

Wey & Arun



Quarterly Magazine of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust

Issue 185 December 2018/January/February 2019



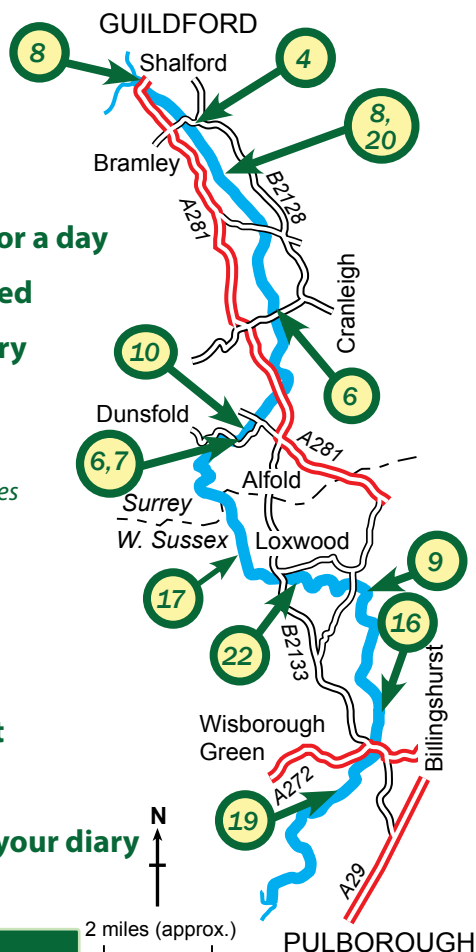
Above: Probably the largest boat to navigate the Tickner's Heath section of the canal since restoration started - the 23-foot Wilderness boat *The Moodle* after launching from the Thriscutt Slipway on 30th September. (Julian Nowell)



Events organiser Roger Beazer (left) celebrated the 16th and final outing in 2018 for the Mobile Display Vehicle at Guildford Farmers' Market. Here he is pictured with fellow volunteers Julian Nowell (centre) and Chris Blow. If you would like to help next year's programme, by either manning the MDV or getting it to and from events, please contact Roger (roger_beazer@weyandarun.co.uk or via the Northern Office).

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**Front cover: Trucks are rolling at Birtley Reach as work
on the Bramley section of the canal gets going.**



Autumn Meeting at Bramley - Saturday 20th October

It's your meeting, said our Chairman Sally Schupke as she welcomed some 120 members to Bramley Village Hall for an Autumn update. After a well received trial last year, all formal business was dropped in favour of a series of updates, with plenty of opportunities for questions.

Sally launched a very upbeat session by announcing that the official opening of the Thriscutt Slipway on 30 September had been a great success, with Waverley Mayor Denise Le Gal obviously enjoying her trip in an Amphicar (see page 10 for a full report). She congratulated all those involved and volunteers for their hard work in getting the project completed.

The next piece of good news was that the Trust has acquired the freehold of Lordings Lock and Aqueduct from the Environment Agency for a nominal price. Land ownership gives us a serious stake in an area, with influence far greater than from a lease or licence, Sally said.

Financial news

The positive messages continued in Joint Finance Director Julian Morgan's presentation. We have more funds available than at any time in the Trust's history.

Striking a note of caution, Julian said that our strong financial position is mainly thanks to some exceptionally generous grants and legacies. We can't rely on these in future years. The Trust really needs to build up its



Sally Schupke.
*(Autumn Meeting pictures
by Stephen Batey)*

The good news is that our piggy bank is looking very healthy

This year so far:
 • Donations - £5224
 • Spend - £2054 (2020 directly on canal restoration and maintenance)
 • Increase in our funds - £3170

Our total funds - £1.54 million
 • A record for specific grants - £600k
 • A record for specific legacies - £100k
 • A total we suggest to projects - £100k

The total is the highest in the Trust's history



Julian Morgan gives an upbeat Finance presentation.

regular, dependable income. Here the Trust absolutely relies on the generosity of its members and supporters.

