



**Press Release**

8<sup>th</sup> of August, 2016

## Restoration of Dudley No2 Canal in Harborne Wharf

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.

In a significant step forward a group of canal enthusiasts from the Inland Waterways' Waterways Recovery Group descended on Selly Oak for one week of intensive canal restoration work. While mainly focussed on repairing a section of the canal wall, the group also cleared the vegetation that was damaging the bridge, cleared the offside wall and greatly improved the access path. Led by Ian Gaston the team arrived on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July in two new red vans recently bought from donations received. They set up in the Stonehouse Gang Youth Club facilities and started work on Sunday morning. For 13 of the 19 volunteers this was their first experience, a chance to learn new skills of mixing lime mortar, cleaning old bricks for re use, brick laying and pointing.



The volunteers, although missing Bev the cook, a much appreciated member of the team who prepared all the tasty meals and also worked on the canal restoration!



For a number of volunteers this was part of their Duke of Edinburgh's awards programme. The group is very well organised with all the right tools, a cook and a Safety Officer. The group was supported by Lapal Canal Trust volunteers who arranged the facilities, delivery of all the materials, hire of the excavator and skip, and helped on various tasks

### Daily Diary record on Facebook

**Sunday, First day.** Started early and very quickly made amazing progress. Removed the fence and the soil covering the wall to determine the task ahead, also busy cleaning the hundreds old bricks donated to be re-used and cleared years of vegetation hiding and damaging the old bridge. Prepared a secure area for receiving materials on Monday.



*Arriving on site*



*Clearing the wall*



*Removing vegetation damaging the bridge*

**Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> Day.** Another successful day with steady progress, cleaning old bricks for re-use, cleaning and preparing the wall for brick laying and starting to repair the wall by pointing with fresh lime mortar, learning a new skill with great results.



*Starting on repairing the wall*



*Pointing*



*Repair in progress*

**Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Day.** Despite the rain, work continued apace, cleaning bricks and the wall and starting to reassemble, it's a work of art! In the evening it was a pleasure for the Lapal Trust to host a meal for a very friendly group in a Birmingham restaurant, travelling by boat from Selly Oak



*Busy cleaning bricks for reuse*



*Carefully reassembling the stone foundation*



*Boat trip to a Birmingham restaurant*

**Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> Day.** On detailed examination the WRG team decided that a section of the wall needed strengthening with concrete, it was unexpected but they took on the additional task so 4.8 cubic metres of concrete was used with steel reinforcement, it was a lot of wheel barrows but the wall will last for 100 years. They also laid foundations to strengthen the access path. But mostly the focus was on repairing the wall,



*Ongoing wall repair*



*Pouring concrete for wall support*



*Finished concrete support wall*

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> Day.** Long day finishing at 7.30 pm, lots of tasks, mainly brick laying, but also building a retaining wall for the path, removing a large concrete block from the bed of the canal, clearing the off side wall which remains in good condition, and as always cleaning lots of bricks!



*Mixing the large amount of cement used*



*Repairing the top of the wall*



*Building a retaining wall for the access path*

**Friday, 6th and final day.** Rather a sad day, the WRG team came from all over the country and were due to go separate ways after a great week working together. For everyone it was an enjoyable time, I guess there was some stress for Ian the team leader but it was not apparent. The Lapal Trust expectations were greatly exceeded, more wall repaired than expected, access path improved, offside wall uncovered and a very large block of concrete broken up and removed and finally a safety bank reinstated against the wall.



*Uncovered offside wall in good condition*



*Final touches*



*Access path retaining wall using old bricks*



*Park Bridge built in 1797*

A community effort, in addition to Ian Gaston and his team of 19 volunteers we need to thank the Bournbrook Fire Station for pumping water from the canal, district engineers for arranging for the tow path to be closed, Selly Oak Park's management for permission and support, Selco for providing materials and equipment hire at cost, Carey's for donating the temporary fencing, Worcester Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society and Canal & River Trust for support and bricks, Birmingham Canal Navigation Society for agreeing to help with a truck, Coombeswood Canal Trust for diesel fuel for the excavator, and Birmingham University for allowing the group to use their sport centre showers. Also many thanks to Rob Green who arranged accommodation at the Stonehouse Gang Youth Club, Adrian Langley who gave us free access to the Scout Hut facilities (toilets and kitchen), Michael Winwood the kindly neighbour who gave us water and free electricity, along with the many well-wishers who viewed the work and some 2500 who followed the Facebook daily bulletins, Charles Shapcott for preparing the repair scheme used and Alex Jones, Archaeologist, for his watching brief and report (fulfilling a planning condition)

We would also like to thank the Headley Trust for a timely grant award of £30,000 which helped pay for the accommodation, materials and equipment hire and will also fund further work on the restoration project.

Please follow progress on our web site [www.lapal.org](http://www.lapal.org) and [www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust](https://www.facebook.com/lapalcanaltrust)

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