

## Editorial

Happy New Year to all. The weather has been most unkind to the area around the canal. For once I wasn't sorry to still be marooned here in Buckinghamshire (though I promise that we *will* be back before the end of 2014). Our family in Billingshurst lost their power early on 24 December, but fortunately it came back on late that evening so our plans to spend Christmas Day there did not have to be abandoned. I really feel for those who may not have been so fortunate. It was probably made worse by the time of year, though despite all the comments, it wasn't as bad as the big storm of 1987 when parts of Sussex were without power for about two weeks. And looking at the canal at Newbridge on 25 December, nobody could complain of water shortages. Just a pity it can't all be stored somewhere and pumped up to Devil's Hole (but maybe our engineers are working on that).

The Santa cruises proved a great success, with full boats on nearly all trips, which is great for PR as well as fund raising. We understand that some fantastic comments were received from those who travelled on the cruises. One recognised that Father Christmas is, like God, omnipresent, in the lead up to Christmas, but the canal was a really special place to see him, and it seems he was more than happy to meet the local families there. More festive trips were scheduled to go to Devil's Hole on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. I am not sure how the weather conditions will have affected these but we all know that WACT is a very resourceful body and if the forces of nature can be beaten, our volunteers will do so.

Back to work on the ground, as well as the individual groups that you will read about in this newsletter, Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) Forestry paid a visit on 7/8 December, when working from two boats, they managed to cut back branches that were overhanging the operational section of canal at Loxwood, providing a boost to our own Mid Week Working Party's efforts to tidy up the navigable length of the canal in the 'off' season. We are always pleased to receive WRG's support, and maybe it would be nice if some of us could return the favour by attending one of the group's Canal Camps in 2014. As well as being an enjoyable week or fortnight on a canal project elsewhere in the country, and a chance to learn, revive, or apply skills, you can make a real difference to one of our many fellow restoration schemes. There are 28 events in total - you can find details at [www.wrg.org.uk](http://www.wrg.org.uk), or you can view the camps brochure at [http://issuu.com/waterwaysassoc/docs/final\\_hi\\_res\\_camps\\_brochure\\_131205](http://issuu.com/waterwaysassoc/docs/final_hi_res_camps_brochure_131205).

The Trust's own plans for 2014 and the following years begin with Gennet's Bridge Lock, where we are so close with the funding that it is possible to say that our contractor, Burras Ltd, will start construction of the rebuilt lock this year. The appeal still has about £8,000 to go, but the good news is that Localgiving.com's 'Grow Your Tenner' campaign still has just under £140,000 in its matched funding pot. If you have not already done so, please consider visiting [www.localgiving.com/charity/wact](http://www.localgiving.com/charity/wact) and choosing either "Give Monthly" (which benefits us more) or making a single donation. Your tenner will be matched by the fund, so it's really a marvellous way of donating - and it need not stop with the GBL appeal, there will be plenty more projects to be funded in 2014.

Other ways of helping include collecting stamps, jewellery/watches and coins/banknotes, and sending these to the Granary Office. Lyn Nash can convert them into money (over £1,000 was raised in 2013), and she can accept used mobile phones as well this year. If you have a Waitrose store near you, please consider nominating the Trust for the 'Community Matters' scheme. Each store has £1,000 a month to share between three local charities, according to votes cast by customers with their green tokens.

*Bill*

## Workers' Lunch

Don't forget the lunch for workers and partners/friends on 7 January at Foxbridge Golf Club, details and directions for which have appeared in the two previous editions of WPN.

It is probably too late to book a place if you have not done so already, but if you are desperate, or have any questions about the event, then Geoff Perks is your man. He can be contacted on 01403 262855.

## Forestry Training

Several of our volunteers have expressed an interest in training for tree felling and other chain saw work. We are now able to offer courses for training in cross-cutting/maintenance use and also tree felling under 200mm.

If there are any more who would like to come along for an assessment, please let David Daniels know - see directory of page 2 for contact information.

## Thursday and Sunday Group - Southland and GBL

We had another first when Colin Durbridge made the final electrical connection to the GBL (Gennet's Bridge Lock) site. We have covered an area between the cabins to provide storage and a workspace, it's not really a workshop, but at least it's under cover. With this facility available some lighting and sockets could be put in enabling us to make a start on brick cutting and security marking of the electrical equipment.

