

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Practical Restoration Handbook (PRH) is very simple. It is to stop everybody having to re-invent the wheel(barrow).

For 30 years Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) Ltd has existed to co-ordinate the efforts of volunteers in inland waterway restoration. WRG has always produced fact sheets on the practical aspects of waterway restoration and similarly the IWAs Restoration Committee (ResCom) produced Information Notes on the more technical aspects of waterway restoration. Production of these Fact Sheets and Notes proceeded slowly and was piecemeal because of the need to depend on the goodwill of the volunteers and availability of expert members to prepare them.

In order to put this work on an organised basis the IWA decided to submit an application for a grant from the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions. The plan was to commission authors and editorial assistance, using IWAs own resources for the overall management and administrative support. The aim would be to produce two handbooks on waterway restoration within a period of about three years.

The IWA was successful in obtaining a grant from DoETR and also in persuading some 29 waterway groups, see Annex 1, to participate in the project and to subscribe funds for the work. The two handbooks are the **Technical Restoration Handbook** (produced by ResCom) and this **Practical Restoration Handbook** (produced by WRG). The Association is most grateful to those organisations which have provided funds and to the authors and reviewers who have provided the content of the handbooks.

It is hoped this handbook will distil the accumulated wisdom of years and further enhance the efforts and reputation of volunteers working on inland waterways. Hopefully the Handbook will give an insight into legal requirements, best practice, good sense and helpful hints and tips – in that order. Wherever possible the texts have deliberately been kept from being over-prescriptive to allow the creative thinking and individual solutions that have been the trademark of canal restoration so far.

WRG was very careful in its selection of both subject and author to give the reader the most balanced view of the subjects it felt were most often encountered. Each of these chapters of the PRH has come through an extensive review period by peers, subscribing canal societies, the DoETR (often via outside bodies) with a handbook manager maintaining overall consistency between chapters. However it is important to realise that each chapter is the work of the author.

There will always be continually changing legislation which means that often rather than dealing with a subject in depth, the text will give "golden rules" and a reference to where to find the most up-to-date version of the legislation.

We make no apology for the fact that so much of the text concerns Health and Safety. WRG has always paid careful attention to Health and Safety and this has resulted in an excellent safety record. Waterway restoration sits across two industries – agricultural and construction – the two worst offenders in Health and Safety terms yet WRGs safety record is very good. The WRG Board feels that it is the continuing policy to make Health and Safety the priority that has lead to this good record.

We also make no apology for the fact that some points are made humourously. Canal Restoration was always meant to be fun and that is undoubtedly the reason that many of us become so involved. It also helps with the readability of the text.

## Disclaimers

To the extent permitted by law, neither Waterway Recovery Group Ltd nor the Inland Waterways Association is liable for any loss, injury, damage, claim or expenses resulting from any use of such information. Every care has been taken in the compilation and checking of the information contained in this handbook. However, the IWA and WRG cannot accept any liability for the accuracy of the statements in the Handbook or omissions therefrom and readers are recommended to seek professional advice on specific proposals or problems.

The information provided by this Handbook is not guaranteed to be error free; if you feel that there are any errors or omissions then please send details using the form in Annex 2 clearly marked to: PRH Amendments, Inland Waterways Association, 3 Norfolk Court, Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth, WD3 1LT.

**Throughout this Handbook the male gender has been used. Anyone who has experience of WRG will know that this is for example purposes only and the points apply equally to male and female.**

## Stop Press

As this Handbook went to press two documents were published that are especially relevant to the Handbook. It is intended to review these works and include them in future revisions of the PRH.

The first is published by HSE books and is called *Charity and Voluntary workers: a Guide to Health and Safety at Work*, HSG192, ISBN 0 7176 2424 2. This is a joint document between the HSE and the Charities Safety Group. The CSG represents around 150 charities and groups. The guidance is primarily focussed on safety in charity shops and other non-construction scenarios, however, many of the guidelines can be applied to canal restoration and it does cover construction sites and conservation work. An associated training video has been produced. Price £12 for the booklet and £25 for the video.

The second is a package produced by The Environment Agency and is called *Bank Protection*, it offers guidance and includes a CD-ROM. Price £95.

## **ANNEX 1 – WATERWAY GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO THE RESTORATION HANDBOOKS PROJECT**

Ashby Canal Association  
Barnsley Canal Group  
Birmingham Canal Navigations Society  
Buckingham Canal Society  
Caldon Canal Society  
Chesterfield Canal Trust  
Chichester Canal Society  
Cotswold Canals Trust  
Droitwich Canals Trust  
East Anglian Waterways Association  
Foxton Inclined Plane Trust  
Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust  
Inland Waterways Protection Society  
Kennet and Avon Canal Trust  
Lapal Canal Trust  
Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust  
Lough Navigation Trust  
Manchester Bolton and Bury Canal Society  
Pocklington Canal Society  
Ribble Link Trust  
Sankey Canal Restoration Society  
Severn Navigation Restoration Society  
Shropshire Union Canal Society  
Sleaford Navigation Trust  
River Stour Trust  
Surrey and Hants Canal Society  
Swansea Canal Society  
Wey and Arun Canal Trust  
Wendover Arm Trust  
Wilts and Berks Canal Amenity Group

## **ANNEX 2 – ERRORS, OMISSIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE PRACTICAL RESTORATION HANDBOOK**

Every effort has been taken to ensure that the PRH is as up to date and as accurate as possible. However, situations, legislation and techniques change. If you believe there is something that is inaccurate or something has been omitted that should be included then please give details below. Forward this form onto PRH Handbook Manager, 3 Norfolk Court, Norfolk Road, RICKMANSWORTH, WD3 1LT.

**Please state clearly the Chapter name, page numbers, paragraph reference, etc. and give as full a description of the problem as possible.**

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