalmen to come from?

#### STILL

one more trainee litho-printer required by Mike Day for WRGPrint. If you feel that you would like to learn, and help us into the bargain, and you are within reasonable travelling distance from Hillingdon, please contact Mike, address page 3.

#### ESSEX

area navvies, who want transport to London WRG working parties should contact Colin Vanner to obtain lifts in a newly-commissioned J4 minibus. Colin's address is: 49, Glebe Road, Wickford, Essex. Telephone: Wickford 4570

#### SHORTAGE

of some £25,000 has halted work on the Upper Avon - until the backlog of money can be found just 10 yards of earth will have to remain across the lock cut which separates the two completed portions of the river.

#### SINCERE

apologies for the confusion caused in the last Navvies by the mis-numbering of some pages and even the fact that continuation numbers were not given to pages that completed certain articles. This was caused by technical problems outside our control (stupidity).

#### THANKS

to L.A. (Teddy) Edwards, Nick Grazebrook, the Northeast IWA and the Erewash Canal Society for much needed financial relief.

#### PURCHASED

after exhaustive site tests, the long-arm Smalley excavator seen at the Droitwich Dig.... of course we haven't got the money .....

#### YET

another old outboard is required by the Ashby Canal Association for use on a workboat which members of the ACA are using for the purpose of keeping the canal in good order. Contact Tom Henshaw, 5 Chapel Street, Newhall, Burton on Trent, Staffs.

#### UNDERSTAND

that a pair of boats were loaded recently at Boxmoor with coal for the Thames.

#### PRESS DATE

for Navvies 47 will be the 25th January. Can you help us provide interesting reading for the 2,000+ subscribers?

#### INTERESTING

job available - is it possible that we have a reader who would be willing to collect, store and suitably classify all voluntary work press cuttings, etc. If you think this is the job for you, contact the Editor please.

# Tring Section Scheme....



During October, we received a letter from British Waterways Board asking us to supply volunteers to the BWB "Improvement Scheme" at Tring (see Navvies 45). Our first reaction was an immediate "NO", but after thinking about it for some time we realised...

- a) As the scheme has had the result, bearing in mind that the Thames is now closed for lock reconstruction, of completely closing the Oxford-Grand Union-Thames circuit for six months.
- b) The available "passing days" were very limited, thus effectively splitting the Grand Union main line into two parts until Easter 1974.
- c) If we gave a categorical "NO" we were effectively condoning this long-term winter closure
- d) Winter traffic and particularly the Ashby Canal coal boats would be violently inconvenienced.
- e) What will happen next year - and where??

So we replied, after consultation with the majority of the Southern Organisers thus:

1. We feel the method of presentation of the scheme was not all it should be and the length of the stoppage is unnecessary, and could not be tolerated.
2. Upon the understanding that we would only be providing labour in an effort to increase the available "passing days" during the stoppage and upon the condition that the volunteers are solely employed directly upon work which will enable the water levels to be raised as soon as possible in the affected pounds - volunteers will be asked to participate.
3. This should not become an annual "event" and any future moves in this direction would be strongly resisted.

We await developments...see Navvies 47...

GKP

## Stratford

For the fourth year running the WRG will be operating an intensive winter maintenance and improvement programme on this, the first canal ever restored by volunteers. Those of you who have worked on the canal, or boated down with a navy's practiced eye, will know that the canal has been steadily improving with the combined efforts of the National Trust, our winter work, the WRG Camp and other volunteers.

This year the NT is concentrating on replacing paddle gear while our principal job will be piling, for bank protection and to cure leaks. Heavier plant will be used to make the job faster. There is much other work of all sorts; we need maximum support to get the canal into the best possible state for the now imminent Upper Avon breakthrough.

Many groups are helping this year (if yours isn't, nag your organiser!). Your help is badly needed; please give it. Tools accommodation and food provided:- your Organiser will arrange.

DATES:	JANUARY	19-20th	London WPG
		26-27th	Bath & Bristol K&A
FEBRUARY		2-3rd	Grand Union Canal Soc/Surrey & Hants C.S
		9-10th	Cambridge Section/Midland WPG
		16-17th	Droitwich C.T/B.C.N.Soc (Sunday)
		23-24th	London WPG

PLEASE MAKE THE EFFORT..

# WRG Bank

## TARGET 2500

In the last issue I was pleased to report receiving a bumper bundle of 120 books of Green Shield Stamps. Well thanks to "Waterways World" readers, I can announce an even larger quantity of books received. A total of 170 books bringing our grand total to 390. We really have got the project off to a flying start and the target figure of 2500 draws a little closer.