Completion of the GBL access road and tidying up the edges took quite a few weeks, but it is now suitable for the horses using the bridleway as well as the other traffic. We still need to complete the bridleway diversion around where the lock bridge will be.

Reports of water going under the structure at Gennet's Pound Sluice have been investigated and a large hole has been found. To enable this investigation, the stop planks were removed, lowering the water in the pound. That was convenient too to ease work at the lock itself. The repair, a combination of concrete and clay, will be done when the weather permits. To accommodate the summer water level for the pound, modifications to the sluice will also be necessary. Over many years in the past, land drains have been installed in the field, which drain into the canal. To keep these flowing in winter will require the pound to have a winter water level. How this is to be achieved has yet to be decided but the sluice will probably be involved in regulating the levels.

WSCC's response to the submission by Hockley & Dawson of the Agreement In Principle (AIP) for the lock bridge has been received. This means the parapets can be 1.2m high, rather than the 1.8m that the Council was asking for previously. The AIP is the trigger for a legal agreement, which will have further conditions we will have to meet. We await a response from Ian Burton on outstanding environmental matters.

Removal of silt in the Devil's Hole pound continues. We were trying to achieve three days work each week. There have been some machine breakdowns causing delays, and of course the weather has been very wet, but in the New Year we will have another go. A visit by the WRG Forestry Team cleared a number of trees, some which were a problem for the hedging group and others offered potential hazards for the boat. The follow-up clearance was made possible by using our Case 13t digger.

The centre line of another alternative route for the canal in Sidney Wood has been marked out, and we have obtained agreement from Forest Enterprise which will allow us to carry out the further clearance which will enable the necessary topographical survey.

**Join us.** The Thursday & Sunday Group generally meets at 09:30. Next meeting is scheduled for 6 Jan 2014. For information about where we are and what we are doing, or to get the latest job list, please ring 07717 855340.

*Eric Walker*

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

As anticipated in our last report, the two outings in December were held in Sidney Wood cutting back the brambles and tree branches etc on both sides of the canal. So far we reckon we have completed about one third of the 1,500yds between Firtree Copse and lock 16.

We shall need at least another two meetings to finish the whole distance. Accordingly it looks as if we shall continue there in January (6th and 20th), weather permitting. This will, of course, be subject to confirmation by our leader, John Empringham.

Happy New Year to all.

*Nick Wood*

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
WACT Office	General enquiries	01403 752403	<a href="mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk">office@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
David Daniels	Visiting working parties	01483 505566 Mon-Thurs 8.30-12.30pm	<a href="mailto:support@weyandarun.co.uk">support@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Michael Bates	Health & Safety Officer	07786 323515	<a href="mailto:michael_bates@weyandarun.co.uk">michael_bates@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Eric Walker	Loxwood Projects	07717 855340	<a href="mailto:tsg@weyandarun.co.uk">tsg@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Ray Pick	MidWeek Working Party	01483 272443	<a href="mailto:anne.pick@btinternet.com">anne.pick@btinternet.com</a>
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	<a href="mailto:mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk">mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Kev Baker	Loxwood Link	02380 861074	<a href="mailto:loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk">loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	<a href="mailto:depot@weyandarun.co.uk">depot@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Tony Clear	Winston's Group	01903 774 301	<a href="mailto:winstonsgroup@weyandarun.co.uk">winstonsgroup@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Keith Nichols	Hedge laying	01403 753882	<a href="mailto:hedging@weyandarun.co.uk">hedging@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Bill Nicholson	Northern working parties	01844 343 369	<a href="mailto:bill@nwpg.org.uk">bill@nwpg.org.uk</a>
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	07777 668 928	<a href="mailto:bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk">bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk</a>

## Tickner's Heath Depot

Well, no doubt you have survived the turkey, mince pies etc and have not been too sorely troubled by this awful weather. Here at the depot we had a rather short month. I did offer the team the chance to attend Tickner's on the last Wednesday in the month but as you can guess the team's replies were unprintable (you can't get the staff).

