

LONDON WRG NEWS



**Issue 79:
June 2015**

Editors Note:

It's been a varied six months in canal restoration, ranging from happy to sad.

The happy news is that "Boats to use coal canal in Paulton for the first time 117 years" (see image below from the Somerset Guardian). The canal society have reopened a 400m section of its Radford and Paulton branch, closed since 1898 as part of the Radford Canal Festival. Hopefully LWRG will get to Somerset again soon to help them make further progress towards realising the dream of reopening the canal all the way to Dundas.

The sad news is of the death of Frank Wallder—overleaf is a brief obituary from Sophie Smith. It would be lovely to hear from others

their tales of life restoring canals with Frank (for example, how did the "what would Frank say?" t-shirt come into being?)

However, through it all there have been many people putting in lots of work on the canals. Including lots of new faces—I hope to meet you all in person soon.

Helena Rosiecka

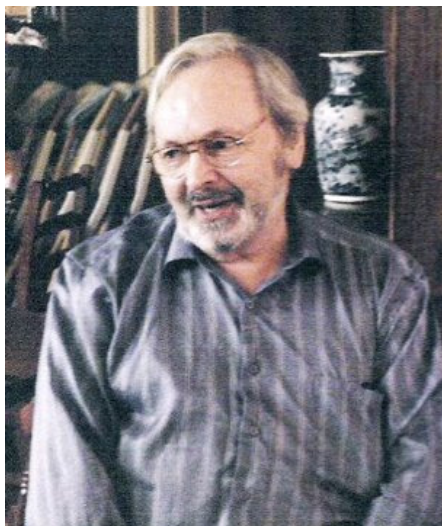


Date	Site	Leader
4/5th July	Ashby de la Zouch canal	Steve D (with KESCRG)
7/8th August	Basingstoke	Moose H
12/13th September	Cotswolds Canal, Gloucestershire	Pete F
3/4th October	TBC	TBC
24/25th October	Wey and Arun Canal, Surrey	Helena R / Tim L
7/8th November	Uttoxeter Canal, Staffordshire	WRG Central
5/6th December	Cotswold Canal, Gloucestershire	TBC (with KESCRG)

OBITUARY—FRANK WALLDER (1ST AUGUST)

I'm sorry to say Frank Wallder passed away on 1st August after battling several health problems in the last 2-3 years.

I had a difficult introduction to WRG and found my first camp very tough but Frank did a great marketing job for London WRG and persuaded me to come along for a weekend dig with them. I had a terrific time just as he'd told me I would. So I guess I have him to thank for all the great experiences I've had subsequently on the waterways. Thanks Frank.



Frank was in cavity walls for many years, something we've all had a laugh about. He also sold posh chocolates to Fortnum and Mason. What I only found out recently is that he was a very active hockey player for many decades before getting involved with the waterways, and went all over Europe playing matches. As he's become increasingly ill over the last few years it's really emerged that he's got a lot of long-standing friends who he's known for decades from the various activities he's been involved with.

Frank gave me a book shortly before he died and when I opened it, an old black and white photo fell out which showed him standing in a potato field in Belgium wearing lederhosen. It seems he picked them up on a drunken teenage rampage around the continent during the 50's. Unfortunately his outfit managed to terrify the Belgians, who thought the Germans were trying to invade them again.

I know Frank missed working on the waterways and regretted not being able to participate as his health didn't allow it these last couple of years. He particularly regretted that he wouldn't get the chance to boat through Eisey, as the Cotswolds was a project he particularly enjoyed working on. I hope we all get a chance to do that on his behalf.

Sophie Smith



17/18TH JANUARY 2015 (CHELMER AND BLACKWATER)

Collected key and emergency loo from the lock keeper and picked a bedroom for me, plus a separate one for the cook. Got to the Jolly Sailor to find Peter Foord finishing his dinner. Everyone arrived before closing, even the van that had to pick up the food that was pre-ordered.

