Get outdoors and dirty!
Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) runs week-long working holidays restoring the canals of England and Wales. WRG’s Canal Camps offer a unique opportunity to volunteer and learn new skills, whilst exploring amazing parts of Britain’s industrial heritage. This year you could find yourself digging out a lock chamber on the Cotswold Canals, using an excavator on the Chesterfield Canal or even clearing vegetation on the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation in Essex.

Tell me more...

Canal Camps are a great experience for anyone who loves being outdoors and enjoys meeting people from different backgrounds and of different ages. Whether you are a complete beginner or have tried your hand at canal restoration before, you will be guided through every task by the Canal Camp leader and their assistant. Volunteers come from all walks of life so why don’t you join us on a Canal Camp and try something completely different in 2015!

Why restore canals?

Now for a bit of history... for sixty years, from the late 18th century onwards, Britain’s inland waterways system expanded to link the country’s rivers, ports, cities and industrial heartlands. Then, with the beginning of the Railway Age, the days of roaring prosperity for the waterways were gone forever with finance being diverted to build railways. By the 20th century canals looked set to become part of history with many abandoned.

Luckily, by the 1940s a few visionaries realised that canals did have a future for pleasure boating, recreation, and industrial archaeology. Since then, hundreds of miles of canals have been saved from dereliction and gradually more and more miles are being brought back to life by volunteer groups around the country. There are still many more miles of derelict waterways and that’s where we need your help!

Each canal camp costs £56... What’s included?

Food
Each day you will be provided with a cooked breakfast, lunch on site and a substantial home-cooked evening meal... along with plenty of tea and cake!

Accommodation
WRG accommodation is best described as basic with volunteers sleeping in one large room in a village hall or Scout hut but you can expect electricity, flushing toilets and dry, draught-free sleeping areas!

Transport
If you arrive by train or bus we will pick you up from the nearest station in one of our big red vans. We also provide travel between the accommodation and site.

Volunteer now

It’s easy to book onto one of our Canal Camps!

• Book online - www.wrg.org.uk
• Call - 01494 783 453 ext. 604
• Use the booking form at the back of this brochure

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“T’ve learnt loads of new skills”

John
“Conserving our heritage is really important”

Jude
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HELP RUN A CANAL CAMP

Our Canal Camps also need leaders and organisers to help run them. Volunteers donate their own holiday time to ensure the next generation of canal volunteers can get involved in restoration in a fun and safe way!

As a WRG Canal Camp leader, assistant or cook you will need to be able to give up a week of your holiday, have some experience of Canal Camps, and most of all be willing to look after (or feed) 18 wonderful volunteers!

To find out how to get involved please email leaders@waterways.org.uk or find out more at www.wrg.org.uk/volunteer

WRG IS PART OF IWA!

WRG is part of the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), the charity dedicated to keeping our waterways alive. IWA and its members are proud to provide support for the high quality restoration achieved by WRG Canal Camps. www.waterways.org.uk

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH WRG:

facebook.com/waterwayrecoverygroup
@wrg_navvies

D OF E AWARD

A Canal Camp is a great way to complete your residential section of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. All volunteers participating in the Award are asked to attend the Camp for the full seven days.

DATES FOR 2015

February
14th-21st February
- Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation CC201501

March/April
28th March-4th April
- Cotswold Canals (Bowbridge) CC201502
- Cotswold Canals (Bowbridge) CC201503

4th-11th April
- Cotswold Canals (Bowbridge) CC201503

18th-19th April
- BCN Cleanup BCN2015

May
9th May
Leaders Training Day LT2015

June
13th-14th June
- Training Weekend-Chesterfield Canal TW2015

July
4th-11th July
- Driffield Navigation CC201504
- Cotswold Canals (NWPG) CC201505

11th-18th July
- Cromford Canal CC201506

18th-24th July
- Cromford Canal CC201508

18th-25th July
- Swansea Canal CC201507
- Cotswold Canals (Bowbridge) CC201509

25th July-1st August
- Monmouthshire Canal CC201510
- Chesterfield Canal CC201511
- Cotswold Canals (Bowbridge) CC201512

August
1st-8th August
- Monmouthshire Canal CC201513
- Chesterfield Canal CC201514
- Cotswold Canals CC201515

