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Mr. D.O'Donovan (Hon. Treasurer)	Mr. T.Galway
Mr. L.Ramsden	Mr. P. Gilsenan
Mr. A.Bishop	Mr. N.Nason
Mr. P.Brady	Mr. D. White

Mrs. P.Nason did not wish to be re-elected to the Committee but has agreed to continue as Membership Secretary.

In order to raise additional funds for further restoration work the Social Sub-committee of the Royal Canal Amenity last year organised two extremely enjoyable and successful events. Both of these, the Wine & Cheese Party and the Dinner-Dance, were exceptionally well supported by members and their friends. To start the 1978 "Season" a rather different event has been arranged and the committee is again looking for your full support for what we are assured will be an outstanding evening's entertainment:

CONCERT featuring

THE GARDA BAND

in the

STATE CINEMA, PHIBSBOROUGH

On FRIDAY, 24th FEBRUARY, 1978 at 8.30 p.m.

ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY, PRICE £1.00, FROM:-

GOLDLN DISCS, DUKE STREET (Phone 682696),

NORTH EARL STREET and MARY STREET

(Only available at these branches)OR a committee member (see above).
(Concert by kind permission of the Commissioner)

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WATERWAY OR MOTORWAY

Dublin Corporation's motorways plans have once again been resurrected to cast a shadow over the future of the City section of the Royal Canal. It appears that despite the many objections to the motorways raised, in particular, by residents of affected areas, the Corporation has no intention of deleting the projected lines from the latest revised Development Plan. Much will depend, therefore, on the stand taken by the City Councillors when the Revised Development Plan is put before them for ratification in the near future.

Some time ago a letter went out from the Royal Canal Committee of the I.W.A.I. to all 45 councillors. A detailed case was made for retaining the Royal Canal both as an amenity and as navigation. The very least that is hoped for is that if a decision is taken to build anyone of the planned motorways north of the Liffey, that the Council will insist on it being routed and constructed in such a way th3t the possibility of reopening the canal as a navigation is retained. Obviously, however, the I.W.A.I. would prefer to see a better solution than this 'last resort' and for environmental reasons fully supports the stand being made by all the local residents associations in their total opposition to the whole concept of urban motorways and the destruction of potential amenities.

BRIGHTER OUTLOOK IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

In the short term, at least, there is a much brighter side to the Dublin scene. Last summer a sum of £120,000 was granted to Dublin Corporation for the clean-up of the city's waterways. By the end of the year about a sixth of this had Dee~ spent, much of it on the Royal Canal, leaving a substantial sum to continue the good work in 1978. A general clean-up of the canal was undertaken between Cross Guns and Binn's Bridge, a tarmac path laid along this section and bollards pl2ced at each end. The tarmac path has also been carried all the way to the first lock at North Strand Road.

A meeting of the City Council's Royal Canal Sub-committee was held just before Christmas to which representatives of local residents associations and other bodies were invited. It was learnt that the Ccommunity and Environment Officer, Mr. Davy Byrne, has every intention of continuing the improvement of the Royal Canal and its immediate surroundings in 1978 including the following:-

1. Repair of the retaining wall of the canal, particularly the very bad section near Charleville Mall and possibly between Binn's Bridge and Crass Guns, also.
2. Replacement of a few missing sheets of wood on the breast gates of the 1st lock in order to raise the water level by about 2 feet thereby improving the aesthetic and amenity value of the canal below Binn's bridge ,
3. Erection of additional bollards to prevent vehicular access to the banks.
4. Commencement of the development of a section of the canal as a showpiece, using the I.W.A.I.'s Linear Park Plan as a blueprint. The length selected is that between Cross Guns and Binn's Bridge.
5. An investigation of the possibility of restoring the locks through the City. Only if navigation is restored can dredgers weed cutting boats and other maintenance craft gain access to the City levels and thereby keep them in good condition. The l.W.A.I. has been asked to put forward some suggestions at the next meeting, due to be held in February.

It was also agreed that C.I.E. should be asked to carry out its promises relating to Spencer Dock, viz: the erection of sheet piling along the part of the dock recently filled in and the removal of the excess filling which found its way into the main channel. It must be 12 months or more since the filling took place but no attempt appears to have been made to tidy up the waterway as promised not only to the Council but also to the 1977 A.G.M. of the I.W.A.I.

on the Royal Canal proved extremely successful and there are high hopes in the town that there will be a further allocation of funds in order to continue the project. In addition to the removal of rubbish and general tidying of the canal banks, several areas have been landscaped and some 6,000 bulbs planted to give a colourful display each Spring. The dry dock has been cleaned out and vegetation removed from between the masonry. New balance beams are being made and will be fitted to the gates of the dry dock in the near future.

The decision has been taken to have the harbour dredged (about 3' of silt!) and this will probably be done in March. Fund raising events are being organised with the help of the local branches of the I.C.A. and I.W.A.I. in order to meet the cost which will be quite substantial.

LEIXLIP / MAYNOOTH

Construction of the new breast gate for the 13th lock by the Royal Canal Amenity Group is now complete and it is hoped to have it placed in position in the near future. Some work will be necessary at the lock itself before it can be reopened for navigation but if all goes according to plan the I.W.A.I. water bus "Clonskeagh" should be making an appearance in Maynooth during April or May.