After getting the kit/food to the Haybay we mostly returned to the pub. Toast was the next mission of the day, followed by bed.

Paul found that the oven was very slow (sorry I didn't know). So breakfast and the beginning of the day was a little late. A few people went to help Roy the local with the work boat Buddy. We were all working by 10, so it wasn't the latest start I have seen!

We were hunting the towpath. It had become a narrow muddy track, but would become its usual 6-8' wide by the end of the weekend. Bob Crow (no relation) used his chainsaw to clear a space for the chipper, whilst oth-

ers brush cut. A team went down to use the DR, bow saws and loppers whilst another set up the burco.

Helen got to pull, whilst helping an awkward tree that needed felling. The chippings were used to soak up some of the muddiest sections. We were continuing the towpath works that BitM, Essex and the local work parties had started in December. From Maldon Tesco toward Heybridge was nearly completed by the time we left.

Sophie's dinner was lovely as always. Because so few London wrg award trophies had made the journey, we decided to award them at the next dig. Which meant we could go to the pub.

Sunday was a bit more on time, but I still managed to capture the beautiful sunrise. I was told to empty the pub car park by 08:30 as there was a military vehicle display in aid of charity. This made picking up people more fun. But we were all in the van (except

I forgot Peter) by 09:00. We saw two military vehicles pass us at 09:08 (glad that timing wasn't critical for their engagement!).

The hedge trimmer was the only extra tool that got an outing compared to Saturday. We had both DRs* running most of the time to get the grass back under control. Thank you to everyone that made

the dig easy to run and enjoyable. We got a lot of work done and the towpath will recover and be a lot easier to maintain and mow for the Essex Waterways team.

Adrian Crow

* It is a bit like an industrial trimmer, but on a pair of wheels

7/8TH FEBRUARY 2015 (WEY & ARUN)

* WRG Dumper One this is Air Traffic Control. You are clear to take off *

Sure, the quote above is mainly an example of how long-distance dumper drivers occupy their minds while hammering along at all of 20mph in top gear. But what exactly were we doing driving dumpers on an airfield anyway?

Well, it goes back – not just to a good idea the previous evening in the pub, but to the Second World War...

"Bandits spotted at three o'clock. Scramble the dumper squadron!"

No, not quite. What actually happened during the war was that one of many new RAF airfields was built at Dunsfold, near the Surrey / Sussex border, on a site that landed slap bang across the A281 main road. Even in those long-off days of relatively little motor traffic this would have made driving interesting, so they diverted the road. This left two stub-ends of the old road leading into the airfield, which were rebuilt

as access roads. One of them crossed the already long-abandoned Wey & Arun Canal near the Compasses pub, and the old road bridge across the deep canal cutting was replaced by an earth embankment with a small culvert for the residual water flow.

Fast forward (which is something dumpers don't really do) to the 21st Century, and the Wey & Arun Canal Trust (having already reopened a big chunk of canal in Sussex and looking for new bits to restore) started looking at the canal's summit level, and in particular the bit that runs past Dunsfold. Having cleared two lengths of canal, they want to link them together to create a mile-long restored section that they can put a public trip-boat on. And to do this they need to turn that embankment back into a road bridge.

The main bridge construction will be done by contractors but there's lots of preparation work that vol-

unteers can do – including creating a building site compound, and a temporary access road for lorries and machinery. And that’s what London WRG and KESCRG were there to do.

Now as it happens our accommodation was in Dunsfold village, which is the opposite side of the airfield. So having arrived on Friday evening and acquainted ourselves with the traditional Surrey pub (and its traditional Surrey prices – although we’ll be prepared to put up with them if the landlord can arrange for every weekend to begin with us watching England win a Rugby match on his telly!) come Saturday morning we were heading in convoy down the other one of the two remnants of the old main road that are now access roads leading into the airfield.

We’d been warned that we might have to explain to ‘Security’ what we were up to. Those of us who are used to airports speculated about whether we’d all have to be x-rayed, how long it would take to put all our kit on the conveyor belt, and whether a machete or a chainsaw counted as a blade “longer than 5 centimetres” for this purpose. But in fact it consisted of a bod in a hut asking if we knew where we were going (we resisted

the temptation to say “to the south coast in about 20 years at this rate”) and waving us through.

A quick drive (albeit not as quick as some – see later) around the perimeter road took us to the splendid new compound where local Dave met us. Soon we had a team clearing vegetation and old fencing from the access road site; another bunch led by Nigel with chainsaw headed off to the far side of the airfield to do some serious vegetation clearance; a third team including Adrian C and Tim climbed up a ladder to continue construction of a canopy attached to the welfare cabin for the all-important purpose of enabling us to drink our tea without getting rained on.



A half-mile run along the airfield roads to the tip site gave the dumper drivers a chance to put their machines through their paces as they took away the cut-down



off time the canopy was nearing completion, we'd made a serious start on the excavation, and Nigel's tree-bashers had presumably bashed plenty of trees – I never actually got as far as finding where

vegetation, stumps, and the start of a serious muck-shift removing spoil from excavations for the base of the roadway. Meanwhile the arrival of a helicopter reminded us that (a) this is still an active airfield and (b) you don't have to argue with the man on the gate if you're Jeremy Clarkson. Yes, this is the airfield where they also film BBC's *Top Gear* – and they were rumoured to be on site.

they were working.

Back at the hall, while Maria cooked us a splendid meal assisted by deputy cook Helena (combining parenting with catering) we held the London WRG AGM – see report elsewhere – and later went out for a pint.

A cue for more fantasising from the dumper team – how fast could you get a Thwaites 3-tonner round the test track? Has the Stig got a WRG Driver Authorisation card? Could we train 'Captain Slow' on the vibrating roller?

Meanwhile another team including Tasterella and Fran had got to work painting the wooden fence around the compound a nice fetching shade of green (*see front cover*), and yet another group involving Pete and Moose were putting together some scaffolding railings and Heras fencing either side of the roadway. By knocking-



Sunday's formalities at the security gate were even briefer, and we were soon on site and pressing on with the muck-shift as well as applying the second coat of green paint and more scrub-bashing. A couple of trial holes in the deck of the road embankment uncovered a buried pipe (which will have to be relocated) as expected; meanwhile the rather less expected discovery of the odd electric cable made the roadway digging job more interesting. A need to fetch more scaffold poles for the railings from Tickners stores (at the far side of the airfield) made for some interesting steering on the tight corners as they were about three times the length of the dumper. How would Clarkson & Co have got on, we wondered...

Meanwhile a model aircraft club (whose models included several jets) provided something else for the dumper team to race against, as the excavation gathered pace. With both dumpers hard at work on this job, filling in the hole with hardcore to form the roadway was done the old-fashioned way with shovels and barrows.

Final job for the day was to shift the rather large amounts of muck that were adhering to the digger and dumpers, which were due to go back to the hire company – who are known to take a fairly strict line on vehicles being cleaned before they're returned at the end of the weekend. (I bet Richard Hammond never has to



do that!) At least we had the services of a water hose and the London WRG pressure nozzle (one of the items in the Really Useful Stuff box that's so useful I don't recall us ever having used it before).

Handy hint: it's a good idea to take off your shoulder camera bag before pressure-washing a digger. Even handier hint: when you've done so, it's an even better idea to place it far enough away that you can't score a direct hint on it with the pressure hose...

Anyway the camera was OK and by the time I got back to the hall everyone else had done an excellent job of clearing up and packing, and I hope I didn't manage to drip too much as I got changed into some dry clothes.