8th-15th August
- Lapal Canal CC201516
- Ashby Canal CC201517
- Cotswold Canals CC201518

15th-22nd August
- Lapal Canal CC201519
- Ashby Canal CC201520
- Cotswold Canals CC201521

22nd-29th August
- Shrewsbury & Newport Canals CC201522
- Grantham Canal CC201523
- Stover Canal CC201524

September
29th August-5th September
- Grantham Canal CC201525
- Stover Canal CC201526

5th-12th September
- Grantham Canal CC201527

October
24th-31st October
TBC
- WRG Forestry Camp WRGFT2015
- Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation CC201528

November
7th-8th November
- WRG Reunion Weekend-Uttoxeter Canal BB2015

December
26th December-1st January
TBC
- Christmas Camp CC201529

Find out more www.wrg.org.uk
Monmouthshire Canal

**Location:** South Wales  
**Activities:** Heritage construction and vegetation clearance

The Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny canals played a central role in the industrial revolution of Newport and the surrounding valleys. Over 30 miles of the Mon and Brec have been reopened but it is hoped that the 50 mile link between the Brecon Beacon National Park and South Wales valleys will eventually be restored.

In 2015, volunteers will be helping the Mon & Brec Canals Regeneration Partnership with their ‘Waterworks’ Project. The Project aims to restore the Ty Coch Lock Flight, creating a resource for the local community and visitors to Cwmbran. During these camps volunteers will learn heritage skills, carry out repairs to damaged stone work and clear vegetation. Volunteers may also have the chance to assist with the installation of new modular lock gates.

Help us bring this 200 year old waterway back to life!

**Dates:**  
25th July-1st August  
1st-8th August

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Cotswold Canals

**Location:** Cotswolds  
**Activities:** Demolition and lock restoration

The main focus for WRG in 2015 is to help the Cotswold Canals Trust (CCT) restore Bowbridge Lock. Completion of this lock, and other structures, on the Phase 1A of the Cotswold Canals restoration project (from Stonehouse to Brimscombe) is a critical precursor for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid for money to pay for the Phase 1B section. Phase 1B will provide the essential connection from the restored lengths of the Cotswold Canals to the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal and access to the main UK canal network.

WRG needs your help with this big push to return Bowbridge Lock back to a fully functioning restored lock. Volunteers will undertake a wide variety of activities, including removal of damaged brickwork from the lock walls and starting the rebuilding process. These will be busy, fun-filled camps that will give you the chance to learn how to bricklay. So not only do you get to work amid glorious Cotswold scenery, you’ll be helping bring back the boats in just a few years time.

**Dates:**  
28th March-4th April  
4th-11th April  
4th-11th July  
18th-25th July  
25th July-1st August  
1st-8th August  
8th-15th August  
15th-22nd August

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That’s not to say we are ignoring the eastern end of the canal and the restoration of Inglesham Lock. WRG will be returning over the spring (dates to be confirmed) to carry out further clearance work from the lock chamber in order for a full survey to be undertaken. This will allow for WRG to make a detailed restoration plan before any further work is carried out.

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South West + Wales

**Monmouthshire Canal**

**Location:** South Wales  
**Activities:** Heritage construction and vegetation clearance

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**Cotswold Canals**

**Location:** Cotswolds  
**Activities:** Demolition and lock restoration

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www.wrg.org.uk

© Photo by Ralph Mills
Stover Canal

Location: Devon  
Activities: Lock restoration and towpath repairs

Built in the 18th century, the Stover Canal was used to transport clay and other minerals from the Bovey Basin, and granite from quarries on Dartmoor, to the docks at Teignmouth. Water remained in the canal until 1951 when it burst its banks, flooding part of a nearby clay works. Since then the canal and all the locks have fallen into a state of neglect.

Volunteers will be involved in the restoration of the Grade 2 listed Graving Dock Lock. Over the years vegetation and trees have damaged the granite lock walls so the plan is to take down the stonework, remove the vegetation and start the rebuilding process. Volunteers will also be involved in towpath improvement work, resurfacing about half a mile.

Dates:  
22nd-29th August  
29th August-5th September  £56

Swansea Canal

Location: South Wales  
Activities: Heritage construction and vegetation clearance

The Swansea Canal originally rose 375 feet through 36 locks from sea level at Swansea up the valley to Abercraf. Whilst much of the original canal has been infilled, the canal remains an attractive wildlife corridor with around 6 miles still in water.