Strategic Funds established

Previously it was the Trust's policy only to assign available funds to projects when it was reasonably certain that they would go ahead. On the other hand, we have always tried to spend our available funds on the canal as soon as we can - we have never built up large reserves. Julian said that currently there were a number of projects in the planning stage, but not certain to go ahead. He therefore announced that the Trust was creating Strategic Funds to help finance future projects in each of the three key areas: (1) Shalford/Bramley, (2) the Summit Level and (3) Loxwood/Ifold.

Financial strength brings opportunities

Julian saw our current financial strength as a great chance to boost the Trust's efforts in a variety of ways, in particular:

- To seize opportunities, in the way the Trust has always done;
- To make sure that our staff and volunteers have the right tools to do their jobs safely, efficiently and enjoyably;
- To use more specialised professional help, especially with planning and design work;
- Perhaps to take on more paid staff, if we can find the right people.

Summit Level update

Project manager Tony Ford's presentation concentrated on four key items:

1. The Thriscutt Slipway, with exciting news of a possible future event;
2. The new Tickner's Heath Bridge, where planning is moving ahead, if not as quickly as we would like;
3. Desilting the remaining section between Compasses Bridge and the slipway, with new equipment due to arrive shortly;
4. Elmbridge Road in Cranleigh, where the local council is keen to remove a bottleneck on a busy road.

Thriscutt Slipway

The slipway and the adjoining wharf are complete and available for use. However, the slipway is within Dunsfold Aerodrome and permission for access is essential (contact the Northern Office, details on page 3). Our construction base

The Quarterly Magazine of

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust

Registered Charity no. CC265331

The aim of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust is the preservation and restoration of the former inland waterway route between the Rivers Wey and Arun, with a view to reopening this to navigation.

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If at all possible please e-mail copy by attachment in Microsoft Word format. Typed copy is also acceptable. Photos are always welcome – prints or hi-res digital please.

Issue 185

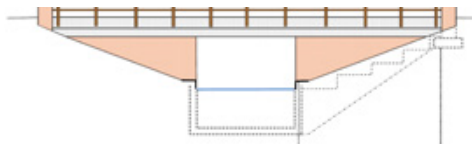
**December 2018/January/
February 2019**

will stay here until it can move to the Tickner's Heath Bridge site. The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) Trailboat Rally is a high-profile event, aimed at drawing attention to sections of navigable waterway that are not currently connected to the national system. Provisionally the IWA has offered us the chance to host the event on our canal in 2020.

Tickner's Heath Bridge

Tony now expected to submit a planning application in spring 2019 for the new bridge that will remove the current blockage where the Dunsfold-Alfold road crosses the canal. (The new bridge will not be exactly where the road currently crosses the canal.)

We have completed some very important steps. The outline design is complete. Surrey County Council has agreed the road and bridge layout. The design now includes a



The proposed design for the new Tickner's Heath Bridge.



The desilting challenge - looking from under Compasses Bridge towards the Thruscott Slipway. (Picture taken in December 2016 - today's water level is normally higher).

separate footbridge, in response to local consultation. However, it is probable that some further ecological surveys will be needed and these can't be done until next spring. Once these are finished, the next step will be a formal planning application.

Removing primaeval silt

The only real obstacle to through navigation between the A281 at Fast Bridge and Tickner's Heath is the section of about 500 metres between Compasses Bridge and the Thruscott Slipway. This section may sometimes appear to contain water but this is mainly an illusion - it is only a few inches deep with a vast amount of silt beneath.

Digging out the silt is relatively straightforward; the really difficult problem is disposing of the material - estimated at 6,000 cubic metres, or 600 lorryloads (but moving this amount of material to landfill would be very expensive and not at all in line with our 'green' objectives).

