

## Editorial

The big news recently has been the flooding which badly affected Surrey and Sussex in January. Both the Canal Centre and the Shalford office suffered an ingress of water, but I understand there was no serious damage. *Zachariah Keppel* got stranded on the canal bank, and had to be recovered to the Drungewick slipway, and a number of paths by the canal have been eroded - yet more work for our volunteers in the near future. My own news is that, after many delays, as you receive this newsletter Judie and I will be on the point of returning to Sussex. So, with luck, future reports won't have to be done at a distance and have to rely less on second- and third-hand information.

Dave Verrall, of MWWP fame, has added to his many other roles and been appointed as Loxwood Canal Centre Supervisor. Congratulations to Dave.

Our Winston Harwood Group has not got its own slot in this issue, so I must acknowledge their recent work repairing various landing stages on the operational section in readiness for the forthcoming trip boat season.

Finally, WACT still needs more money, particularly for the GBL appeal, which is now only about £4,000 short of its £175,000 target. Chances to double the value of £10 donations will cease soon. The 'Grow Your Tenner' campaign by localgiving.com matches donations, either single or 'give monthly', of up to £10. It is scheduled to cease when the available 'pot' runs out or at the end of February. So it is still possible to bag some of the £30,000 or so that remained in late January.

*Bill*



*The Monday group in Sidney Wood on 20 January (Digby Ridge)*

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

We suspect that, like all the other working groups, our efforts in January were affected by the large amounts of rain and consequent flooding. Accordingly our first meeting of 2014 was restricted to clearing the debris in the canal at Tickner's Heath and clearing fallen branches and logs etc from the watercourse on the common land south of the causeway to allow the excess water to flow away more freely. We did, however, resume our work in Sidney Wood later in the month and with a good turnout of volunteers, a lot was achieved.

We found that the first culvert, which we had cleared before Christmas, had become completely blocked again and it took three members of the group considerable time and effort to clear it. In addition to brush cutting the bramble growth etc and clearing it from the towpath and banks of the canal, a fallen silver birch tree which was obstructing the bridleway, was cut up and a substantial oak tree branch was removed from the canal. Nevertheless to complete the job as far as lock 16, another visit is required, likely to be the 3rd of February. Later next month we may also undertake more work on the common land at Tickner's.

*Nick Wood*

## Thursday and Sunday Group - Southland and GBL

The Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) access road has stood up well in the wet weather. It will be interesting to see how it withstands frosty conditions. Repairs to the parapets at Barberry Bridge have been completed. The rest of the work will have to wait until the river is very low. Better weather is also awaited for the repairs and modification to Gennets Pound sluice.

With the responses from WSCC, CDC and the issuing of the ecological survey for GBL, an application to CDC to discharge the Planning Conditions of the Planning Application has been made. The application to Natural England can now be made for the GCN Licence. Meanwhile everything else at GBL is on hold.

In the Devil's Hole pound more of the same, we were trying to get three days work each week. There have been some machine breakdowns, causing delays, and of course the weather has been very wet.

The centre line of another alternative route for the canal in Sidney Wood has been the subject of a topographical survey.

**Join us.** The Thursday & Sunday Group generally meets at 09:30. For some time now there has been a job list circulated to the TSG Group, this is to enable the volunteers to know where they will be working as the group has been split into up to six sub groups to do what is the latest task. For information about where we are and what we are doing or to get the latest job list, please ring 07717 855340.

*Eric Walker*

## Navvies' Lunch - 7 January 2014

This year 45 people turned out for the annual Navvies' Lunch, which was again held at the Foxbridge Golf Club. As previously, we were splendidly regaled with an excellent meal, a more than adequate supply of drinks (for those not driving) and, of course, lots of conversation with colleagues and, in many cases, their partners. This is a great opportunity to mingle with those from other WACT working parties and to discover what they have been up to. Everybody seemed to enjoy the gathering, which was held on a Tuesday in order, according to one attendee, to get up everybody's strength for the MWWP's session on the following day.

*Geoff Perks*



**Picture by Janet Philips of the happy band of working party volunteers and partners at the Navvies' Lunch on 7 January. We would like to list the names of all present, but for one thing we don't have space for a bigger picture and a long list of names; and anyway, that nice Mr Perks says that he has failed to identify about a third of those present**

## Northern Working Party and Visiting Groups

Just one visit to report - on 18 January when nine, mainly NWPG, volunteers visited Shalford to start the clear up following the floods over Christmas. The original plan was to visit Guns Mouth Island and trim back the growth on the Alder stumps. However, the island and much of the lower part of Hunt Park were back under water so our plans changed to cutting up fallen trees and planting the first section of hedge in front of the A281 fence.

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>

Inspection of the path through the park revealed surface damage which we should be able to be put right in one weekend session in the spring.

February and March will see three visiting group weekend work parties concentrating on the Dunsfold section. After that we'll be back at Hunt Park when, as well as repairing the path, we hope to start work on the viewing platform.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Tickner's Heath Depot

Well here we are in another year - just as wet and soggy as at the end of the last. I did say in the last issue let's hope for better weather in 2014, obviously someone up there isn't listening to my requests for dry and warm Wednesdays. Anyway, for those who were paying attention to the January issue, I no doubt left you in suspense wondering if our experts could get the Hydrovane compressor working. Well, we did. Mind you, it took the combined efforts of all the team (less yours truly) to figure out the circuitry and get the beastie operational. So the Trust now has a fully functioning compressor. All we now need is bits to attach to it.

Having time on his hands after the compressor, Francis Wellerd turned his attention to the team's strimmer. As he had donated it to Tickner's he did not see a problem and set about to the give it the once over (will the boy never learn?) Of course, you've guessed it, would the thing run properly? Of course not, and even after some help from the team's good luck charm Mick Jones it was still resisting all attempts to operate properly. But Francis is not known as Mr Persistence for nothing. After rummaging in his garage and a few trips to the internet he came up trumps. Mind you, it was touch and go for a bit.

Ken Bacon, in between trips to the Granary Loo (for decorating purposes I should add), turned his attention to the MWWP's Tirfor winch. As it had been helping to put the ZK back where she belonged it was thought a good idea to have a look-see to make sure it hadn't strained itself. After a good clean down and inspection Ken was confident that all was well. All that is now needed is to give a trial pull to see how it operates.

The other members of the team, Richard Powell and David Robson, haven't been idle either. If they are not bailing out the boats in our dry marina (did I say dry?), they can be seen clustered around the tracked dumper freeing off the brake pedal or helping Dave Kersley with the problem of track tension. Their other skill is in ensuring visiting work groups have the equipment they need to carry out their projects.

Oh yes, I nearly forgot. The two Davids even found time to venture into darkest West Sussex to pick up the bundles of papers from the Ashington Cactus Farm and empty them into the skips at Loxwood.

Well that's about it for the month. So, other than an afternoon at the Canal Centre changing the lock combination, that's the sum total of last month's effort.

All the best

*John Smith*

## Hedgelaying Team

Saluté, and now, the prologue. Oh! NO! don't missus. So I thought we had finished at Southland Lock at the end of Wednesday 8 January. What a mistakea to makea! After the team had finished that day I took a walk along the length of the lock and down the slope from the tail. On turning around to look back up the slope to the tail of the chamber I decided that we hadn't finished.

The idea was to make a thick sound/view shield from the towpath. With this in mind the team has spent the last three days, with one more to finish it off, laying with selective pollarding the said slope and canal bank.

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
23 March	Small Boat Rally, Dunsfold	Contact: <a href="mailto:rallies@weyandarun.co.uk">rallies@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
26 April	Annual Meeting, Billingshurst	Details in next <i>Wey-South</i>

The Southland Somme has not defeated us or a number of walkers. It has been pleasantly sunny and mild with just the odd brief rain shower. Making things worthwhile are the positive comments from the said walkers and seeing a low, circling red kite above the chamber (they are on the increase in the area) plus buzzards, fieldfares, redwings, goldfinches and the usual now 'paired up' robin. It's a lovely quiet site.

We have a further three sites to work at, flooding permitting, for the rest of this season so with that in mind here are the probable dates (last minute changes may occur with possible extra dates added):

So here are the dates for February 2014 onwards:

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

**Mar** - Fri 14, Mon 17, Tues 25

**Apr** - Thurs 03/Wed 02, Thurs 10, Fri 18

**May** - Tues 06, Wed 14, Thurs 22, Fri 30

Saluté

PS - My stalwart, Bob Potts, is away for the end of January (and some of February?). So I wish him a speedy recovery plus my illness is ongoing, making it difficult to keep to a specific time and I also have a hospital visit sometime in February

*Keith Nichols*

## Mid Week Working Party

January began with the traditional navvies' lunch which was held at Foxbridge Golf club. We would like to thank Geoff Perks for organising the lunch. Please see photo from Janet Phillips.

