

## Editorial

Lots has been going on at the Northern end, and we are told things are nearly ready for the contractors to move in and undertake the reprofiling work. Members will have a chance to see this first-hand on 27 April, when short boat trips will be offered prior to the AGM at Shalford. A small boat rally is being held there too, to coincide with the AGM.

Talking of AGMs, we understand that if the comparatively small number of WACT directors could be increased, even more ambitious restoration projects could be considered. People with management skills, both technical and non-technical, are sought. Please make yourself known to the Chairman if you are interested.

*Bill*

## Thursday & Sunday Group - Southland and Northwards

Winter weather continues to hamper the work. At Southland, the lock ground paddle jack-heads are still awaiting drier and warmer conditions before they can be bolted down. The fish-plates to extend the ground paddle connecting rods are back from galvanising and are ready to be fitted. We have completed the cutting-back of the brickwork to accommodate the paddle when the gate is in the fully open position. The deflector plate for the back pump outlet pipe is ready to be fitted. Fitting the walkways to the lock gates, both top and bottom is nearly finished. When these are done that group will go to Loxwood lock and fit the top gate walkways. The back pump shelter is taking shape.

Four of the safety ladders have been fitted behind the Onslow Arms.

Julian Cheek and his team have continued marking out all the leased area we have from Forest Enterprises in Sidney Wood. The Waterway Restoration Group, Forestry Team (WRGFT) as scheduled, went to Sidney Wood to clear a silver birch thicket sufficient to enable the topographical survey.

For Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL, lock number 8) survey work (levelling) is yet to be done from Southlands lock. Until we are able to start work at the actual lock site there are other jobs to be done nearby at Barberry Bridge, fitting a kissing gate supplied by WSCC, and repairs to its brickwork and parapets. When it dries up (+10°C for a couple of windy weeks without rain) the access track to GBL will be put in. It will however, be in competition for resources with the DH pound clearance and the towpath repair there.

At Devil's Hole Lock (DHL), the Loxwood pound having been emptied the surveying for the DHL back pump was done and the pound allowed to refill. The replacement back pump (you remember, the original one has been moved to Southland) is on order from Italy.

Fundraising for GBL is now on its way - see the WACT website home page for the current position. Now there is another Localgiving scheme where donations of up to maximum of £10 a month for twelve months will be 100% matched and Gift Aid can be recovered. The matching funding is a maximum of £125 per month. Please contact me if you want to join; it starts in early March.

It's just about 4 furlongs from Southlands lock to Gennets lock, don't you feel something is missing with the metric system?

**Join us:** The Thursday & Sunday Group generally meets at 09:30 at Southland; if you need directions please ring 07717 855340 for latest info.

*Eric Walker*

## Northern Working Party, and Visiting Groups

A short month, but there was still time for two full weekend working parties from NWPG and WRG ABITM. Along with the MWWP we've been battling away moving, cutting, splitting, moving by water and wheelbarrow, and then stacking logs from Guns Mouth Island to Bridge End ready for members to arrange to take away in return for a donation. It's a task that employs a lot of labour from the chainsaw operatives, log splitters (I now know about the amazing qualities of the 'grenade splitting wedge'), punt pullers (using the ingenious MWWP rope system), and wheel-barrowers/stackers. NWPG managed to keep nearly 20 people fully employed for the whole weekend. Hard work but fun.

An extra two-day working party has been organised on 8/9 March to finish the clearance, to improve the landing stages ready for the AGM and to carry out some exploratory work in Hunt Park for the summer camps.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Hedgelaying Group

Howdie Pardners. Baldwins Knob Lock side is now finally finished and tidy, with our last day there being 15 February. That took two bonfires, bacon and spuds and then more spuds in the fire with some walkers also warming up by the said last fire.

We have since moved on and had one day coppicing at Barnshill for stakes and some binders for use at Drungewick Slipways. The weather became quite summery i.e. it snowed all day.

The group has only about eight days left this season, depending on weather and nesting birds with Monday 4 March being put aside for trimming with the Monday Group in the Drungewick Lane area. Also, we have had a request to tart up the Southland lock side hedge which will take two days including coppicing for binders.

That's all folks apart from the future possible dates:

<b>March</b>	Mon 4, Tues 12, Wed 20, Thurs 28
<b>April</b>	Fri 5, Mon 15, Thurs 23
<b>May</b>	Wed 1, Tues 9, Fri 17.