We have to thank the subscribers of "Waterways World" for this months fine set of figures, for they sent in at least 66 of the completed books which appreciably added to those sent in by our regulars. Can we sustain this splendid momentum? Our thanks to the publishers of "Waterways World" for featuring our appeal and giving it such prominent presentation in both their recent issues.

Here are some who contributed: A.F.Ashcroft; J.A.Denning; Jean Heap; Kathy & Mike McGrath; Mrs M.H.Morrell; D.J.S.Allinson; J.P.Milton; Ronald Ashworth; Margaret Pickerill; M.A.Olver; Elizabeth Arthur; Miss S.M.Wood; David Wallace; Miss W.M.Bible; E.J.Park; Nancy Marsden; Simon & Ann Leach; R.H.Ledgerwood; A.C.Pazakerley; N.T.Barnes; G.Williams; J.Brennard; P.Pearson; I.G.Matthews; G.E.Williams; G.Hawkins; J.C.Nesbit; Margaret & Ted Hill; Mrs Madeline Kirkham; R.H.Tildesley; Southampton Canal Society; Steam Cruising Co; H.Jessey; P.Pike; G.W.Ragg; J.C.Laycock; N.Voley; "Fisher"; Roger Blist; Ian Bruce.

So keep feeding that fledging Wergled Smalley Bird so that one day he may join his brothers at work gulping up sludge.

### STAMPS & COUPONS

I was pleased to be able to announce a record total of £60 received in the last issue. Unfortunately as expected, we were not able to maintain this exceptionally high figure with the added drain-off of the Green Stamps for "Target 2500".

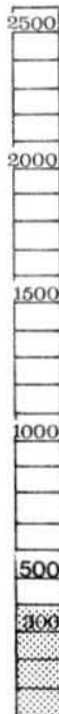
However the figure for this issue of approx.£21 is a very good average and is made up as follows:

Embassy	6,814	Players No.6	4,220	Sterling	10
Park Drive	1,313	Soveriegn	735	Gold Bond	1,936
Players No.10	227	Kensitas	116	Cadets	490
Crown Filter	113	Players	71	Carlton	120
Virginia	17	Belair	24	S&H Pink	9 books Co-op Shks.

Sent in by: Freddie Stephens; R.J.Hooton; David Alexander; Mr Gibson; Mr & Mrs Harden; J.P.Milton; Neil Johannessen; Peter Willy; P.Pearson; Mrs D Hopkinson; John Henden; Rob Dutton; Graham Worthington; F.A.Bottomer; FUL SUDANI; Mrs J. Wellard; Nancy Marsden; North London Rescue Commando; Colin Murray; Jill Seymour-Walker; Sally Morris; Chrisie Pollard; M.G.Lawrence; Southampton Canal Society.

Keep sending your contributions in, for although we may be giving prominence to Green Shield Stamps we do nevertheless rely a great deal on our regular contributors sending in all manner of coupons which can be exchanged for cash. So, don't just hoard or worse still throw away that odd coupon save it and send it in as soon as you have a worthwhile quantity collected.

Send to: JIM FLEMING, N.B "Tom Ran" Canal Basin, Aylesbury, Bucks.



# CHILBLAIN CAMPAIGN



(THE SCOTTISH I.W.A.)

After reading most of today's magazines on Inland Waterways, one could easily be forgiven for thinking that Britain has at last woken up to the possibilities of restoring Inland Waterways for amenity and transport uses. I hate to disillusion you, but that is certainly not the case.

Public and Local Authority thinking in Scotland is archaic, if not totally obstinate. Why is it that people refuse to learn from the mistakes of others? Why is it that one is considered a 'crank' when promoting anything new? There is absolutely no reason why Scotland should not reap the same benefits from Inland Waterways that the rest of the country do, and although leisure developments are, in general, some years behind those in the South, both money and knowledge are available to develop Inland Waterways NOW in readiness for the massive demand which will so obviously become apparent in a few years. Scotland's Waterways were built for reasons which differ from those of the South, and in general, the waterways themselves are also different. For a start, they are of a worthwhile size - none of these 'Narrowboat ditches' - Caledonian, Crinan, and Forth & Clyde, smallest of the three, could handle craft up to 68'x20'x9'6" draft, that is even bigger than the Sheffield & South Yorks Navigation which is currently being used by BACAT craft, and is considered worthy of enlarging.

Glasgow is the only industrial area in the west of Britain which has a sizeable water link to Europe! or rather HAD, for it was closed to traffic just 1 year ago, when petrol was still less than 20p a gallon. Since closure, a few bridges have been replaced by causeways, and two short stretches have been filled in, but recent information leads us to believe that there is a definite possibility for reopening. The 'leak' of British Waterways official estimate for total reopening of the Canal at £6.6m compares favourably with infilling costs of £400,000 per mile, which would work out at approx. £14m. for the whole canal. Quite rightly total infilling is ruled out by nearly all authorities in Scotland, except, of course, public opinion, which is the most difficult of all opposition. Instead, British Waterways have proposed a linear rat-trap in the form of a water park with the canal replaced by a shallowed channel with graded and shelving banks, designed for paddling in. A truly remarkable scheme designed by the Board's Development Officer in LEEDS! I would have thought that Leeds was close enough to the abysmal 'water park' in Rochdale for this 'Development Officer' to have been able to smell the thing from his own office!

Despite the gloomy outlook, it does appear that we are beginning to get through to the Local Authorities at last. Falkirk Burgh Council have just completed a £140,000 Environmental improvement scheme, which although has not restored the canal, has at least brightened up the surrounds, and has encouraged use of the canal towpath as a walkway. Part of the money was spent 'dredging' the Union Canal within the boundaries, but there appears to be little difference since the Contractor, and his 32RB spent most of the summer dabbling in the weeds. The Council are now asking whether volunteers could help improve the appearance by clearing weeds from the channel! We have simply suggested that they buy a boat.

Voluntary work on the Forth & Clyde is still at a difficult stage, where the work is simply to be of a 'political' nature, to gain public support for 'clean canals', whilst at the same time doing enough preventative work to stop further deterioration. Major channel and lock clearances are difficult, as this canal was never designed to be drained, and all maintenance work was done by divers. It has become quite obvious that this canal will not look anything but a midden until the water level is raised back to the original, from the present level, some 2' down. This will probably involve considerable re-puddling, and leak plugging, all of which involves a considerable commitment to a programme of regular work.

RICHARD DAVIES

# SANITY AT LAST?

BWB Press Release, November 1973

"The British Waterways Board were advised today that the Secretary of State for the Environment has given his Consent to the promotion by the Board of a Parliamentary Bill giving them power to carry out improvements to the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation."

The Scheme, estimated to cost £2.4m, envisages improvements to the length of the Navigation between Doncaster and Rotherham, and when completed, will enable the passage of 750 ton barges as far as Mexborough and 400 ton barges as far as Rotherham. At present the carrying capacity of the craft using the Navigation to Rotherham is limited to 90 tons. Following a detailed market survey carried out by the Board and INBUCON, the Board have obtained written assurances from a considerable number of customers that once the waterway is improved, they will offer no less than 950,000 tons of traffic to the Board and the carriers for quotation. This exceeds by 200,000 tons the figure required to break even on the Scheme."

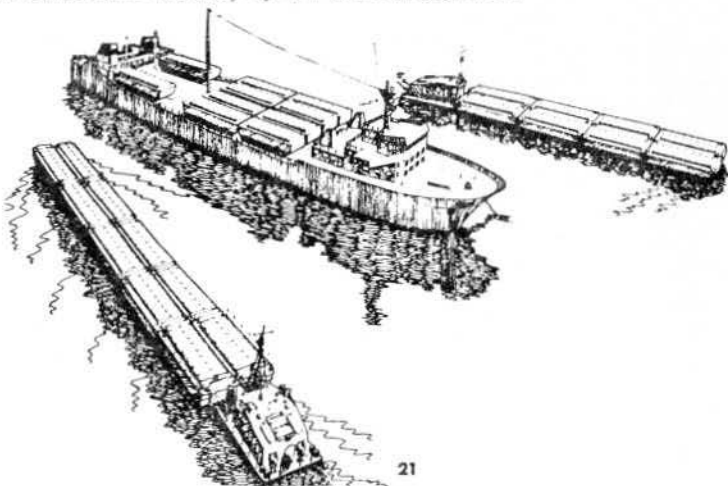
IWA Press Release, December 1973

"This has been an historic month for the waterways.

Mr. Rippon's splendid decision closely follows the decision of the Greater London Council to help finance a freight study of the modernisation of the Grand Union Canal."

Obviously this is very good news, although we cannot help wondering if this will not turn out to be a typical British answer to any problem ... i.e. to stifle all good ideas and initiative until its value is blindingly obvious even to the most myopic legislator, then in one grand and glorious gesture "allow" those causing the nuisance just enough rope to hang themselves. In this case, BWB still have to find the cash, at presumably current interest rates.

