



Milton Keynes Branch



London & South-East Region



The Parks Trust



The Wyvern Shipping Co. Ltd.

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**HUMAN ARM FOUND DURING MILTON KEYNES CANAL CLEAN-UP!
76 volunteers turn out to spring-clean the waterway.**

On 5 – 6 April, members of the Milton Keynes Branch of the Inland Waterways Association were joined by volunteers from local businesses and the public, to give the waterway through the city a thorough spring clean - and the event was registered under the Great British Spring Clean banner. On the Friday, the stretch from Fenny Stratford to Giffard Park (6 miles) was tackled; Saturday's stretch was from Giffard Park to Galleon Wharf, Old Wolverton (4 miles).

A total of 76 volunteers attended over the two days. Attendance on Friday was 55; Saturday 39. 18 volunteers worked both days. Total hours worked was a magnificent 478, not including the many hours spent organising the event. Two children who took part received Certificates of Merit as mementos.

Once again, the event was supported by Canal & River Trust, the navigation authority, who provided safety equipment, workboats, a dredger with crew, and volunteers. Wyvern Shipping Co Ltd (hire boat operators) provided sponsorship, special equipment, and the skippered tug for the hopper (large workboat) from which volunteers grappled for submerged items. The Parks Trust, responsible for the city's open spaces, sent their volunteers. Employees from Leica Geosystems AG and John Lewis also took part, in fulfilment of community service commitments.

Volunteers collected rubbish from the towpath and hedges, leaving it at the water's edge for collection by the hopper crew. Rubbish from the far side of the canal was collected by volunteers working from a pan (shallow-draught workboat) towed by IWA volunteers in their own narrowboat. A tea-boat, crewed also by IWA volunteers, provided much-appreciated refreshments.

The haul amounted to an estimated weight of around eight tons. Finds included the usual supermarket trolleys and bikes, a bed, an airbed, several mattresses, garden chairs, traffic cones, timber, a tennis racquet, boots and shoes, and a kitchen sink. The most bizarre finds were lots of lemons, and an arm from a shop-window mannequin - the rest of her was not found!

At the new Campbell Park marina development, the towpath volunteers were escorted through the site by prior arrangement, giving them the chance to briefly view the site and cross the recently installed three-way bridge. No cleaning-up was done as they passed through the site.

Sonny King, Volunteering Development Coordinator (London and South East), Canal & River Trust, said:

“We are proud to work with such well-established volunteer groups as IWA Milton Keynes Branch, and we are always willing to lend our support to fantastic efforts like the clean-up. There is always a brilliant turnout that is ever increasing, no doubt due to hard work that everyone puts in, and the camaraderie of the event itself. The combined efforts of everyone make a huge difference to our network. It reflects brilliantly our ambition of making life better by water. So a huge thank-you to all of you!”

Thanks are due to local pubs and other businesses who displayed posters, to BBC Three Counties Radio for an interview just prior to the event, and also to the passers-by who praised the volunteers' efforts.

Finally, of course, a big thank-you to all the volunteers who turned out to help return the waterway to how it ought to look, for the enjoyment of everyone, even those who thoughtlessly dump their rubbish.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

About IWA

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA), a registered charity, leads campaigns to conserve, maintain and restore Britain’s network of canal and river waterways. With a membership of around 16,000, IWA provides a strong voice for waterways users, working with navigation authorities, local and national government and other organisations to keep all our waterways alive. Through its extensive national branch network, IWA organises and supports numerous waterways events and activities across the country each year, helping communities to discover, appreciate and enjoy the benefits of their waterways heritage. IWA Milton Keynes Branch has around 400 members living in Milton Keynes, Bedford, Leighton Buzzard, Luton and Dunstable. www.waterways.org.uk

About the Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of over 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation’s third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, navigations and hundreds of important wildlife sites. We believe that living waterways transform places and enrich lives and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature. www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

About The Parks Trust

The Parks Trust is an independent charity that cares for over 6,000 acres of parkland and green space in Milton Keynes, including river valleys, ancient woodlands, lakesides, parks and landscaped areas alongside the main roads, all of which make the city such a great place to live, work and visit. The Trust is also committed to delivering environmental education for both children and adults, and providing exciting leisure and recreation facilities and events. www.theparkstrust.com

Thumbnail images	Higher-res image files accompany this release. Photo credits as given.
	mkcu01 coffee break LF.jpg Friday morning coffee break – we already have a bed, garden chairs and, of course, supermarket trolleys. Picture: Les Franklin.
	mkcu02 hopper lands LF.jpg The hopper crew land for lunch. Picture: Les Franklin.
	More . . .

	<p>mkcu03 campbell pk LF.jpg Towpath party being escorted through Campbell Park marina site. Picture: Les Franklin.</p>
	<p>mkcu04 hopper slewed LF.jpg The hopper and tug are slewed to the far bank to retrieve a heavy item. Picture: Les Franklin.</p>
	<p>mkcu05 from hedge LF.jpg Loading rubbish from just one place in the towpath hedge. Picture: Les Franklin.</p>
	<p>mkcu06 end of the line VD.jpg “End of the line” for the hopper crew. Picture: Vernon Draper.</p>
	<p>mkcu07 the haul LF.jpg The haul at Galleon Wharf, Wolverton. Picture: Les Franklin.</p>
<p>More . . .</p>	



mkcu08 the arm LF.jpg
The mannequin's arm – we didn't find the rest of her!
Picture: Les Franklin.