

### Editorial

Here's hoping that everybody enjoyed a good Christmas, and wishing you all the best for 2016. This looks like an exciting year for the canal with several major projects on the go, at Compasses Bridge, Gennets Bridge Lock and the Bramley Link.

Congratulations to Ray Pick, who in November received a special certificate of recognition in the BBC Sussex and Surrey Community Heroes Awards for 2015. Ray has been a volunteer with the Mid Week Working Party for many years, and until recently acted as MWWP leader.

*Bill*

### Thursday and Sunday Group

Progress at Gennets Bridge Lock will now be 'more of the same'. The initial brick courses have been done on the bridge abutments, but there are many more to go. Other brickwork within the lock is getting done too. The pace of bricklaying is picking up as more bricklayers join the group. The concrete foundations for the parapets have been poured, this means that all that brickwork that will finish up underground, can be done. The mild weather has been a great help in this regard.

We now have a site routine; mixing the mortar and the back fill are major jobs at the beginning of the day, then to lay the bricks so on the next working day the void behind them can be filled. At the end of the day putting up and repairing the new fence are regular tasks.

A team under Martyn Baker has been preparing the top cill for the reinforced concrete invert.

With a regular group of 15 and more people joining the group, the programme is being pulled forward, just how much it is too early to say as the weather will constrain work over the next three months.

Happy New Year to all and to the newts don't come our way - stay in the pond we made for you.

The Thursday and Sunday Group meets at 09:30. The TSG has a work briefing form emailed out before the working day. Please email Eric Walker if you want to get on that circulation list.

*Eric Walker*

### Mid Week Working Party

As I failed to write a report last month, I am reporting on two months' activity. We started November clearing the towpath between Southland and Devil's Hole. It looks a great deal clearer since we have done this.

We then moved on to Fast Bridge, along Alfold Lane where most of the group have not been before. We took a large number of huge branches out of the canal and cleared patches of brambles on the field side of this part of the canal. As this is private land we were kindly allowed bonfires by the landowner which made the task of clearing much easier. During our last week's visit we celebrated the award of Ray Pick's BBC Surrey and Sussex Volunteer of the Year with a small glass of bubbles. Although we have spent four weeks so far, it will take many more visits to complete the task here. From here we cleared the culvert and river bed at Rooks Hill farm. This area is looking really tidy now.

Our last two weeks before Christmas were spent at Hunt Park clearing up after the WRH Forestry team. We cleared and chopped logs as well on the second week having a bonfire to clear the brash by kind permission of the neighbouring landowner. The first week we had the largest working party I have ever known - 27 people. Well done everyone!

*Margaret Darvill*

### Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

Having just missed the deadline for the December WPN, this report covers our efforts in both November and December.

As anticipated in the October WPN, our three November meetings were held in Sidney Wood where we commenced cutting back a year's vegetation growth on both sides of the canal. As requested, we removed the stop planks at the overspill weir at the end of the summit near lock 16, cleaned them and then replaced them with a wedge underneath them to allow the water to drain out of the canal. Other work included blocking the overflow pipe under the first causeway at the Firtree copse end of Sidney Wood to prevent excess water from the first pound flowing into the next section to keep the latter dewatered. We also cleared both culverts.

December was taken up meeting requests for our help. We assembled and secured two picnic tables on the viewing platform in the Hunt Park and did as much as we could, which wasn't much, at Gosden Aqueduct. Pulling out the ivy loosens the bricks and removing tree stumps and ivy roots in the wing walls will dislodge much of the original brickwork which would then have to be made good or at least safe. However, we have undertaken to carefully clear the far side wing wall when we can gain access via the river using the aquadocks

when they become available to us. Also in December we worked with Ian Burton planting trees and bushes around the picnic table at Devils Hole Lock, as well as clearing litter and rescuing the life ring from the lock.

Subject to the above, we shall be continuing in Sidney Wood in January as we will require at least two more outings to complete tidying up all the way to lock 16.

Wishing all our colleagues a happy and productive 2016.

*Nick Wood*

## Visiting Groups and Northern Working Party

It's a combined report this time because the various groups have mainly been working together. WRG Forestry visited the W&A Canal in early December to commence tree management works along the line of the cycleway at Hunt Park. To assist the work, and because bonfires are not permitted on the Surrey County Council section of the site, we hired in a chipper to process the brash on site.

This, along with the hired dumper used to tow the Trust's log trailer, was safely stored at Tanglewood Farm with the kind assistance of the Brentons for the duration of use. Various trees identified for removal by an earlier survey were

taken down with the larger timbers being either passed over the fence for use at Tanglewood or hauled back to the Hunt Park compound to await storage and processing.

The work continued on the following Wednesday and Saturday with the MWWP and then the Northern Working Party (NWP) 'third Saturday team'. On both occasions we had Andy Evans and Rob Nicholson with us to continue the felling with the rest of the team stacking the brash and moving log sections to the compound. A fallen tree across the river was removed to prevent water being held back should the river flood. The compound was also tidied up with more logs processed and made ready for acquisition. It should be recorded that on the first Wednesday there was a record total of volunteers on the site from MWWP.

Not having had enough the previous week and with Christmas approaching, 12 members of MWWP returned on 23 December to burn the brash on the Brenton's bonfire site just over the fence and therefore beyond the area subject to restriction. Thanks to them as single day hire of a chipper would cost the Trust a lot of cash. WRG Forestry plan to return to the W&A in March to continue the work and local teams will no doubt be called upon again to help with the vital clearing up and processing of their efforts.