My thanks to everyone on the dig, from both London WRG and KESCRG; especially to Steve for helping with the leadership; to Maria, Helena, Paul and anyone

else who helped with the cooking and shopping; to Rozalia for not making too much din; to Tim and Pete for chairing the meeting and taking the minutes; to Sally from Wey & Arun Canal Trust for cakes; and to anyone I've forgotten.

Oh, and thanks to WACT for a good supply of varied work for the weekend. This is going to be an interesting project over the next couple of years, as the Trust puts together a serious programme of work.

Speaking of which, I remember when *Top Gear* was a serious programme. Mind you, I also remember when the Wey & Arun Canal restoration was largely seen as a bit of light entertainment, even by its fans. How times change...

Martin Ludgate
(Images: Martin Ludgate)

Making it all worthwhile, below is a letter of thanks for the work done:

Hi Martin,

Could you please pass on our thanks to everyone who was at the camp last weekend at Compasses. We are really grateful to you all for turning up and helping out push on with the preparations for the bridge replacement. Whether it was filling sandbags, making the wooden awning, painting the compound screening, concreting, brushcutting and clearance by the slipway, moving muck and making the access track - all these tasks were dealt with in a professional manner and with enthusiasm.

I do hope everyone enjoyed the weekend and we will see you all soon.

Sally Schupke
Chair, Wey & Arun Canal Trust

AGM MINUTES—8TH FEBRUARY 2015

Present:

Martin Ludgate, Tim Lewis, David Miller, Paul Ireson, Pete Fleming, Fran Burrell, Adrian Crow, Helena Rosiecka, Rozalia Rosiecka, Maria Hearn-den, Moose Hearnden, Alan Lines, Valerie Goodwin, Iain Corbin, Helen Dobbie, Adrian Sturgess, Stephen Davis, Anne Searing, Inka Roszkowska, Laura Gilmore, Nigel Lee, Matthew Ward Baines, Rebecca Winson.

Apologies:

None declared.

Future Dig Dates:

See page 2 - Note: locations and names marked with * are provisional and not yet confirmed. Possible other sites include Shrewsbury & Newport, Buckingham, Wilts & Berks, Ashby, and Lapal.

Other Business:

- ⇒ **Weekend costs** - It was agreed that £10 still covers weekend food normally (numbers dependent) so no increase was required at this time. To continue to be monitored with feedback from leaders/cooks.
- ⇒ **Van costs** – These remain capped at £10. Martin is monitoring this and claiming additional money from funds when required. Considered benefit of van for transporting tools far outweighs costs.
- ⇒ **Cavalcade/Little Venice 2015** - Level of funds is deemed to be sufficient (see below under finance) so it was agreed that there was no specific need to undertake fundraising at this years event. The option of utilising NB Fulbourne is available for the decorated boat. Theme for the event will be confirmed.
- ⇒ **Finances** - Current value of funds as of 06 Feb 15 - £1070.18. This takes into account all current known expenditure.
- ⇒ **Socials** - *ACTION: Tim Lewis and Paul Ireson to try and identify a more central, welcoming location.* Socials will be advertised more going forward but will generally remain on a Tuesday 2 weeks prior to the dig.
- ⇒ **Publicity** - Helena has sourced printed business cards that give the contact details for the group. People are encouraged to take a number of these for distribution to interested people. A stock will also be kept in the van with some left for passing round at summer camps.
ACTION: Helena will work up a leaflet design.
- ⇒ **Tools** - As two wrecking bars seem to have been lost it was considered to be worth replacing these. *ACTION: Pete to investigate costs.* The need for goggles for use with the Stihl saw, a hardcase box to keep the brush cutter helmet in as its mesh keeps getting squashed, and for new hi-vis vests with LWRG on them were raised. *ACTION: Pete to source goggles, a hardcase box and the price of hi-vis vests.*
- ⇒ **Catering kit** - *ACTION: Maria to source chopping boards, stirring spoons, tin openers and a plastic rolling pin.*

Pete Fleming

"All this talk of catering reminds me of how we used to do it in the olden days..."