You will no doubt remember that in the last edition Peter Foulger had acquired some items which he thought were within our capabilities to fix. How right he was (in two cases out of three that is). Our technical wizards (Francis Wellerd, Mick Jones, Ken Bacon and Richard Powell) turned their attention first to the 3in pumps. Various labels were attached to the items, one saying that the head gasket had gone (where? you may ask) and that the other had a broken impeller. After stripping them it was found that neither was strictly true. Yes, one part of the impeller cover was broken but on reassembling it was found that it pumped water at a very reasonable rate. The other started and ran perfectly, granted after a bit of fine tuning by the team. Both were tested using our test tank (an old skip really) and showed a remarkable ability to shift water - in fact far superior to any of the comparable pumps we have at the depot. All in all, both turned out to be a good addition to the Trust's equipment.

We then turned our attention to the other item, which was a Briggs & Stratton powered Hydrovane compressor. This has proved a rather different kettle of fish and has caused us a lot of head scratching and mumbling. Luckily Francis Wellerd had done a course on said compressors, but as that was some years ago, bringing it all back to mind took some effort, but we are slowly getting there. Mind you, our task was made harder by someone deciding to butcher the carburettor in an effort to strip it down. So at the moment we are waiting for new parts. Whether we will ever see the compressor operational is another matter, as at the moment the electrics are a nightmare. Parts are missing, and there seems to be no discernable indication what does what and goes where, but our electrical wizard Mick Jones is on the case. With luck, and helpful suggestions from other members of the team, all is not yet lost. At least if all else fails the Trust will have a serviceable 16hp Briggs & Stratton engine.

Ken Bacon has continued his ministrations at the Granary loo. Next on his agenda is to do a bit of work to the walls, which have suffered with age. He then intends to give the floor a good coat of paint supplied by yours truly (paid for by the Trust I should add) then it will hopefully be 'job done'.

Our last member of the team, David Robson, when not engaged in rock breaking (I told him not to be too cheeky), is helping Dave Kersley deliver fencing and hedging material. David R has turned out to be a dab hand with the circular saw, cutting up old scaffolding planks to provide fuel for the braziers on the Santa cruises. Well done David.

Dave Kersley of course continues to be everywhere and anywhere delivering what is needed by the working parties. He even managed to shift nearly all of the road planings heap that has laid in the yard for many years. No doubt Eric and his crew put the stuff to good use. Hopefully Dave's task was made easier after the team had moved various cement mixers and a pile of hardboard, and cleared a path so that he could get at the stuff.

Well I think that about it for this month let's hope for better weather in 2014 so all the best for the coming year.

*John Smith, on behalf of the Tickner's Team*

## Hedgelaying Team

Happy, drier (it won't be) New Year to all and sundry. Friday the 13th (our last work day) lived up to expectations as I had the awful news that Bob McHardy had died in hospital on the Monday/Tuesday of that week, after an accident (the real meaning of the word) on that Monday evening. Bob was a quiet, unassuming man who worked hard with the team after having had a long journey to the site by bus and fold-up bike from Burgess Hill and then the same journey back afterwards in the dark. Who else would do that? I feel doubly sad because his incredible efforts for the Trust did not seem

Working Party Diary		
Every Sunday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Contact Eric Walker for details
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 (plus Thursday and Sunday as required)	Loxwood Link Maintenance	Check with Kev Baker
Every Wednesday	Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot	Contact John Smith/Ken Bacon
Tuesdays or Fridays	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
7 January 2014	Navvies' lunch, Foxbridge GC	Contact Geoff Perks, 01403 262855

to be good enough for the "Trust as a whole", for him to be rewarded with a free posted copy of the WPN. Penny and I fought hard for this as Bob didn't have an email address because he did not own a computer. Many travel long distances and work hard for the Trust but I think Bob was exceptional. Long may the memory of Bob last and I dedicate our effort at Southland Lock to him. Cheers Bob, wherever you may be.

On a more cheerful note, the team were at Southland Lock on Thursday 5th with seven souls and Friday 13th with five of our souls. In between those two dates the WRG Tree Climbing Team had kindly reduced to 4-foot height, the one old hawthorn tree that was too difficult and dangerous for me to tackle. Thanks guys. On the Friday we dropped the last tree to be laid which was a 1.5-foot diameter field maple, which fought back for some time taking us from what had been a nice sunny day, albeit somewhat breezy, into the wet and stormy part of the afternoon. The swine, but we eventually got the better of it. This was the end of laying the last three trees on that day whilst members of the group were staking and binding the earlier laid material. Unfortunately we didn't manage to finish the hedge completely so we will have one more visit there in 2014.