Tony Ford and Dave Evans have now devised an approach for an estimated 2-year desilting programme to be tackled by our own (mainly volunteer) workforce:

1. We are purchasing (secondhand) equipment, expected to be delivered around the end of 2018: a dredger, a tug and two barges;
2. The equipment will be lifted into the canal at Compasses Bridge;
3. We will unload the barges at the new wharf next to the Thruscott Slipway and move it by dumper to a field next to our existing depot;
4. We will dredge in a series of stages, first placing the material on the banks to allow drying and then moving it to the field.

Elmbridge Road

Anyone who knows the Cranleigh area will be too familiar with the single-lane bottleneck in Elmbridge Road, which is the most direct route from the A281 to Cranleigh



village. This bottleneck is also a blockage across the canal route. Surrey County Council has set up a 'priority project' to introduce a full-width two-way road and a footway. Funding is available from community contributions ('Section 106') made by local developers. However, the Council does not own enough land for the proposed new road. The Canal Trust sees an opportunity here for a joint project that would create a new canal bridge and a wider road, as well as releasing about 200m of canal route for restoration.

This is a very complicated planning situation and success is by no means certain, but the chance is too good to miss.

EWG - Refurbishing Tickner's Heath Depot

Dennis Gillen explained that the Trust's Eric Walker Group (EWG, formerly TSG) is now working on major improvements at Tickner's Heath Depot. The group finished work at Gennets Bridge Lock in April 2018.

Some of the depot's buildings date from World War 2, including Nissen huts. Most are structurally sound but others are definitely not and will be demolished. Nearly all the buildings have asbestos roofs which must be removed or encapsulated by specialist contractors.

The team has constructed a new scaffolding store and rebuilt the gable end of the



Top: Overgrown areas and piles of discarded materials were cleared; a new scaffolding store was constructed; the workshop is now much lighter thanks to new windows at the gable end.

workshop, where the windows were ready to fall out of their frames. Previously overgrown areas of the depot have been cleared, uncovering vast amounts of material that 'might come in useful sometime'. After sorting, most of this will be recycled or otherwise disposed of.

At the end of the programme we will have a depot that is much more suitable for the staff, volunteers and equipment working up and down the canal.

Bramley Link - Birtley gets under way

Philip Oliver's presentation concentrated on the Birtley Reach, a section of canal immediately south of Bramley. The section is in water although there are several causeways and some leaks are evident.

Thanks to a generous donation from a member, the Trust has been able to negotiate the purchase of a section of canal about 900 metres long. On the day of the Autumn Meeting, a week-long Waterway Recovery Group/Newbury Working Party Group (WRG/NWPG) was just beginning major work on the site.



***First steps at Birtley:
a temporary access route.***

Dunsfold trip boat?

A member asked at the meeting whether we have plans to run boat trips on the Summit Level. We would love to do this, but we have not made any definite plans yet. It is a perfect opportunity for a volunteer to start looking seriously into the practical aspects. Ideally we would be ready to start boat trips once the two-year desilting programme is complete. Anyone interested - please contact the Northern Office (details on page 3).

A challenge has been to work out how to get equipment and materials to the canal; the most obvious way on the map would be via a track that crosses the canal on a causeway. However, this track joins the busy A281 at a very narrow entrance that is also on a bend in the road. This route would raise obvious safety concerns and would risk seriously disrupting road traffic. Fortunately a helpful local landowner has a more accessible entrance to the main road. The first task for the group has been to construct a temporary access track to the canal.

The Birtley Reach is very attractive thanks to its position on a slope between the Downs Link path (the former Horsham-Guildford railway) uphill and the Cranleigh Waters river in the valley. The team has mapped out three phases of work aimed initially at making a circular canalside walk available, with connections to the Downs Link. With two new bridges to put in place and three causeways needing removal, initial estimates of the investment needed for this are in the region of £250,000.