Volunteers will spend the week furthering the restoration of the Trebanos Locks. Working alongside Swansea Canal Society and Canal & River Trust staff, volunteers will help repoint the lock chamber walls and repair the wing walls of the lower lock, learning new heritage skills along the way. Volunteers will also carry out bank repairs using willow hurdles and continue to clear out the canal channel. The Canal Society is well renowned for its hospitality and is looking forward to welcoming volunteers from all over the UK and Europe to the lovely Swansea Valley this summer!

Dates:  
18th-25th July  £56

Ashby Canal

Location: Leicestershire  
Activities: Bridge restoration and brickwork

The Ashby Canal is 22 miles long with no locks and runs from the Coventry Canal at Marston Junction to Snarestone. It was originally 30 miles long, continuing to a terminus at Moira, but the northern 8 miles have progressively closed due to coal mining subsidence.

Instead of tackling just one bridge, WRG is looking to take on the challenge of restoring two bridges in two weeks! WRG volunteers will be working at Jackson’s Bridge (41) on the navigable section of the canal, repointing and repairing damaged brickwork, as well as completely rebuilding Bridge 62 on the newly restored section of the canal! These camps will give volunteers the chance to try their hand at lots of different tasks with a particular focus on bricklaying.

Dates:  
8th-15th August  £56  
15th-22nd August

Chesterfield Canal

Location: Derbyshire  
Activities: Lock and wall construction, brick and block laying

20 miles of the Chesterfield Canal has already been restored, and the Chesterfield Canal Trust are hard at work restoring the remaining 8 miles. This means building new locks and new lengths of canal to get past difficult obstructions like roads and railways - and that’s what we’ll be doing on this year’s camp. The aim for 2015 is for WRG volunteers to help make significant progress at Staveley Town Lock. Volunteers will be assisting in the construction of the lock, as well as helping build 35 metres of the new canal wall.

The restoration project is now faced with a new problem. The HS2 High Speed railway threatens to undo the Trust’s good work and make it far more difficult to reopen the canal. The more we can do to continue the work and show everyone what a restored canal would look like, the better the chance of getting the railway plans changed so that it doesn’t harm the canal.

Dates:  
25th July-1st August  £56  
1st-8th August
**Cromford Canal**

**Location:** Derbyshire  
**Activities:** Lock restoration and towpath repairs

Last used as a working waterway in 1944, most of the Cromford Canal has slowly fallen into a state of disrepair. Despite this, the canal from Cromford Wharf to Ambergate is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its diverse and rich plant and aquatic life.

In 2014, volunteers spent a muddy, but fun, few weeks clearing out Lock 4 of the Ironville Flight to allow a survey to be undertaken. In 2015, volunteers will be returning to finish clearance work, and carry out stone work repairs to the lock as well as reinstating the cill. Volunteers may also get involved in the clearance work at Lock 2 and towpath repairs at Lock 5.

Pack your (steel-toe capped) wellies and join us on the Cromford Canal!

**Dates:**  
11th-18th July  
18th-24th July

**Shrewsbury and Newport Canals**

**Location:** Shropshire  
**Activities:** Lock restoration and machine work

The Shrewsbury and Newport Canals were officially abandoned by an Act of Parliament in 1944, but Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust, formed in 2000, is now actively campaigning to preserve the remnants of the canal, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway linking Norbury Junction to Shrewsbury.

Volunteers will spend the week working to rewater a 100 metre section of the canal near Meretown. This will involve the use of excavators to re-profile the banks, and laying geotextile lining materials to make the canal waterproof. Volunteers may also work on restoring the Meretown Lock as well as constructing a new towpath and footbridge over the canal. It is hoped that this work will enable the Trust to re-water this section. Volunteers will have the chance to try their hand at lots of different tasks and there may be the opportunity to operate machinery.

**Dates:**  
22nd-29th August

**Grantham Canal**

**Location:** Leicestershire  
**Activities:** Lock restoration work

During the years of dereliction, the Grantham Canal has become a valuable wetland habitat for local wildlife. The restoration work aims to preserve and enhance its value for wildlife, whilst opening up the canal and making it fully navigable once more. With the towpath improvement works the area is now popular with many cyclists and walkers and is a real asset to the local area.

WRG is supporting Canal & River Trust’s (CRT) and Grantham Canal Society’s successful Heritage Lottery bid to restore locks 14 and 15. The emphasis of the bid is to undertake restoration work using volunteers and allowing people to learn waterway heritage construction skills. This summer WRG volunteers will be getting stuck in right at the start of the restoration project working alongside volunteers from the Canal Society at Lock 15 – setting up the site, constructing dams, dewatering the lock chamber along with lots of other tasks!

**Dates:**  
22nd-29th August  
29th August-5th September  
5th-12th September

**Lapal Canal**

**Location:** West Midlands  
**Activities:** Canal wall reconstruction and vegetation clearance

The Dudley No. 2 Line Canal was authorised in 1793 and opened to traffic in 1798. It was built as a bypass canal to avoid the original Birmingham Canal (known as the Old Main Line). The western end of the canal is still in a good condition, but the eastern half, known as the Lapal Canal, has been abandoned and slowly filled in since the mid 1950’s. The long term aim of the restoration project is to restore the entire length of the canal, creating a valuable cruising ring on the Birmingham Canal Navigations.

WRG’s help is needed to restore 500 metres of canal in Selly Oak Park, where sections of the canal have been in-filled, the wharf wall has collapsed and vegetation has grown up. The early restoration of this section of the canal is very important as it will help to ensure that the canal will be navigable in the future and not just left as a greenway.

**Dates:**  
8th-15th August  
15th-22nd August

www.wrg.org.uk
Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation

Location: Essex
Activities: Vegetation clearance and towpath improvement work


To help maintain this beautiful waterway, WRG volunteers will be working alongside the Essex Waterways Team to help clear overgrown vegetation from the towpath, improving access for all waterway users. As with every February or October Canal Camp there will be lots of scrub bashing, bonfires and other activities to keep you warm! Accommodation for the camps is on a barge moored in the tidal estuary, converted for residential use.

Volunteer and help us keep this active and vibrant waterway alive!

Dates:
- 14th-21st February
- 24th-31st October

Driffield Navigation

Location: Yorkshire
Activities: Vegetation clearance and lock repairs

The Driffield Navigation is an 11 mile waterway, running through the heart of the Holderness Plain, to the market town of Driffield in the East Riding. Much of the Navigation has been restored and further progress was made in October 2014, when new lock gates were fitted at Riverhead allowing the first boats to pass through the lock in over 20 years.

Volunteers will be returning in 2015 to help complete a new nature trail, started by WRG in 2014, that will enable walkers to explore the Navigation safely, creating an amenity for the local community to enjoy. Work will include clearing vegetation, removing stumps and installing bat and bird boxes. Volunteers will also work with Driffield Navigation Trust to carry out repairs to several locks along the Navigation.

Dates:
- 4th-11th July

"I loved the camp because I had the opportunity to get to know more about the UK people, their habits, hear different accents and discover the wonderful British countryside!"
Angela, 48, Italy

"I volunteered for a week at Bowbridge Lock on the Cotswold Canals in August, to complete the residential part of my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. There was a wonderful sense of camaraderie and friendship on the camp... I would recommend that anyone else considering it should go for it wholeheartedly!"
Will, 19, Devon

"In 2014 I spent a week in thigh-deep mud at Bowbridge Lock, as well two weeks on the Lancaster Canal driving dumpers. I use my existing skills, learn new ones, and enjoy working with people with a wide range of ages and backgrounds. It is a real change from my usual week!"
Susan, 71, Scotland

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Susan, 71, Scotland

Keep up to date with waterways volunteering and subscribe to our magazine ‘Navvies’!

Published six times a year, each issue gives full details of forthcoming work parties and progress reports from all over the country. It’s an interesting, useful and entertaining read, and it only costs £3 for six issues.

The subscription cost is kept artificially low so that everyone can afford to subscribe. If you can make a donation in addition to the minimum subscription, this is always appreciated.

To subscribe go to www.waterways.org.uk/navvies
SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

Are you looking for exciting ways to fill a weekend? Are you interested in learning new skills? Maybe you want to improve your bricklaying or hone your digger operating skills? If your answer is ‘YES’ then WRG has something for you.