Casting cynicism aside for a moment, we obviously wish BWB every success with this farsighted scheme (farsighted for Britain at least) and hope that this is just a prelude to the more intensive commercial use of our waterway system. For years enthusiasts have been told by their 'Leaders' that the climate is not right for a commercial initiative - we respectfully submit that the climate is absolutely right now and that the waterway world puts the maximum amount of energy into reasoned pressure towards the construction of the commercial waterway system Britain deserves.



# Council blow to the canal fans

CANAL enthusiasts battling to stop a section of the Regent's Canal from being filled in have received a setback.

After considering a "save-our-waterway" petition signed by 1300 enthusiasts, Islington Council's policy committee has re-affirmed its view that part of the three acre stretch of water in the canal's City Road Basin will have to be filled in if plans for a big council housing scheme on the banks of the basin are to go ahead.

The filled-in section—about a quarter of the basin area—will provide a site for an electricity sub-station to serve the 250 homes planned by the council and the surrounding area.

The council was asked to find

an alternative site for the sub-station by amenity groups who want the whole of the canal basin preserved as a leisure attraction.

The basin is at present used by the Islington Boat Club, which has 500 members under the age of 18, as a boating centre.

The children row, sail and canoe from a barge—the club's headquarters — moored in the basin.

## 250 homes

The City Road Basin Action Committee, which sponsored the protest petition, claims there is no need to fill in any part of the basin.

Councillor Gerry Southgate, chairman of the council's policy committee, rejects the petitioner's claim.

He said: "We have reached the

situation after over three years of discussions and negotiations where we have to make up our minds what is to be done.

"As far as the council is concerned the housing scheme must go ahead.

"We shall be able to add 250 homes to our housing stock without having to rehouse a single family from the site. We would like to avoid filling in any part of the basin but it is not possible. All attempts to find an alternative site for the electricity station have proved unsuccessful."

Mr Tim Voelcker, chairman of the Islington Boat Club, described the policy committee's decision as "very sad."

He said: "We are quite convinced that the search for an alternative site for the electricity station has not been as intensive as the council makes out. Islington stands to lose nearly an acre of valuable open space."

December 11 1973

## Evening Standard Canal cargoes

THE oil crisis has given a welcome boost to the revival of interest in Britain's inland waterways as a means of freight transport. In terms of fuel consumption, after all, a barge offers four times the efficiency of carrying a cargo by road. What is more, the canals are virtually pollution-free and they don't have to be built; they are already there, and all they need is to be sufficiently improved to take larger craft.

Two recent decisions promise well for the British Waterways Board's efforts to expand its commercial operations. Environment Secretary Geoffrey Rippon has now allowed a Bill to go forward in Parliament which will authorise the Board to modernise part of the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation—a scheme which will permit 700-ton barges to go as far as Rotherham. And the GLC has joined forces with the Board to finance a marketing study on the feasibility of widening the Grand Union Canal from Rickmansworth to Brentford. Ultimately, it is hoped, this would divert a great deal of heavy dock-bound lorry traffic from London's roads.

If Mr Rippon also shows himself willing to finance the £3,000,000 Sheffield plan once the Bill is passed, the outlook for the waterways will indeed be rosier than it has been for decades.

## Anti-boat campaign

WITH THE restoration of the Basingstoke Canal now under way, a campaign is being launched by Dogmersfield Parish Council to oppose the use of motor boats which, it is claimed, "would ruin the canal for everyone else."

## Thanks

1. To STAN THOMAS who has rebuilt the diesel engine in the WRG J4 bus, at a very considerable saving to the Group.
2. To CRICK GRUNDY for very kindly loaning us the 2" pump in use at the Droitwich Dig.
3. To MR CROSS of Cross Rent-aTipper Ltd of Southall for making available a low-load trailer used for moving dumpers and pumps to the Droitwich Dig.
4. To all those who have supported the WRG Book Service - this additional income is very valuable to us at this time...we know its a bit late for Christmas...but why not let us help you spend your present money.