Bramley Link phase 1 and Gun's Mouth Island

Philip said that planning permission for Gun's Mouth Island was delayed pending the completion of further wildlife surveys and the review of our flood model by the Environment Agency.

A planning application will be made for Phase 1 of the Bramley Link around the end of the year assuming we can conclude the required land negotiations. A professional planning consultant with strong experience of environmentally sensitive projects has been helpful in advising the Bramley Link team.

Drungewick Lock

Dennis Gillen returned to the microphone to give an update on progress towards re-opening Drungewick Lock. Currently the lock is closed to boats because we have had expert advice that there is a significant danger that the west lock wall could give way.

Our Engineering Group came up with a number of options. We now have a preferred option for the repairs and two highly qualified civil engineers helping us on a voluntary basis. We have to proceed one step at a time.

Step 1 is to prepare for a detailed professional investigation of the soil conditions. This has involved a team from the Eric Walker Group (EWG) digging a series of pits to find out where the counterforts are. Counterforts are stone walls built as reinforcement behind the lock walls and at right angles to them. Clearly it would be a big mistake if the soil investigation company tried to drill into these walls. EWG's work revealed five counterforts.

Step 2 is the soil investigation, which will sink small sample tubes to a depth of 13 metres to give a precise view of the ground make-up.

Step 3 is for our engineers to design the repairs, using the soil information. By approaching potential contractors we will then know likely costs and timescales for repairs.



Our mini-digger Teaspoon proved ideal for working in the very confined space on the lockside at Drungewick. (Pictures by Dennis Gillen)



The picture clearly shows the five counterforts uncovered by EWG's investigation.



Canal renovation moves up a gear with slipway opening

They faced floods, arctic temperatures and searing heat, but Site Manager Dave Evans and his hardy band of volunteers carried on building, and the Thriscutt Slipway was opened in fitting style on a mild afternoon in September at Dunsfold Park.

The slipway was made possible thanks to a generous donation from the Thriscutt family in memory of their parents, Nancy and Sydney. Son Andrew came over from Canada to witness Mayor of Waverley Councillor Denise Le Gal cut the ribbon. Andrew said he was the first international member of WACT, joining in the late 1990s.

The star of the show, however, was a stunning blue Amphicar, owned by Thriscutt family

friend Mike Stallwood. The German-made amphibious vehicle made quite a splash with the estimated 90 supporters who turned out to celebrate the opening. Mayor Le Gal and Andrew were treated to a lap of the canal to put car and slipway to the test.

The 'car that swims' was joined by numerous canoes and kayaks making use of the wharf and canoe landing site, plus the trailable Wilderness Beaver, brought by John Basford, from the Wilderness Boat Club.

The slipway has been built to Inland Waterways Association guidelines and it is hoped that WACT will be able to host the IWA National Trailboat Rally at the site in the next few years.



***Clockwise from top left:
Andrew Thriscutt said his
father would have been
proud of all that has been
done to make the slipway
a reality and looked
forward to a day when
the canal was open "from
the top to the bottom".***

***Mayor of Waverley
Councillor Denise Le
Gal cut the ribbon and
declared the slipway open.***



***Chairman Sally Schupke
thanked the 'dream team'
behind the slipway: Tony
Ford; Bill Nicholson and
WRG; and Dave Evans.***

***Project manager Tony
Ford paid tribute to
the generosity of the
Thriscutt family.***

***Lyn Nash and canal
dog Nancy manned the
Mobile Display Vehicle.***

***A happy Dave Evans
was presented with
a gift from WACT.***





Wings, wheels and waterways: a host of craft were brought to the aerodrome site to help launch the slipway. The trailable Wilderness Beaver was the first to put the slipway to the test, and was joined by canoes and the Amphicar. A remote control boat also joined in the fun.