The towpath east of Maynooth, which for a long time has been almost impassable in many places is in the process of being cleared by C.I.E.'s Royal Canal staff. following the raising of the water level in this section after the 13th lock repairs it should prove a very popular walk

ASHTOWN

Regretfully, the Royal Canal amenity Group has been informed by C.I.E. that owing to shortage of staff it will not be possible for them to replace the breast gate. At the 9th lock, a. promised a long ago in 1975. The Group has decided, therefore, to undertake this task itself.

Suitable premises in which to build

ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH THIS PROJECT (PREVIOUS WOODWORKING EXPERIENCE IS NOT ESSENTIAL) IS ASKED TO CONTACT E.SLANE, HON. SEC., R.C.A.G., TEL. 307320.

C.I.E. has kindly agreed to assist the Group wherever possible and have already provided the necessary plans.

ROYAL CANAL CABOE CLUB

The club, which was established just under a year ago, holds training sessions every Monday night from 8 to 9 pm in the De Paul Swimming Pool, Navan Road, Ashtown. Activities last summer were severely restricted owing to the lack of water in the canal, but the club was fortunate in being able to practice elsewhere. New members are welcome and anyone interested should contact Jim Forde, 20, Glendhu Road, Dublin, 7(Tel. 304391).

ROYAL CANAL RAMBLING CLUB

R.C.A.G. Member, Joe Roy, who donates much of his spare time to helping with towpath clearance work, feels that more use should be made of canal towpath for walking and rambling. For this reason he would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in forming a towpath ramblers club.

The idea is to arrange occasional outings including weekend camping expeditions. Joe Roy's address, is 91, Conor Clune Road, Dublin 7 (Tel. 306480).

WANTED

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS OR PRINTS OF THE ROYAL CANAL

The Editor would be very interested to learn of the whereabouts of any old pictures of the canal, particularly those which include working boats. Please send details (NOT photos) to address given at foot of Pale 4.

By D.M.HARTFORD

PART 2 HILL OF DOWN TO MULLINGAR

The next morning we did not resume our journey west on the Royal Canal until after 10 o'clock because the three postmen did not arrive on duty until that time and our friend the postmistress insisted they launched the 17ft. canoe for us ladies. It was so damp a day I recall we were glad of the dryness under D'Arcy's bridge to eat some chocolate., Just before the bridge we had enjoyed the long curve of beautiful beeches above the towpath hedge on our right that bounded Hyde Park, Colonel D'Arcy's demesne. Immediately the other side of the bridge we saw two more dark hulks. drawn up which, I learnt from a C.I.E. man who helped us at a lock, carried gravel or sods for repairing the bank.. We had seen one of these heavy boats tied up and inhabited the day before.

Soon the first lock came Our helper explained how these eight Killucan locks (Nos. 18-25) ascended with a short pound between each, from the wide harbour covered with duckweed at Thomastown. Our hearts sank at the thought of portage at each and I decided to take turns walking the bank while the other paddled to the next lock. There was, however, the encouraging thought of the pub and shop near the fifth one at Killucan Station and it was very pleasant walking the smooth turf with a real Westmeath smell of turf and wet thatch in the air. Also, a little old very deaf man left off earthing up his potatoes and walked with us to help at the two locks after our pause at the licensed shop and the cottage at the last one was held by a blind lock-keeper whose wife was lonely and glad of a talk.

It was a long pull after that into Mullingar, including a beautiful stretch of open bog and then a long cutting through rock. When the town was finally in sight the canal curved high round one side of it, and we went along beside small houses with many children on the towpath until we came to the ideal combination of a grassy bank, small boys to help us to land, a garage end a kind foreman who let us leave the long canoe there for the night.

(To be continued)

LONG LEVEL RALLY - 22 - 23 APRIL, 1978

Participation in this year's I.W.A.I. Royal Canal Rally will give you an opportunity of travelling along a section of waterway described above in the second instalment of Miss Hartford's reminiscences. This fourth annual rally will commence, as previously, at Thomastown Harbour at the western end of the 20-mile Long Level. Boats are launched from 10 am onwards, with the rally due to depart at 11 am. Many crews forgather on the Friday night to push the boat out in Quinn's Bar and camp overnight beside the harbour.

The rally pauses for lunch at the Hill of Down and then continues to Moyvalley, which is reached in the late afternoon, for the overnight stop. On Sunday, after an early lunch, boats move off eastwards again to reach Enfield in the mid-afternoon. This tree-shaded stretch from Moyvalley to Enfield is one of the most beautiful on the whole canal. The farewell gathering, with musical accompaniment, will be held in the Midland Bar at Enfield.

Apart from the first few yards immediately below Thomastown harbour, where there is a silt bar, there are no navigational problems. Some weed will inevitably find its way around a propeller or two but it is no more than a minor nuisance at this time of year. Boats have to be launched and retrieved via the bank but there are always many hands available to make light work of this exercise. Do come along and join the rally - no entrance fee, no formalities, just come as you are + boat.