## FOR SALE

### Tee Shirts

White with black lettering 'I dig canals'

Black with silver lettering 'I dig canals'

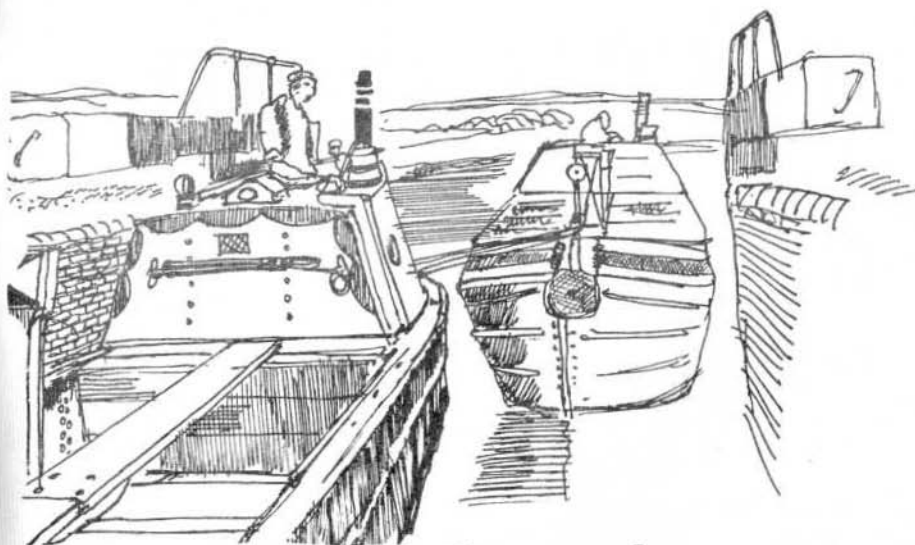
Size: large, medium, small £1 each

Badges 'I dig canals' 5p )

'Waterway Recovery Group' 5p ) + s3c

'Droitwich Dig' 5p )

Orders to Jim Woolgar, 56 Connaught Crescent, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey.



## Organisers

WEY & ARUN C.S.-South

ANGUS MACKINTOSH

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Cranleigh, Surrey. Cranleigh 3774.

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K&A TRUST - BATH A.SHAWE-TAYLOR  
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Trowbridge 5143

K&A TRUST-READING DEREK BLAZDELL  
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K & A TRUST JUNIOR DIVISION  
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PEAK FOREST C.S.-Marple PETE STOCKDALE  
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UPPER AVON PROJECT DAVID HUTCHINGS  
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NARROW BOAT TRUST BERNARD HALES  
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Burton Joyce 3276.



# NAVVIES GEAR

## ALL PRICES INCLUSIVE OF POSTAGE

### WADERS

Thigh boots, heavy construction - ideal for lock work ... .. £5.75 pr.

### WELLINGTON BOOTS

- a) Mens - steel toe cap & mid sole.. all sizes ... .. £4.80 pr.  
 b) Mens - designed for site work.... all sizes ... .. £2.80 pr.  
 c) Ladies-black shiny finish,light.. all sizes ... .. £2.80 pr.

### WATERPROOF COATS

Made from flexible non-crack PVC coated fabric, resistant to abrasion and tearing... sizes: small, medium, large.

- Full length coat ..... £3.80 each  
 Jacket ..... £2.90 each  
 Trousers to match ..... £2.40 pr.

### HEAVY-DUTY SAFETY HELMETS

Manufactured to BS:2826, adjustable headband-colours, white, black, yellow, green  
 Small or large sizes ..... £1.00 each

### WORK GLOVES

- a) Leather palm, cotton back & wrist ..... £0.38 pr.  
 b) PVC grey-green; knitted wrist - waterproof ..... £0.38 pr.  
 c) PVC red gauntlet - mens sizes ..... £0.75 pr.

### DONKEY JACKETS

- a) 32oz shower-proof melton ..... £4.50 each  
 b) 36oz melton; PVC on shoulders, elbows & cuffs ..... £5.30 each  
 Chest sizes - small, medium, large, 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 on neck & wrist. Seams welded & overstitched. Yellow only. Sizes small, medium, large ..... £3.50 each

### "T" SHIRTS

- White with black lettering.. "I Dig Canals" ..... £1.00 each  
 Black with silver lettering "I Dig Canals" ..... £1.00 each  
 Sizes small, medium, large

### BADGES

- a) "I DIG CANALS" - white background, red lettering ... ..\* £0.05 each  
 b) "Waterway Recovery Group" - silver lettering on black ... ..\* £0.05 each  
 c) "Droitwich Dig" - white lettering, red background ... ..\* £0.05 each  
 \*\*\*IMPORTANT -when ordering badges only, enclose S.A.E

All above items offered at minimum prices, therefore subject to change without notice. Please allow 3-4 weeks for deliver of bulky items. ORDERS PLEASE TO JIM WOOLGAR, 56, Connaught Crescent, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey. Please send remittance with order. Postal Orders/cheques etc made out to WATERWAY RECOVERY GROUP. Don't forget to state size and colour etc.

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