Photographs by Julian Morgan, Julian Nowell and Gill Davies





July
2016



The slipway story

The build could not have been completed without the dedication of visiting Waterway Recovery Group, Newbury Working Party Group and Northern Working Party volunteers. Poor weather and the Weald clay made the work heavy going, as did the summer heatwave. Mother Nature may have thrown its worst at the teams, but by late summer 2018 the canal bank was ready to be removed and water could flow into the slipway.

September
2017



October
2017



October
2017



December
2017



May
2018



July
2018



August
2018



September
2018



Collaboration gets the thumbs up from volunteers

It was a case of many hands make light work when the Wey & Arun Canal Trust Midweek Working Party joined forces with the West Sussex County Council Public Rights of Way volunteers for two days.

The teams came together on the 12th and 13th September to spend two days clearing overgrown vegetation around Rowner Lock and the public footpath to Loves Bridge in Billingshurst.

Their hard work over a mile of countryside now means the footpath is more easily accessible and walkers can better enjoy the views of the canal from the path and bridge. New signposts also help mark the footpath routes.

The project was a big success and Midweek Working Party organiser Margaret Darvill said the 20 WACT volunteers and 12 WSCC Public Rights of Way volunteers all enjoyed working together.



The link-up could become an annual affair.

Margaret added: "The area is now much more accessible and the clearance work shows off the wonderful view of the canal. The initiative was so successful that we hope to make it an annual event."

Don't miss a date with the WACT 2019 calendar

It's not too late to get your hands on the Trust's calendar for 2019.

This year the calendar has been put together using selected works of art inspired by views of the canal and members' photographs. Artists include the renowned Garth Allan and Harley Crossley and member John Russell-Hayes. Printed on high quality paper, there is one page for each month with a large box for each date.

The A4 calendar is supplied with envelope for posting to friends and family. It costs £7.50 and can be bought from the Canal Centre at Loxwood, or online at www.weyarun.org.uk/shop/.



Canal Centre Supervisor Barbara Hatch with this year's calendar.

Right: Fanny, Lyn and Dave check out the newly installed bench.

Below: A pair of walkers were already making good use of the seating area.

Bottom: Fanny still has her original membership card.



Fanny marks 42 years of membership

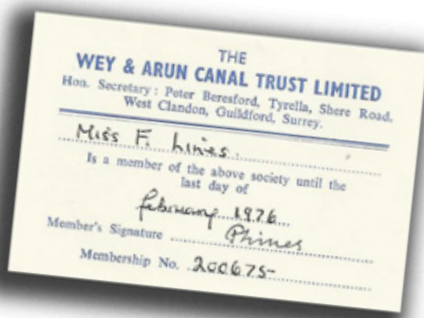
Longstanding Trust member Fanny Lines was over the moon to see the bench she commissioned installed in late August on the towpath.

The bench has pride of place overlooking the picturesque Southland winding hole. It bears the inscription 'Donated by Fanny Lines. Active member since 1976'.

In the 42 years Fanny has been a member she has been an invaluable volunteer, becoming a familiar face among the supporting team at the Canal Centre in Loxwood.

She continues to support the Trust and will be part of a team stuffing envelopes to get this quarter's *Wey-South* out to members.

Fanny was joined by her Canal Centre co-workers Lyn Nash and Dave Verrall to celebrate the installation of the bench. The group were pleased to find it was already being put to good use by a couple enjoying a walk along the towpath.





Looking fabulous

John Smallpeice is looking resplendent in its new livery and home at the Thriscutt Slipway.

Many hours of manpower have gone into restoring the 20-foot narrowboat, including shot-blasting (carried out by a professional firm), painting, and refurbishing the interior. Loxwood Link Maintenance Manager Kevin Baker has overseen the boat's transformation, helped by WRG BITM.

The 12-seater boat has played an integral part in the Trust's history, being used to take paying passengers up until 2015 when Small Boat Safety Guidelines meant it was no longer commercially viable to run, and it was put to use as a workboat.