The MWWP spent the first two weeks of January clearing storm debris at Drungewick. Our first priority was to clear the large amount of debris floating in the canal above Drungewick lock. This included an old sign from the Onslow Arms public house, which has now been given to the landlady of the Onslow. The towpath was also cleared of debris. We managed to burn some of the debris. However due to the very wet conditions the remainder of the debris will have to be burnt once the rain stops and the floods recede.

The team returned to Brewhurst in the third week of January, to clear vegetation and small branches, a job that had been started previously by the WRG forestry team. We also moved and stacked the logs near to the entrance of the field, so that they could be collected by local people in return for a donation to the Trust. Another team aboard our work boat *May Upton* continued with the clearance of the offside bank from Brewhurst Bridge to Baldwins Knob lock.

During the last week of January we cut back the overgrown vegetation that was obstructing the passage of boats between Brewhurst lock and bridge. We also cleared trees and branches which had been blown down during the storm.

The MWWP would like to thank Derek Heath for his continued assistance with the work boat *May Upton*. During February the MWWP hopes to continue clearing the offside bank of overhanging vegetation between Brewhurst and Drungewick, to help the boat operations .

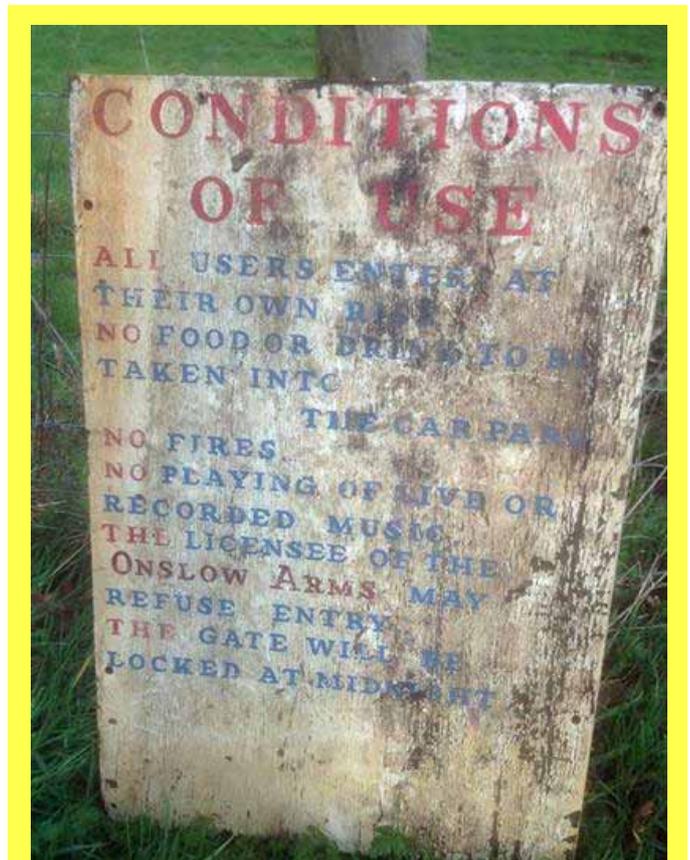
*Dave Verrall on behalf of Ray Pick*

## Situations Vacant

WACT is still seeking persons able to fill a number of positions, including:

**Restoration Manager:** Ideally a Chartered Civil Engineer, recently retired from full-time employment, preferably experienced in inland waterways and canals, earthworks and geotechnical engineering and project management, with both contracting and consulting experience and an ability to work with others.

**Project Managers:** To manage small works mainly undertaken by volunteers and/or major projects using contractors. Likely to be at or near retirement, with construction and management experience. Details of these and other vacancies at [www.weyandarun.co.uk/sitsvac.php](http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/sitsvac.php). If you can help, or know any suitable candidates, contact David Daniels at the Shalford office, 01483 505566 (Mon-Thu am).



*The Onslow Arms sign found by MWWP and pictured by Dave Verrall. Your editor is sure he remembers certain previous licensees whose 'welcoming' attitude towards customers may be reflected in the wording of the notice...*