**Northern Working Party erecting scaffolding at Compasses (Bill Nicholson)**



**Compasses Bridge - the south western wing wall. The concrete blocks form the shuttering for the structure which will be filled with concrete. The outside surface will be clad with facing bricks. (Photo: Dave Verrall)**

Meanwhile at Compasses, the Northern (Summit branch) Working Party decided that those spare days between Christmas and New Year could be effectively spent on site. Tuesday 29 December saw 10 NWP volunteers erecting the scaffolding on the southern face of the bridge necessary for the arrival of the parapet contractors expected on 4 January. Thanks to the expertise (and youth!) of the Evans brothers, this major and complex task was completed in just six hours. The job was made more complex by the need to span the working area for the eastern wing wall where the main contractor, Thornes, still have more block laying to complete. NWP will be back on 16 January to dismantle the scaffold and re-erect it as a deck under the main bridge ready for bricklaying to start (weather permitting) on 22 January when the Newbury Group return for the first of a number of visits in 2016.

New volunteers (and we normally have one new member on each working party) are always welcome. Please contact either Dave Evans or me.  
*Bill Nicholson*

## Hedgelaying Team

New Year greetings all. There is not much festive cheer in the North this year end and I'm sure we all feel sorry for people that have been flooded out. At least for us down south, we haven't been hit, yet! I'm glad I live up the hill and will be relatively OK until the 30m sea rise - Loxwood on Sea?

Well, we have spent most of December coppicing and as of the 29th we have 200 stakes and binders. This is enough for about 10 days or fewer of work, but will probably see us out for this season. We have been trying not to trample the primroses in flower. What a crazy warm and wet

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Maurice Cranefield	Visiting working parties	01483 505566	<a href="mailto:Maurice_Cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk">Maurice_Cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Dave Evans	Health & Safety Officer		<a href="mailto:compasses@weyandarun.co.uk">compasses@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Eric Walker	Loxwood Projects	07717 855340	<a href="mailto:tsg@weyandarun.co.uk">tsg@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Margaret Darvill	Mid Week Working Party	01483 894606	<a href="mailto:margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk">margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	<a href="mailto:mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk">mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
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John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	<a href="mailto:depot@weyandarun.co.uk">depot@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Tony Clear	Winston Group (Lordings)	01903 774 301	<a href="mailto:winstongroup@weyandarun.co.uk">winstongroup@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
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Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	<a href="mailto:bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk">bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk</a>

winter so far. I expect the next missive from me will be entitled "Three feet of snow, can you believe it?". Cheers all.

*Keith Nichols*

## Tickner's Heath Depot

With the onset of the festive season we only managed three visits to Tickner's in December and a lot of the time was spent putting the depot to bed as it were.

As mentioned in the last edition the technical members of the team were left scratching their collective heads as regarding the 3in pump of Dave Evans crew. Well, after reassembling and giving it a dry run it seemed to be in full working order, so it was decided to give it a go in our test tank. Lo and behold the beastie passed with flying colours, pumping away to its hearts content.

Once again our old chum Dan came up trumps and found a contractor to relieve us of the majority of the ferrous scrap lying about the place. The pile has since disappeared, which then gave us an opportunity to cut back the brambles which were rather hampering our attempt at store our scrap in an orderly fashion. Things may be even tidier in the New Year as the scrappie promised to return with a skip which will make storage a lot easier.

So other than producing more signboards for weekend activities on the canal, that completes the report of our month's work.

Finally we must thank Mrs Dan for the delicious chocolate cake which the team was only too happy to devour on our last visit of the year. Please don't take that as a hint for the coming months.

Well, I guess that about it for this month. All the best for the 2016.

*John Smith*

## Navvies' Festive Lunch

MWWP Navvies and their partners, and non-active members of the group, are invited to the Annual Luncheon on Wednesday 10th February 2016, at Foxbridge Golf Club, with lunch being served promptly at 1pm.

### Wey & Arun Canal MWWP Lunch Menu Wednesday 10th February 2016

#### Starters

Roasted Tomato & Red Bell Pepper Soup,  
Rustic Croutons

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Duck Liver Pate, Melba Toast, Onion Chutney

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Deep-fried Brie Wedges, Mixed Leaves,  
Spiced Apple Chutney

#### Mains

Homemade Steak & Kidney Pudding, Mashed Potatoes

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Supreme of Chicken, Boursin & Mushroom Sauce,  
New Potatoes

~

Classic Fish Pie

All served with a selection of fresh vegetables

#### Desserts

Crème Brûlée, Shortbread Biscuit

~

Spiced Pineapple Upside Down Pudding,  
Rum & Caramel Sauce

~

Lemon Tart

Cream & Custard will be served

#### Coffee & Mints

As in previous years, there will be a choice of two or three courses, including coffee.

The three course menu will cost £20.25, the two course menu will be £16.95. See above for menu choices.

Drinks may be purchased at the bar beforehand.

Bookings will only be confirmed when payment by cheque is received, together with each person attending's menu choice.

Notice of intention to attend can be made to either Di Miles, 8 Newlands, Buckingham Close, Guildford, GU1 1TR (email di913@btinternet.com) or alternatively to Trish Loveland (email ploveland222@btinternet.com) or see us on a working party day.

*Di Miles*

## 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	Details from Margaret Darvill
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	Work in Lording's area	Contact Tony Clear for details
Various Tuesdays	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans
10 February 2016	MWWP Navvies' Lunch	See above