Tim Lewis



LWRG Awards 2014: Nominations and Winners

Possibly slightly abridged
nominations list as I have
lost the final version...

Lame Excuse

- Tim Lewis For missing SCC due to being lame (dodgy knee)
Tim Lewis For going BOATING for 3 months to avoid having to go on any digs! (**WINNER**)
Helena Rosiecka For missing W&A for being 8.5 months pregnant, and SCC due to having a baby.
Inka Ro For not attending any digs the first half of the year due to being abroad studying

Doughnut

- Hamon Stewart For attempting to poke his own eye out with a stick at SCC.
Joseph Atwill For falling face first in the mud at the Cotswolds (next one down from Ham Mill) having sunk over the depth of his wellies. (**WINNER**)

Driving

- Alan Lines For driving to the Utoxeter dig the weekend before the event (and then again when it was actually on) (**WINNER**)
Paul Ireson For leaving Fran at Waterloo (and then going back for her later)
Martin Ludgate For driving the van to and from the Christmas dig with Rozalia screaming in the back

Bricklaying

- Rob Brotherston For efforts at Ham Mill (**WINNER**)

New Recruit

- Peter Foord For being new to LWRG this year
Amber Jenkins For volunteering when its also the day job
Matthew W-B For being new and then for managing to convince his girl-friend to come too (**WINNER**)
Rozalia Roziecka For doing her first dig 3 months old

Catering

- Sophie /Martin D For producing venison at the SCC
Anne L/Sophie S For organising the cooking at the Xmas weekend dig
Moose Hearnden For hiding the black pudding from the breakfast chefs then telling them off for not cooking it at Basingstoke (**WINNER**)
Colin W/Chris B For cooking breakfast by torchlight at Shrewsbury and Newport
George Rogers For managing to get the kitchen clean enough to cook in at BCN

Leadership

- Helena Rosiecka For leading a dig when 8 months pregnant (**WINNER**)
George Rogers For guessing the fire alarm code at Chesterfield

LONDON WRG SOCIAL (10TH MARCH 2015)

We decided at the AGM to have a go at reinstating the London WRG pub evenings, which used to happen on the Tuesday 11 days before each working party.



These died out last year because everyone was away boating or whatever. Here's a picture from the first of a new series of evenings.

If any of you who are in London fancy a pint or two 11 days before a dig we will be in the Star Tavern, 6 Belgrave Mews West, Belgravia, London SW1X 8HT from about 7.30pm onwards.

Martin Ludgate

28TH FEBRUARY/1ST MARCH 2015 (COTSWOLDS)

David Miller (ably leading) was a model of quiet diplomacy and let folks be more or less self determining, and play to their strengths. When asked he gave a definite command eg 'Get back down there and knock out some bricks'. I'm joking. But the sub-text was there.

Weather was remarkably clement, with the sun in a blue sky until about 3pm on the Sunday when the rain stopped play. Food was as usual beyond compare, with Sophie and her beautiful companion Rachel M being

super fab in the kitchen; the spag bol and tiramisu was extremely well received. I myself was on the 2nd month of no sugar so had to forego the lemon shortbread and italian sweet, but it looked perfection. And was, judging from the reactions of the sugar eaters.

- ◆ Alan Lines: tiffing and taking the photos.
- ◆ Martin Ludgate : brick laying on the vet's side. And winning an award for 'just a three hour monologue' on the Saturday night. Quite a feat.
- ◆ Tim Lewis : wielding the Sunday portion of power cutters on the ladder recess, and being the 'where is the thing that I can't see but is literally an arm's length away' champion.



This was either sandwich bags, van keys, or Iain.

