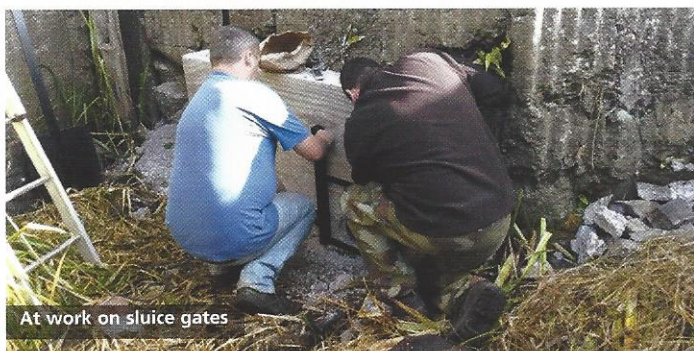


WANTED: BARGE FOR SLANE!

by Pat Doyle



Slane guard-lock before clearance



At work on sluice gates

Having been overgrown for many years, the waters of the Boyne Canal at Slane have again made an appearance. This is due to the efforts of local voluntary group, Slane Community Forum, which is working on a long term restoration project.

The work is being done in conjunction with IWAI Boyne Branch, who have done such fantastic restoration work at Oldbridge, and An Taisce, the waterway owners. The work at Slane began one year ago. The long term ambition is restoration of the Boyne Navigation permitting boat traffic again. This is being done over 3 phases. The first year was spent restoring the approximately 8km of towpath, which is now a very attractive riverside walkway. This autumn work has been carried

out on the canal itself, restoration and installation of sluice gates in the temporary barriers, repairs to canal bank and, most importantly, dredging of the 400m in the vicinity of Slane Bridge. The third phase will include dredging of remaining canal section and installation of lock gates, funding will be sought for this in 2015.

The project is being carried out under the oversight of a steering group, William Carolan, Paul Mongey, Conor Brady, Richard Smith and Pat Doyle. Richard is also leader of the project team made up of members from various work programmes.

This is a key project in the regeneration of our community and village. The visibility and attractiveness of this project is

further adding to the impetus in the Community and leads to confidence and enthusiasm for other projects.

We are delighted with the guidance and support received from so many organisations –Parks and Wild Life Service, Inland Fisheries, Meath County Council, IWAI Boyne Branch and An Taisce.

The works would not have been possible without the wholehearted input of local agricultural contractors Michael Keeley and Stephen Gallagher, local farmer Paddy Macken and Michael Rafferty of R&M Buckets who generously donated the sluice gates. Their support has been so encouraging and is much appreciated.

In order to embellish the project and create a real centre of attention, the group is now

seeking an old canal boat or keel. The idea is that this will be restored and placed on the canal beside Slane Bridge. It is hoped that with adjacent seating on the canal bank, it will become a real attraction and destination for visitors and locals.

The plan is that a 'men's shed' will be established which, under experienced guidance, will restore the barge, thereby leading to greater community participation. We are searching far and wide for such a boat- it may be steel, iron or wood and we will deeply appreciate any contributions or suggestions.

When next in the area you are invited to visit and enjoy your Boyne experience.

Photos: Pat Doyle

Pat is Chairman of Slane Community Forum.

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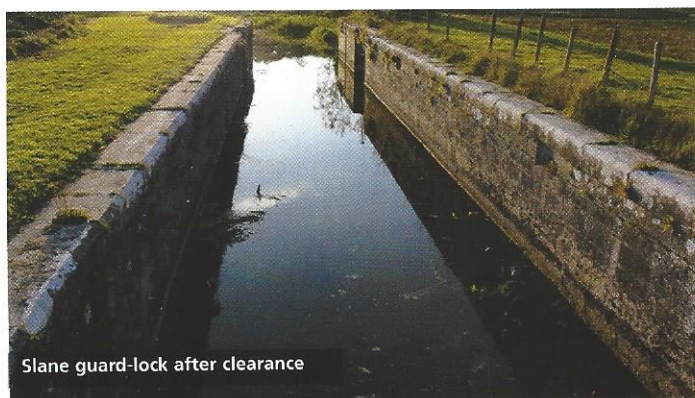
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Slane guard-lock after clearance

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