

VOLUNTEER CAMPS TO SAVE BRIDGE

A DERELICT canal bridge near Shrivenham is set to be restored to its former glory, thanks to two weeks of work by volunteers.

The Waterway Recovery Group has launched its 2009 programme of week-long 'Canal Camps'.

The camps, which are taking place in April, will see volunteers labour on restoring Steppingsone's Bridge, a derelict canal bridge near Shrivenham.

In the past few years volunteers have rebuilt the bridge's collapsed arch, this year's work, which will be staged over April 4-11 and April 11-18, and this year, we will compete the rest of the structure and landscaping.

Those behind the work say it will be a good chance for volunteers to brush up on their bricklaying skills.

Ken Oliver, chief executive of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust, said the volunteer camps were useful.

"They enable us to have some willing volunteers to get vital work done," he said.

"It allows us to blitz a job and put maximum effort in a minimal period of time.

"These volunteer camps are, and always have been of great benefit to the work we do with our own volunteers.

"And those who take part

say there is always a great sense of camaraderie."

As well as the work at Shrivenham there will be work carried out on the Wilts and Berks Canal at Pewsham Lock, near Chippenham, in July.

That work will see a full lock clearance and rebuilding of a culvert under the canals.

Then between July 25 and August 1, the waterway's group will head to Seven Locks, near Wootton Bassett for a week long camp.

There they will continue the restoration of the brick-built locks

that carried the canal up a hillside west of Wootton Bassett.

Mike Palmer said:

"WRG's work is still as important as it ever was.

"Public agencies are having to live within tight financial constraints and are having to prioritise their spending plans.

"It is our job to make sure that we can supplement restoration programmes through WRG volunteering so that we get more waterways restored than would otherwise happen - and waterways that we value."

For more information, or to volunteer, call Jenny Black on 01494 783453 ext 604 or email enquiries@wrg.org.uk.

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PLEASED Ken Oliver, of the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust