



Press Release

19th of August, 2017

Restoration of Dudley No2 Canal in Selly Oak Park

The Lapal Canal Trust is focused on restoring the Dudley No 2 Canal from Selly Oak to California where it is planned to build a marina with new homes. It will be a significant regeneration project creating employment and becoming a tourist attraction.

For the 2nd year we were very pleased that the Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) of the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) had accepted our request to help with our restoration project. The volunteers arrived on Saturday the 29th of July and finished on the 5th of August. We completed the work started last year on repairing and reinstating the brick canal wall in Harborne Wharf, and in addition, two large tree stumps were removed from the wall on the West side of the bridge.

The team with team leader Ian Gaston arrived on Saturday and settled into the accommodation provided by the Stonehouse Gang; first thing Sunday morning they were busy getting the site ready, preparing the bricks for reuse and starting to remove the three lots of tree roots.

Brick cleaning and delivery of equipment and materials



On Monday morning Selco delivered the excavator, followed by the skip and the tons of ballast, sand, cement, and lime ordered. These were carefully stored under the old bridge.

Removal of large tree root and beautiful repair of wall

Work started on repairing the brick wall, only to find a large tree root that had damaged the wall, this was carefully removed and this section of the wall and the concrete cap replaced. On Tuesday they started to pour the concrete for the wall with this task completed on Wednesday.



Removal of tree root from 50 year old ash tree.

This turned out to be the largest most challenging task with the roots of the 50-year-old ash tree having damaged an 8 metre length of canal wall, it was more work and damage than we had expected but nothing stands in the way of a determined WRG volunteer!





Removal of third tree root.

The tree stump was again large, but the wall was protected by large sandstone foundation stones. Our Archeologist believes the stones were probably salvaged from Weoley Castle when this section of canal was built in 1796. Unfortunately we also had to contend with disturbing a wasp's nest.



Repairing 20 metres of wall

This year the group completed the repair of a further 20 metres of wall with bricks removed, cleaned and replaced, so a 50-metre length of wall has now been completely restored so that this stretch of canal is closer

to having water. This year's camp has 3 students working for Duke of Edinburgh Awards. As well as first timers interested in learning new skills we have very experienced volunteers working to the highest professional standards. Experts at using a wide range of equipment with building skills to match. One of our volunteers, trained as an aerospace engineer, and normally works for another canal society. He has 15 years volunteering experience and we were very grateful for his help. For the 2nd year, in addition to Ian we were pleased to welcome Dave who drove the excavator and Bev our cook who is also an expert bricklayer.



Big thanks and evening out in Birmingham

On Tuesday evening the Lapal Canal Trust was pleased to host a dinner in the city center. Thanks to Cathy and Dave and narrow boat Bosworth Lady. They generously agreed to collect the volunteers from Selly Oak and transported them to Gas Street Basin in the center of Birmingham. Perhaps the beginning of a regular service when the canal is opened.



A work camp is a significant operation, a lot of careful planning before starting, method sheets and risk assessment forms to be prepared and materials and equipment ordered. Thanks also to Terry Stanton our Chairman and especially to Peter Fisher LCT Technical Officer for his tireless help during the week and now busy planning further work.

In addition to thanking the Inland Waterway Association and their volunteers, we would like to thank the many organisations who supported us. Rod Green who arranged accommodation at the Stonehouse Gang Club, Chris Wallace who gave us access to the Scout Hut facilities (toilets and kitchen) and also our friendly neighbour Michael Winwood who gave us a water connection and free electricity. Alex Jones who provided archaeological supervision and report. Cathy and Dave who arranged a boat trip to Birmingham for the volunteers. Places for People Leisure for the welcome given to our volunteers to use the showers in Harborne Pool and Fitness Centre and Coombeswood Canal Trust who provided the fuel for the excavator. Also Canal and River Trust for their general support for restoration projects, Steve Bond, from BCC's Selly Oak District Highways Team, who arranged for the path to be closed and Sue Amey, Steve Flood and Leo McKevitt of the parks department who arranged for the tree to be cut and gave approval for the work.

In particular, thanks again to the Headley Trust whose grant last year funded the cost of accommodation, equipment hire, and materials.

During the week, our Facebook page reached a total of over 40,000, thanks to everyone who shared, and there was a significant up-lift in the number of followers and likes to over 900, we should reach 1000 by Christmas.

Please follow progress on our web site www.lapal.org and www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust

For queries and higher resolution version of the photos please contact

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