*Keith Nichols Tel: 01403 753882; Mob: 07817 798865*

## Tickner's Heath Depot

When is it going to warm up?! - no doubt like other working parties, we at Tickner's have been exercising our new found skills in cold weather training and can only dream of a time when there are more therms in the atmosphere.

Pleased to say that the dredger repairs are nearing completion at the time of going to press. With one more Wednesday in the month it looks like the final engine room door will be completed by Ken Bacon and Richard Powell, then Peter can take the old girl out onto the canal and she can be about her lawful business. Hopefully, after Mick Jones' efforts with the glass fibre kit, Peter will have a nice dry control shack.

On the last Wednesday of the month Francis Wellerd, Mick Jones and David Robson will be giving the Green Goddess (6in pump) a running trial at the slipway. It is vital that the old girl is a runner as her services are required by Kev Baker for an urgent job on the canal.

The award for persistence this month goes to Francis Wellerd for his efforts in trying to coax the Johnson outboard into life. He, along with most of the other members of the team, had attempted (and given up) to get the beast to run for longer than 5 minutes. In the end it was decided after investigating all possible technical solutions that enough was enough and the Johnson had to be consigned to the great outboard park in the sky.

Francis W and Mick J have also serviced and cleaned the sit-on mower, so that it is ready for our resident gardener Richard Watson to do his thing once the ground at Tickner's has dried out a bit.

Dave Kersley has been very busy bringing all manner of equipment back from the canal. Now all we have to do is find a place for the stuff. He has made a start on cutting up the vast amount of obsolete wooden lock furniture at the depot. He even managed to rope yours truly into cleaning the marker pegs brought back from Southland. At last I have the chance to justify my existence.

One final item: Richard Powell and David Robson have made an estimate of the overall length of the gash scaffolding boards rescued from the airfield burn site. It would seem that end to end they measure something in the region of 460m give or take a few metres.

I think that about it for this month, all the best.

*John Smith*

Working Party Diary		
Usually first & third Mondays of the month	'Mrs Bucket' - Keeping Up Appearances	Details from John Empringham
Every Wednesday	Mid-Week Working Party	Check with Ray Pick for confirmation of venue
Every Wednesday Thursday & Sunday as required	Loxwood Link Maintenance	Check with Kev Baker
Every Wednesday	Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot	Contact John Smith/Ken Bacon
Every Thursday	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
Thursday and Sunday	Eric Walker's Group (construction)	Contact Eric Walker for details
10 March	Mothering Sunday cruises	Details from WACT office
27 April	WACT Annual General Meeting	Shalford Village Hall



**Pictures taken by Chris Richardson just after the Monday Group finished in Sidney Wood.  
Above: looking north above Culvert 3;  
Right - looking north from the second causeway.**

## **The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays**

We completed our work in Sidney Wood at our first meeting in February. 1500 yards of towpath between Firtree Copse and lock 16 as well as the winding hole above the lock, now looks a lot tidier. We may have to return in the summer to repair or replace some of the timber boards which edge the towpath. There is also a short section of very deep muddy towpath above the winding hole which requires digging out and relaying, but we are afraid that is beyond us as it probably needs mechanised attention.

Our second meeting we termed 'Odd-Job day' and we undertook clearance at Newbridge to improve sightlines of the canal whilst other members of the team assessed the work necessary at the area of common land around Tickner's Heath, which the Trust has undertaken to maintain. We cleared the debris from the recent flooding around the causeway into the yard and commenced the task of installing QR codes on Infoposts at the request of Chairman Sally.

We meet again on 4 March, likely to be working with the Hedge Laying Group at Drungewick Lane, and on 18 March.

*Nick Wood*

## **Message from the Boat Group**

The boating season is nearly upon us again, the first charters are on 9 March followed by the Mothering Sunday trips, and then the Easter Bunny trips. I am hoping to clean the boats ready for the new season and am asking for your help. I cannot commit to a full day until Thursday 14 March so am hoping at least a few of you will be able to assist with this important task.

If anyone can help out on 14 March, please let me know. Thank you in advance for your help.

*Steve Harmes, [sh@weyandarun.co.uk](mailto:sh@weyandarun.co.uk)*

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