WRG’s Regional Groups organise weekend canal restoration ‘digs’ for volunteers throughout England and Wales. The work can be anything from restoring a lock chamber to vegetation clearance, there really is something for everyone. The weekends start on the Friday evening and volunteers work on site from Saturday until Sunday afternoon. Each weekend costs between £8-£15 (this includes food and accommodation).

For more information and upcoming dig dates visit the WRG website at: www.wrg.org.uk

BCN Cleanup

Location: Birmingham
Activities: Canal Cleanup

Ever wondered what is lurking beneath the waters of the Birmingham Canal Navigation? The Cleanup weekend is a great opportunity to have fun and meet new people while clearing shopping trolleys, tyres, bicycles and even more exciting treasures from the canal! This year WRG volunteers will be working on a new site at Smethwick Junction and surrounding locks, on the BCN Old Main Line.

In 2014, volunteers cleared 40 tonnes of rubbish from the canal at Ashed Flight, Typhoo Wharf and Camp Hill Locks and it is hoped this annual effort on the BCN and Black Country Network will keep it from getting choked up with rubbish and becoming impassable for boats.

Dates: 18th-19th April £13

Bonfire Bash
Uttoxeter Canal

Location: Staffordshire
Activities: Vegetation clearance and socialising!

WRG’s Reunion is our big annual get together and working party for over 100 volunteers, also known as the Bonfire Bash because we usually spend the weekend clearing vegetation along the line of a canal, and warming ourselves by bonfires! This year, the weekend will be at Crumpwood on the Uttoxeter Canal. More details to follow!

Dates: 7th-8th November £13

CANAL CAMP BOOKING FORM

Personal Details
Title: (delete as appropriate) Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other
First name(s): ............................................................... Surname: .................................................................

Address: ............................................................................................................................................................
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Email: .................................................................................................................................................................

DoB (you must be over 18 at the start of the camp): ...... / ...... / ......

Please note: Booking confirmation, kit list and Health & Safety booklet will be sent out via post once booking is confirmed. All other correspondence will be sent via email including camp directions.

Emergency Contact Details
Please provide details of someone who we can contact in case of emergency

Name: ................................................................................................................................. Tel: ...........................................

I Wish to Attend Canal Camp(s):
Camp No: ........................................................................ Canal: ....................................................................
Camp No: ........................................................................ Canal: ....................................................................

Dietary Requirements
Please indicate any special dietary requirements (e.g. vegan, vegetarian etc and any food allergies)

...........................................................................................................................................................................

Other Information
Do you hold a current First Aid Qualification? YES / NO

If yes, please specify details: ...................................................................................................................................

Occupation: ...........................................................................................................................................................

Are you attending as part of your Duke of Edinburgh Award? YES / NO

How did you hear about us? ........................................................................................................................................

How do you intend to travel to the camp? (Car, Public Transport, Other) .........................................................
Medical & Access Information

Please let us know if you have any conditions for which you are currently seeing a doctor for treatment (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, allergies, or other health issues) and/or if you have any access needs. Please also include any information about medications including the dosage. This information will help the leader plan suitable activities for the Canal Camp. Please advise us of any changes before the start of the camp.

Payment

To pay by cheque please make payable to ‘Waterway Recovery Group’

I enclose a cheque for £ ........................................................................................................................................

OR

Please debit my account £ ....................................................................................................................................

Card No: ..........................................................................................................................................................

Start date*: .............. / ............... Expiry date: .............. / ............

Issue no*: .................................... CCV no**................................................

* Start Date/Issue No. is for Switch/Maestro cards only. **CCV No. is the last 3 digits on the back of the card.

Cancellation Policy

If you wish to cancel or transfer your booking, please inform us at least 21 days before the start of the camp. Your payment will be refunded less a £10 administration fee, or transferred to another camp free of charge. If you cancel less than 21 days before the start of the camp, no refund can be made.

Declaration

Please read the following before signing:

I agree that information on this form may be stored on an electronic database and that this information may be provided to organisers of the camp that I will be attending and to other authorised WRG personnel. WRG may use the information you supply for administrative purposes and to send you information about our activities.

Signature: .......................................................... Date: ................................

Data Protection Act: We promise not to sell your details to anyone else. WRG may send you information about The Inland Waterways Association’s campaigns and activities from time to time. If you do not wish to receive this information, please tick this box.

Please return your completed form to:

WRG, Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA