

MOTORWAYS OUT

With the shelving of the Dublin motorways programme, as announced by the Minister for Local Government, Mr. Tully, on 11th October, the way is now clear for the development of the Royal Canal within the city as a recreational amenity. The proposed motorway along the city section of the Royal Canal was, moreover, a major obstacle to the restoration of navigation and would have dealt a serious blow to the development of the full tourism potential of both the Grand and Royal canals by preventing boats passing from one to the other across the River Liffey.

As the City Council decided last year, despite the motorway plans, that the area along the Royal Canal should be developed as a linear park, it is to be hoped that priority will now be given to the implementation of this decision. Additional amenity areas are urgently needed north of the Liffey and residents along the canal have already shown on several occasions their willingness to assist by cleaning up the waterway, planting trees and providing seats. However, credit must be given where credit is due and Dublin Corporation did make a start earlier in the year to improve the section of canal between Binn's Bridge, Drumcondra and Newcomen Bridge, North Strand. The canal was first drained and a large excavator used to dredge the accumulated rubbish and silt from the bed of the canal. It was found that the most difficult points to clean were the locks and below the bridges, where there were huge masses of rubbish of all kinds thrown there by thoughtless dumpers. Men at the bottom of the locks loaded the rubbish by hand on to a hoist made of chain-link fencing which acted as a sieve and allowed the water to run clear. The hoist was then pulled to the top of the lock. Two thousand tons of rubbish was removed in 500 truckloads. This from only $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of canal.

Incidentally, for do-it-yourself canal cleaners, Dublin Corporation Cleansing Department will loan tools and equipment to voluntary groups.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE

The ad-hoc committee reported to the Minister for Transport and Power at the beginning of July and representatives of the IWAI's Royal Canal Committee have since met the Minister to seek assurances on the future of the canal. Mr. Barry said that the time to discuss the restoration of the Royal Canal in more detail will be after the Cabinet has come to a decision on the future ownership (i.e. CIE vs. OPW) of the whole canal network. This~ he considered, could be before the end of 1976.

LEIXLIP

A boat slip into the 12th level is under construction $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of Cope Bridge. This is a joint project of the IWAI and the Royal Canal Amenity Group and is being built, as far as possible, by voluntary labour. Work started at the end of September and it is due to be, completed in November. Kildare County Council has promised an amenity grant of £450 towards the cost of the project.

MAYNOOTH

The second Maynooth to Leixlip canoe race on the Royal Canal and the Ryewater was held on Sunday 14th March and attracted approximately 160 entries. There was a mass start from the Square Maynooth and competitors carried their canoes the 300 yds. to the canal

The first 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles was followed by portage around the 13th lock and again beyond Louisa bridge a mile or so further east Here the contestants had to clamber down the canal aqueduct to the Rye Water some 100ft below. The finish was in Leixlip. The race was sponsored by Maynooth Community Council and proceeds from the race went to the Irish Canoe Union Olympic Fund. The success of the race was in no small way due to the weed cutting activities of CIE and general clearance work carried out by a group of local residents. Those interested in continuing this work and further improving the amenity value of the canal in the town should contact Mr John F. Read, 86 Rail Pk. Maynooth.

KILCOCK

With only a few inches of water in the levels and rampant weed growth, the appearance of the canal through and below Kilcock is most depressing, to say the least.

It must be nearly two years ago since the Kilcock Community Council approached CIE regarding the repair of the upper gates of the 14th, 15th and 16th locks to enable the levels to be refilled with water. It was promised that the work would be done as soon as possible but alas; a start has yet to be made. It appears that shortage of labour to do the work is the cause of the delay. This is all the more unfortunate as it now appears that due the banks of the canal drying out excessively in the hot weather, seepage is liable to occur through the bank above the 16th lock and extra work is necessary.

COUNTY DUBLIN

After completing the task of opening-up the towpath from Ashtown to Clonsilla, a distance of about four miles, members of the Royal Canal Amenity Group turned their attention once again to the waterway. By the end of March both the 10th and 11th levels had been almost cleared of overhanging branches and, at several points, whole trees. The work was completed by CIE staff when they arrived to cut the weeds in the canal. The Group wishes to acknowledge with thanks the loan of a chain saw for several months by Messer's Farmhand, Castleknock; without which progress would have been very slow indeed. Similar work is also in progress on the 12th level.

In May, the Group turned its attention to preparing its two passenger boats "Royal Talbot" and "Royal Granard" for the summer season. The passenger trips were a great attraction and it was most unfortunate that the dry weather, which with leaking lock gates was responsible for a shortage of water in the 10th level, caused the schedule of trips on this particularly attractive stretch to be abandoned. However, just sufficient water to float "Royal Talbot" was held in the 12th level, and trips to the Deep Sinking continued until the end of August.

ENFIELD/KILLUCAN

The second annual rally on the Long Level took place over the weekend 24/25 April. An advance party of IWAI members arrived in Thomastown on the Friday night to get the proceedings off to a good start. After an hour or two's sleep the overnight camp was rudely awakened by the arrival of Saturdays reinforcements. Although the day was dry and bright the Force 5 wind from the north-east made most people reluctant to leave the shelter of Quinn's Bar and there was a slight delay of two hours before the rally got underway. Lunch was taken at the Hill of Down and was followed by a brief stop above the Boyne to view the Aqueduct. On reaching Moyvalley an overnight camp was established in close proximity to Miss Fury's hostelry which was, of course, the venue for the night's festivities.

On Sunday the rally continued to Enfield to be greeted by the Coill Dubh children's band. There were boat trips for local children and an aquatic fancy dress parade in the afternoon followed by a musical evening to bring the rally to a close.

This event has now earned itself a place in the annual waterways calendar and the date to note in your diary for 1977 is the weekend of the 23/24 April.

DUBLIN

A new group has been formed in the Glasnevin district, following a well-attended meeting held in the Maples Hotel on 7th October. Known as the "Royal Canal Water Rats" the members lost no time in getting down to business. On Saturday 23rd October, twenty five volunteers spent about six hours in pouring rain clearing rubbish from the 5th lock at Cross Guns. Staff of the Corporation's Cleansing Department assisted the members and several lorry loads of rubbish were removed.

Further details of the Water Rats and their activities from Mr. D. Gilligan, 21, Claremont Court, Dublin, 11. Telephone 307356.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

A little soon perhaps to wish our readers a Merry Christmas, but not too early for you to be thinking of buying your Christmas Cards.

The Royal Canal Amenity Group has this* year produced two designs and proceeds from : the sale of these cards will assist the work of restoration of the canal.

Both cards are of high quality and excellent value for money.

Reproduction in black & white of a drawing by G.F.Sargent, 1843, of a Royal Canal Fly Boat in Dublin. Size 6" x 5", wording "Christmas Greetings".
Price 60p for 10, Inc. envelopes and postage.

Full colour reproduction of a photograph of the Group's passenger boat "Royal Talbot" on an attractive stretch of the canal near Castleknock. Size 8" x 5" wording "Christmas Greetings"
Price £1.05 for 10, including envelopes and postage.

Orders with remittance to:

Mr. B. Thornberry, 85 Roselawn Road
Castleknock, Dublin 15.

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