The temperatures have ranged from -2°C to +10°C within the same day, whilst it has gone from sunny and still to wet and extremely windy as well. We have seen seven walkers only in one day but that's not bad for the weather conditions and the condition of the "Somme" towpath.

I will miss Jim Phillips as 'my little treasure', i.e. the Treasurer, as we got on well with our respective senses of humour. I do hope the new treasurer has a similar sense of the ridiculous?

It only remains for me, in the last couple of days of 2013, to thank everyone who has assisted in our efforts, however small, over the past year.

So here are the dates for 2014:

**Jan** - Wed 08, Thurs 16, Fri 24

**Feb** - Mon 03, Tues 11, Wed 19, Thurs 27

**Mar** - Fri 07, Mon 17, Tues 25

April and May to follow next month

There may be extra dates available over these five months. Arriva dirty all for 2013 (that's not Italian Shirley).

Cheers all, mine's a pint!

*Keith Nichols*

## Mid Week Working Party

The MWWP, with the assistance of Derek Heath and the *May Upton* work boat, have cleared the right-hand side of the towpath from the Canal Centre and the Onslow Arms public house up as far as Brewhurst Lock.

We reduced all the large branches and trees in the area to provide logs for Dave Kersley to collect and all the brambles, hedge cuttings and small trees were then burnt in areas agreed with Peter Foulger.

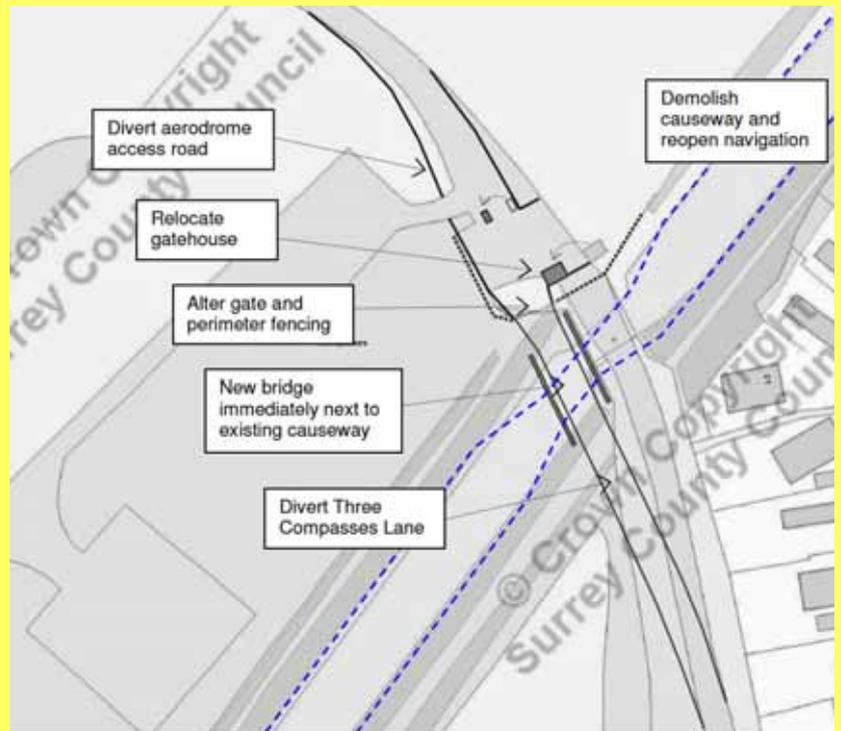
Ray Pick, Dave Verrall and Bob Smith arranged a meeting with Peter Foulger to decide how to approach the clearing of the steep banks above Brewhurst and it was agreed we would bring *May Upton* along the next section so that the brambles and small bushes could be cut down and transported to an agreed burn site.

This work is being carried on to Baldwins Knob Lock and when complete will ensure safer passage of the boats as far as the slipway at Drungewick.

In view of the recent storm & flood damage, MWWP will be moving up to Drungewick in early January for two weeks to clear the storm/flood debris away from the lock and bridge area.

*Ray Pick*

## Compasses Bridge



**Among WACT's ambitious future plans is the replacement of the causeway at the Dunsfold Airfield southern entrance with a canal bridge offering navigable headroom.**