

DUBLIN NORTH CITY MOTORWAY. THE ROYAL CANAL ROUTE

The Development Plan for Dublin City, dating from 1971, envisages the filling-in of the Royal Canal from Spencer Dock to the City boundary and the building of a motorway along the route of the canal. Needless to say, the local communities along the Royal Canal are totally opposed to this plan and are joining forces with the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland to ensure that the canal is preserved and restored as an amenity for the North City area.

According to the Foras Forbatha Advisory Report on 'Transportation in Dublin' the reason for building the motorway is to provide an access route linking up the port of Dublin and the central industrial areas with routes to the west. It is not intended to be a motorway to be used by commuter traffic.

Why, one must ask, is it necessary to spend millions of pounds on this urban freight motorway when a perfectly suitable railway route exists already and runs alongside the canal on the route of the proposed motorway? This same railway line is scheduled for modernisation to provide a much needed commuter service to Dublin from Blanchardstown, Clonsilla, Leixlip and Maynooth. For an efficient service electrification would be desirable, but this might be difficult to justify solely for a passenger service. However, use of the railway for both passenger and freight traffic would fully justify not only electrification but also relaying the second track (lifted ill the 1930's) between Clonsilla and Maynooth, a distance of 7 miles.

Apart from being environmentally desirable, the cost of modernisation of the railway will be far less than that of building the proposed motorway. What is more, a fraction of the saving would suffice to restore the Royal Canal as a recreational amenity in the city and greater Dublin area and to develop its tourist potential westwards to the River Shannon.

ROYAL CANAL LINEAR PARK

The alternative plan to the motorway provides for the development of the Royal Canal as a linear park through the north city. This plan, which has been prepared by the I.W.A.I. in close consultation with residents associations, will be submitted to Dublin Corporation for inclusion in the 1976 revision of the Dublin Development Plan. The plan will be on view at:

THE DAVIS CALLERY, 11 CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN, 1 10 - 25 JULV 1975
12.30-6.00

during an EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS OF THE IRISH INLAND WATERWAYS by:

Cecil Barrow	Kevin Byrne	Bernadette Madden	Kitty Wilmer O'Brien ARHA
Muriel Brandt	Peter Clarke	Liam Martin	Michael O'Brien
Ruth Brandt	Gerald Donnelly	Tom Nisbet RHA	William O'Brien
Cecil Bruen	Henry Healy RHA	Kieran O'Brien	Tom Ryan RHA

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ULLINGAR

The local TWAI Branch held a very successful rally on the Royal Canal at Easter. The banks between the Dublin Bridge and the Harbour Bridge were crowded with spectators to watch the mini.-flotilla of boats pass by. The spectators were also treated to a display by the Mullingar Sub aqua Club. C.I.E. has recently agreed to Westmeath C.C. taking in charge the towing path along this stretch and it is hoped that improvements will be made as money becomes available

NORTH KILDARE

At a meeting in Sallins in April a new North Kildare Branch of the IWAI was formed. Among the immediate aims of the Branch is to help with work on the Royal Canal. Further information from the Hon. Secretary, Bill Sturgess, Borehard, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.

LONCFORD

Another new IWAI Branch was formed at a meeting held in Clondra in February. Further details of this branch from Michael Flanagan, Clondra, Co. Longford.

LOW LEVEL RALLY

The first ever rally on the Royal Canal took place in April. Despite the petrol shortage occasioned by the tanker drivers' strike over 20 boats and almost 100 people took part. Boats were launched at the western end of the long level, at Thomastown, and during the course of two glorious sunny days the flotilla of outboard-propelled rowing boats, dinghies and inflatables cruised through the heart of the countryside. On the Saturday stops were made at Hill of Down and Moyvalley for refreshments and on reaching Enfield the Coill Dubh children's band struck up Irish airs and the visitors were officially welcomed by members of the Enfield Development Association. Afterwards local people were taken for trips along the canal in the visiting boats.

Enfield was also the Venue for the overnight stop and on the Sunday the boats set off again to cover the final 5-miles to Ferrans Lock near Kilcock, and return to Enfield for the closing of the rally.

ENFIELD

It is understood that there are plans to build a slipway into the canal at Enfield in the not too distant future. No doubt we shall see some small cruisers on the next Long Level Rally?

COUNTY DUBLIN

Working parties of members of the Royal Canal Amenity Group, the Porterstown Youth Club and the Venture Scouts are continuing to improve this section of the canal. The towing-path is now clear for walking from the city boundary at Ratoath Road, Cabra to within a few hundred yards of Callahan Bridge at Clonsilla, a distance of 5 miles.

In the spring, C.I.E. cut the weeds on the level above the 12th lock and followed up with weed killer to suppress further growth.

Bord Failte donated a 16' rowing boat to the Amenity Group and this has been repaired and painted. An outboard engine is to be purchased (a member of the group has kindly offered to meet half the cost) and the boat will then be used both for pleasure trips and as a work boat. However, shortage of water in the level is a problem at the moment due to engineering works being carried out higher up the canal. The matter is being attended to by C.I.E. and it is hoped to commence boat trips by early July.

On 14th June a clean-up' of the chambers of the 10th lock at Ashtown was organised. Dublin County Council provided machinery lorries and also some help. A large party of members and local residents removed four lorry-loads of rubbish from the canal but still some remained. The clean-up, therefore has been repeated on the following two Saturdays. On 28th June the County Council again assisted the group by removing several dumped cars from the level above the ninth lock.

On 24th June, as part of Navan Road Community Week, a film show and public meeting was held in the Dominican Convent, Cabra. It was attended by over eighty people and many new members were enrolled. The local residents expressed their concern regarding the neglected state of the canal in the area and a request has since been sent to C.I.E. to carry out repairs to the top gates at both the 9th and 10th locks. This would enable the levels above these locks to be filled. At present they are the only dry levels between Spencer Dock and Maynooth.

KILLUCAN

A new IWAI branch was formed in April following a well-attended public meeting and film show. The branch has been very active and has commenced restoration work at Thomastown. The harbour is now in excellent condition following weed cutting and general tidying by members. The 18th lock has also received the attention of a work party. A C.J.E. weed-cutting boat arrived at Thomastown in mid-June and is working its way eastwards along the long level. The next task of the local branch is to dredge the stretch immediately below the harbour, which Long-Level-Rallyists will recall is very overgrown and restricted in width. Another job being contemplated is the repair of the top gates of the 18th lock, which are in reasonably good condition. The Branch is to be congratulated on getting off to such a good start.

LONGFORD

At a meeting held in the Annaly Hotel in February a local Royal Canal Group was formed. A work party, organised by Matt Farrell has cleared the towing-path and the opposite bank from the town to Farranyoogan Bridge. Unfortunately the number of volunteers has dwindled recently but despite this the next stretch to Church Lands Bridge should also be clear by the end of June.

Last year Longford UDC with the help of an amenity grant dredged some 300 yards of the Longford Branch south of the railway. This year work is being carried out on the banks and if there is money available some weed clearance will be done beyond the dredged section.

In collaboration with the IWAI Royal Canal Committee a scheme has been prepared to reopen the canal from Longford to Clondra. The main objects of the scheme are to permit pleasure cruisers from the Shannon to reach Longford town and provide an additional amenity for local residents. There is no reason why the project should not go ahead even before the remainder of the canal is reopened to navigation. Details of the project have been circulated widely.

Royal Canal News is compiled by Hon. Secretary,
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