It is named after Guildford solicitor John Smallpeice, who became the first Clerk of the Wey & Arun Junction Canal Company. His descendant Gilbert Smallpeice had the job of liquidating the company.

The boat is expected to be used for publicity purposes and occasional maintenance work.



From top: John Smallpeice after a facelift; showing signs it was in need of a spruce-up; on its way to be assessed.



Lordings Waterwheel in its full glory in 2007. (John Wood)

Trust adds Lordings Lock and Aqueduct to its portfolio

The Trust is pleased to announce it has acquired the freehold for Lordings Lock and Lordings Aqueduct, including the waterwheel, from the Environment Agency. Lordings was historically known as Orfold.

The purchase was at a nominal price, which was kindly donated by a member. We are grateful to our director Tony Coles for his work in bringing negotiations to a successful outcome.

Lordings Lock, Lordings Aqueduct and the waterwheel have undergone extensive renovation over past decades. Back in 1992 Winston Harwood and colleagues embarked on work around the area, a move not then backed financially by the Trust due to monetary constraints. Unperturbed, Winston set up a British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Group project, calling it The Orfold Aqueduct Group. The group set out with a mission to restore the aqueduct, lock and waterwheel, the latter of which Winston embarked upon without the benefit of original drawings.

Years of hard work ensued, carried out by Winston and subsequent WACT and visiting working parties, and in September 2011 a small boat rally marked the official recommissioning of Lordings Waterwheel.

Driven by the flow of the River Arun, when in full working order the waterwheel is capable of lifting water from the river level into the canal, about 3m above, and is thought to be the only one of its kind in the country.



In this archive picture, the Orfold Aqueduct Group volunteers are widening the brick arches at the Aqueduct.

Birtley work starts



The MWWP began clearing the picturesque Birtley section in early Autumn, followed by a Waterway Recovery Group week-long camp in late October. Truckloads of rubble were needed to create an access road, and investment in matting paid dividends by making the heavy machinery's path over the terrain much easier.





The first phase of development is to fence off the area, much of which is adjacent to farmland, with the long-term aim of creating a circular walk. The loan of Stephen Darvill's post-driver made the job of erecting the 2.5km of larch fencing needed a much faster - and less strenuous - exercise.



WRG Forestry



The Loxwood section around Brewhurst Lock got a spruce-up thanks to the WRG Forestry camp. The specialist volunteers spent a week clearing and making safe dangerous and diseased trees, identified in a previous tree survey. A MEWP (mobile elevating work platform) was brought in specially for the job, and Colin the chipper was put to good use. The extent of the ash dieback can be seen in the photo bottom left.



Birtley - we've been there before



John Wood's book *The Wey-South Project* tells us that the first working party on the Surrey section of the canal was at Birtley on 16th January 1972. (The 'official' start in Surrey was at the more accessible Run Common site, near Cranleigh, on 2nd April 1972.) In 1974, working with local anglers, the Trust made a first attempt to repair a huge breach in the canal embankment. This was unsuccessful and it was not until 1976 that the Trust put together a much larger civil engineering project to repair the breach with more than 1,000 tons of donated clay.

These two archive pictures (by John Wood) show the breach before repair (top picture, bottom left) and the repairs in progress.



Winter wildlife

Winter brings migrant birds from other countries. These include redwings and fieldfares who are members of the thrush family. They mainly feed on berries and crab apples in the hedgerows and trees.

As well as the more common birds, grey herons, Great Spotted and green woodpeckers, grey and pied wagtails may also be seen. Look in the sky for birds of prey including kestrels, buzzards and red kites.

Foxes and deer have been seen in adjacent fields and woodland.

Several visitors to the canal have mentioned that they have recently seen kingfishers. They are very quick and most people only see a glimpse of them as they fly along the canal. But occasionally they are seen in the trees and bushes. I have seen them on the wharf and boats at Loxwood.

We would love to hear about your wildlife sightings along the canal. Please send reports and any photos to dv@weyandarun.co.uk.

Dave Verrall



Clockwise from top left: A redwing here for the winter; pied wagtail; the migrant fieldfare; watch out for the bright flash of a kingfisher; a sunbathing grey wagtail; the vibrant green woodpecker.



Difficult summer for boat trips - but maintenance gains

Loxwood boat trips resumed on September 15th after six weeks when exceptionally dry weather caused serious water shortages. Although bookings for private charter trips tend to tail off from the beginning of August, this still meant that many customers were disappointed and the Granary staff had to deal with refunds and all the administration work that goes with them.

The silver lining was that the team could use the unexpected downtime to tackle a programme of boat maintenance. Normally it is difficult to do more than running repairs during the peak season, which means more major work has to be done in colder and wetter weather.

Martin Smithers has stepped down from his Boat Maintenance role and we are very grateful to new Maintenance Manager David Arnold and Ian James, plus other volunteers, for enthusiastically picking up the 'to do' list.

Both *Wiggonholt* and *Zachariah Keppel* received a lot of TLC, from repainting and tidying engine rooms to fitting five new supports for the VHF radios.

With the boats now looking tip-top, the Special Events team has also been working on finalising details of trips for next year, which run on top of the usual weekend boat cruises. There is a packed programme of enticing events, ideal for all members of the family. Look out for the 2019 programme leaflet available now.

And don't forget about the popular Santa Cruises, booking now, along with the Boxing Day and New Year's Day trips. This year there is also a special Santa for Grown-ups cruise - after all, why should the kids have all the fun?

You can book tickets online at www.weyandarun.co.uk, or by phone at 01403 752403.



The team gave the cabin floor on Wiggonholt a new lick of paint as it had become severely worn.



Ian James pictured with a smart new bow hatch on Zachariah Keppel. (Pictures by David Arnold)



The Trust is continuing to acquire equipment that will be in frequent use and so more economical to buy than to hire. (Left) The new self-propelled chipper, dubbed 'Colin', funded by a memorial gift from the family of Colin & Jean Gibbs (Colin founded our Midweek Working Party). Chipping is a much cleaner and greener way of dealing with brushwood than burning.



The two machines below are not new to us but have recently moved to Birtley. (Centre) Dave Evans with the dumper truck '9-tonne Dave'. (Bottom) The 13-tonne digger 'Sally'.



Working Party Roundup

What a lot has been going on recently. Other than the Thruscott Slipway re-opening, there has not been much in the way of major projects to report – it's more a case of essential backup work behind the scenes.

The Trust's ever-growing bank of plant and equipment has to be looked after, so a secure, well-equipped depot is essential. Our Tickner's team has done a wonderful job in difficult circumstances, and thanks to the assistance of the Eric Walker Group, the depot will soon have impressive new storage and workshop facilities, and will even be connected to mains electricity.

With the slipway complete, the Northern Working Party, along with our much-valued visiting groups, have turned their attention to Birtley, upgrading the towpath into a proper access road, with professional-standard fencing and gates. This could not have been achieved without the help of the private owners of the land concerned, and all credit is due to more unseen volunteers who are responsible for liaising and negotiating with the owners. It's all too easy to forget that unlike most other navigations this canal is not under the control of the Canal and River Trust, or a similar navigation authority – restoration and re-opening depends on the goodwill of multiple private owners.

News of all this, and the other things that our working party volunteers get involved with, can be found regularly in the *Working Party News* e-mail newsletter. WPN can be sent straight to your inbox at the beginning of each month, you can view the current issue and back issues on the Trust's website, or if you prefer paper copies these are sent out by the Loxwood office. Just email listadmin@weyandarun.co.uk to get on the mailing list, or send a supply of stamped, addressed envelopes to the Loxwood office.