- ◆ Fran Burrell : brick removal par excellence.
- ◆ Colin Whitcombe: concrete mixing and all round good egg, and in fact, that was literally the case as the breakfast eggs were indeed lovely.
- ◆ Inka Roszkowska : the most photographed of the whole weekend, brick remover and concrete spreader.
- ◆ Martin Danks and Bob Metcalf: concrete kings and other quiet tenacious tasks.
- ◆ Iain Corbin: arbortech maestro, and despite being warned by a whole succession of folk, was able to wield the tricky beast without mishap. Also ladder recess supremo on Saturday.
- ◆ Valerie Goodwin aka Verity aka Taster aka 'No sugar and get that sweet thing away from me'. Beavering away with the bolster and hammer, some of which were heroically reclaimed by the plucky Joe. In wellies.
- ◆ George Rogers: not in a red morph suit, and often not wearing enough clothes for the chilly

breezes imo. Working away on the concrete and other skilled work.

- ◆ Rachel Malham : not feeling well but a really warm and generous kitchen lady, offering to wash the brew kit which went beyond the normal wrg protocol.
- ◆ Richard Thomas: the ultimate hero who fetches and carries and just goes hither and yon, making sure folk had bricks, mortar and buckets emptied. Concrete mixer.. all round saint.
- ◆ Rob and Phil, the Devonians, so busy laying bricks they kept missing calls for brews and snacks.
- ◆ Sophie Smith : the angel of the apron. And always a kind word and came and shifted bricks on site on Sunday.
- ◆ Paul Ireson : in waders, getting amongst it and making sure those heavy lock gates (ruins of) were tirdored away.
- ◆ Rachel Petrie ,Joseph Atwill and Laura Jane were the usual 'quietly getting stuff done' team.
- ◆ Rebecca Winson and Matthew





Baines arrived Friday but had to shoot off on Saturday morning as a friend was in car trouble.

The plan for work for the weekend was as follows:-

1. "90% of the bricks on the towpath side of the lock have now been taken out. We need to take out the rest and start 'dog toothed' recesses. Also the ladder recess needs further cutting out". Done! Paul was well chuffed with what we got done, thanks to the arbor-tech magic of Mr Corbin and his team of shifters.
2. "Bricklaying on the non-towpath side if it's dry enough". Started! About 5 rows done by each of the brickies (we had three most of the time).
3. "Removal of a lot of spoil and bricks to Brimscombe Port". Fran and the team shifted all that guff.
4. "Jon will be cutting up the old lockgate at the weekend and we need to remove then from the lock, maybe with Tirfor". Done! And weirdly the lock gate (what was left of it) lying on the towpath looked like a tree again, as if its life had gone full circle.
5. "The concreting of the top cill": Bob Metcalf was among the team spreading and mixing and pouring concrete. The bottom layer was a brick one, with wire on top, then a screed of concrete. I know some of you like all these tool talk details.

Other news: Jigsaw done, some folk stayed up really late and set the world to rights, others got up mega early and jigsawed or kindly started breakfast (Paul and Colin).

Big thanks to all, and well led David.

Val Goodwin

(Images: Val Goodwin and Alan Lines)

21ST/22ND MARCH 2015 (CHESTERFIELD)

I failed in my editorial duties here—
All I know is that George Rogers was
the able leader, they burnt Tim's cam-
era, had a group photo in the accom-
modation and Mandy Morley had a
bubble bath when she got home....

CAPTION COMPETITION



18/19TH APRIL 2015 (BCN CLEAN-UP)

... Then I failed on this one too—look
out for a report in the next issue of
Navvies (271)....

16/17TH MAY 2015 (COTSWOLDS)

... Anyone noticing a trend here? No
dig report. Realising just how hard it
is to get reports written by people if
not there in person to nag.

ATTENTION - if you were at Cavalcade this year: An appeal from
the Met Police with reference to the Little Venice and surrounds

POLICE APPEAL: "Has anyone seen a yellow stick, since the
1/05/15 approx 1.5 meters long, its similar to a spirit level, it has
straight edges. Police are interested in recovering this item in rela-
tion to the body found in the canal on 10/05/2015. If you think you
may have information that may help us please get in touch with
my team on 020 8785 8244, or call Crimestoppers, anonymously
on 0800 555 111."

17/18TH JUNE 2015 (CHELMER AND BLACKWATER)

The joys of being the weekend dig organiser and also the van driver meant that after getting a message from Martin L that Head Office had the van that I would need to arrange to pick it up during the week before the dig.

By Tuesday before the dig and a proposed rail strike starting on Thursday evening I arranged to pick the van up from Tring on the Wednesday after it's excursion to the Lancaster Boat Festival. But plans had to be changed as FEH had a clutch failure and Jenny Morris having to make arrangements to bring EHP down to Head office along with the London WRG kit for me to pick up on Thursday. After this conversation, I sent a text to Tim saying that I had a can and I could still do the pick-up. Reply was "You won't get much kit in a can".

So by Friday I had the van and Martin's boots which I had to extract from FEH in the garage while it was on the ramp. So after doing the shopping and several traffic delays I arrived at Waterloo to pick up Tim and Aileen and then proceeded to Tottenham Hale to pick up Laura. But due to the earlier delays and managing to hit every traffic light on the A10 at red, so we were 50 minutes late to pick up Laura who at least had a book to

read and as we were unlikely to arrive at Heybridge at the time I planned to pick up the accommodation keys, I asked Tim to text Nigel if he could get the keys.

The text messages went as follows:

Tim to Nigel – Can you pick up the keys from the lick cottage.

Nigel to Tim – Where is the cottage?

Tim to Nigel – Besides the lick.

We won't ask why Tim's predictive text prefers Lick to Lock. Following arrival we all retired to the Jolly Sailor to await the arrival of Dave Miller who managed to get a sneaky pint before the pub closed for the night.

Saturday morning after breakfast we all went to the lock boatyard to start the excavation of the path ready for the construction of the bays. Bob Crow and Nigel operated the multi-purpose unit which Essex Waterways use for various tasks like small excavation and canal side grass cutting. This raised operating issues as the controls are very different from a normal machine and the added complication of working underneath the brow of a concrete boat which overhang the line of the path. Meanwhile Laura, Matt & Rebecca were sent to strim an area behind the boats in the dock to enable us to scatter any hard-core extracted from the path and surrounding area.

Lunch was taken back at the Hay-

bay and the afternoon tasks were to finish off the bays and start the first concrete pour. Helen and Tim manned the mixers while the rest of us barrowed the mixtures over the lock gates and around the back of the dock until we could reach where it was required. This normally took at least two stints with a rest halfway to the recoup. Nigel, Wendy and Aileen were the smoothing and tampering team. This routine was disrupted twice due to the locking in of vessels through the sea lock which also required some assistance from us to operate the gates. So we

stopped after completing one of the bays.

Sunday, we started at 8:30 on site and continued the same procedure as Saturday afternoon but with Mat replacing Tim on the mixer for intervals. Helen was being occasionally distracted by a motor biker policeman who resides on one of the boats as well as other motor-bike riders who frequented the track besides the mixers. We were joined by Martin returning from his Dutch trip. Lunch was once again taken on the Haybay with the added bonus of Martin's birthday cake

Before and After—A good weekends work



along with tubs of ice cream. Mat and Rebecca left us after lunch, so I took over on one of the mixers.

We managed another three and half bays before the locking out of the vessels prevented movement of stuff. When the fourth bay was finished I was persuaded that the team were happy to continue and finish one more bay. When that bay was finished the ballast pile had been severely reduced by the two day work and we left the locals to finish off the last two remaining bays at their leisure.

I would like to thank everyone who attended the weekend from both WRG and Essex Waterways and managing to achieve so much.

Paul Ireson



27/28TH JUNE 2015 (TOOL PAINTING)

AKA a dig weekend I thought I could actually be useful whilst having Rozalia in tow and 'on site'. Only downside was the minimum of 4 hours travel to get there. To reduce the epicness of this we split the journey by staying overnight at Sophies; not realising that that shortened day ones journey but added an extra hour on the next morning when it was another two hours to the boatyard. Oh well, I was fed spaghetti and given a bed.

Once at the boatyard on Saturday morning (around tea break) I deposited Rozalia on her picnic blanket and joined in the painting. Soon though I realised that whilst I was being useful Rozalia was seriously distracting the others by bum shuffling off her blanket and attempting to eat rusty nails.

Luckily by that point Maria had emptied out all the catering boxes – so we put Rozalia in one of the bigger ones with all her toys. And there she contentedly stayed for several hours. Meanwhile the rest of us painted stuff red. Occasionally getting a bit too enthusiastic as Maria kept having to take her and Moose's personal tools off us (often too late).

Moose who tried to convince passers-by that we were having a garage sale – all but one of the

passers-by were bright enough to realise that you don't have a garage sale whilst simultaneously painting everything a uniform red and white striped pattern. The one that didn't wanted to buy a coal scuttle – not even sure why we own one!



dry overnight we headed to Mooses boat for a cuppa and a wash before heading off to the Indian for dinner. At this stage we waved goodbye to John H as he had other business to deal with that evening. The Indian was lovely – though they didn't possess a high chair so

After lunch, when I was mocked for the phrase "Put that down and eat your banana", I took Rozalia for a tour of the boatyard to convince her to sleep. This worked so well that after I parked up her pram and returned to work Tim could also be seen dozing whilst leaning against the pram.

keeping Rozalia under control was a mission until Moose solved the problem by playing "grab the menu" with her.

The afternoons painting had added intricacy – we had to do the white stripes whilst the red was still a bit damp. This led to some lovely red and pink tools. Fran, Sophie and I were happy with that outcome but Moose less so.

The next day we finished painting the bits we had missed (and some more of Moose and Maria's personal tools. Then started sorting everything back into vans. As Rozalia no-longer had a catering box to sit in (it being full of catering kit) we decided to start out 4 hour journey home and leave Martin, Tim, Paul, Helen, Moose and Maria to finish off the packing.

Once everything was painted and packed away into the garage to

All in all a wonderfully relaxing weekend. My thanks go out to Moose and Maria for accommodating us (and catering) and to Helen for providing Rozalia and I with a boat to sleep on. Lastly, thanks to everyone else for painting things red and white in a cheerful manner.



Helena Rosiecka

(Images: John Hawkins and Martin Ludgate)

Rozalia Tool Painting

Mummy's taking me tool painting
To a place in Essex called St Margaret's
We are having a stopover at Sophie's
So additional rest is the target

Sophie has several cats
But there not the shape of Mandy
I will wait for mum to turn her back
And offer them all candy

We arrive at the boatyard
And look from the pram all around
And see that all the kit
Is spread out on the ground

All these new toys out in front
My playtime I thought would be great
But then mummy lifted me up
And placed me in a crate

Pulling myself up on the side
To escape was a bit of a struggle
But If I make enough of a noise
It resulted in several cuddles

Mummy and Sophie are turning red
From the brushes and the tools
And leaning everything on a bench
To prevent that any should fall

The evening visit to the Indian
I must not cause any dread
So I eat lots of poppadum's
And piles of Naan bread



My sleeping arrangements are set
Mummy and I are staying on Helen's boat
Then we can show to daddy
That his daughter is a float

Next morning after breakfast
They laid the gear on the ground
And I am left in the pram
With the Tirfor gear around

The gear is loaded into vans
While I am put back in a box
So I clean it for mummy
By using my feet and socks

So I have done my 1st tool painting
And I am less red than my mother
So we need to look at the calendar
For me to do another

*Communicated by Rozalia Rosiecka
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