We cannot leave without mentioning that the November 2018 issue of *WPN* was the 300th – quite a milestone. Looking at the pictures of the towpath improvements at Birtley, who



Working Party News issued its 300th edition in November.

would have imagined that such a professional operation could have grown from the amateur, well-meaning, but inexperienced start well over 40 years ago when the first issue of WPN was put together? Congratulations to all concerned.

Bill Thomson

Monday Group

Nick Wood writes: Our weekly outings in August, September and October have been very busy. The group has been getting round and about the canal, 'keeping up appearances' at our numerous regular sites and undertaking work elsewhere at the request of others.

Accordingly, all our 'regulars' – North to South, Hunt Park, Run Common, Three Compasses Bridge, Tickner's Heath, Gennets Bridge, Southland and Devil's Hole locks, Loxwood, Drungewick Lane, Newbridge (A272) and Haybarn Swing Bridge – have received attention. In addition we have cut back the vegetation at Lordings Lock and flood lock and tended Malham Lock again in October.

On the Loxwood Link we have cut back the hedges and trimmed the towpath on a number of locations between Drungewick Bridge and Brewhurst Lock, and cleared the



The Monday Group had company when they stopped for lunch at Barnsill. (Roger Wilson)

permissive path from Drungewick Lane to the lock and the winding hole for the second time this year. Barnsill Slipway has emerged from the undergrowth and the fence was repaired. Finally, we have become dab hands at laying paving slabs by bench seats.

Contact John Empringham, 01483 562657, mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk

Midweek Working Party

The group has had a busy time, with bumper numbers of volunteers, well over 20 at times, and lots of new people. There has been plenty to do, even though the group has been waiting for a project to get its teeth into.

The group has finished clearing the middle section of the canal from Gennets to the field crossing. If one walks along this part of the canal, it is now possible to see a very clearly defined towpath and canal route.

Other projects included the annual maintenance session at Run Common. The landowner is always pleased and gives the troops a cake to share, which is happily accepted. Another week was spent at Birtley, preparing for the visit by the Newbury Working Party Group. This involved clearing along the fence line so that the existing fencing could

easily be taken out. This made the towpath seem so much wider, and following the group visit the towpath has changed out of all recognition.

Another week saw a repeat visit to Haybarn to clear south of the swing bridge – as one volunteer remarked, “What are we doing here, we only cleared this six months ago?” But such has been the rate of growth this year there was plenty to do.

Finally, the group was tasked with clearing up after a contractor had taken down a large number of trees on the offside of the canal south of Drungewick Bridge. Six fires later and 23 people working, the field is once again ready for horses.

Contact Margaret Darvill, 01483 894606, margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk

Hedgelaying Group

The hedgelaying team planned to reconvene on 18th and 25th September, to start coppicing at Slinfold. However, on the first date, the team comprised just one (Keith). Fortunately, four other group members joined in for the second attempt.

The next outing, on 30th October, saw the group move to Haybarn to start actual laying. The previous coppicing had produced 300-plus stakes and about 260 binders. Although the group will be short of binders, the final material can be cut when the exact amount needed is known. Haybarn will need about six days of work and could be complete before Christmas – or maybe not. Unfortunately, Keith has been ‘enjoying’ an enforced ‘holiday’ at St Richard’s Hospital in Chichester. The group doesn’t know when he will be back, or how much he will be physically capable of doing. We wish Keith well for a speedy recovery and resumption of hedgelaying.

Contact Keith Nichols, 01403 753882 hedging@weyandarun.co.uk

Northern (Summit) Working Party and Visiting Groups

Following the hectic summer work camp, the group spent about two days each week at the slipway preparing for the opening on 30th September. One weekend saw a visit from London Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) who tackled the essential but unpopular job of installing a land drain to aid with the water run-off which had been present all summer despite the drought.

They helped extend the side walls to the slipway, erected fences and assisted in the launch of the *John Smallpeice* back into the canal. This was the first use of our structure by a relatively large boat (the Chairman's canoe doesn't count). The Trust is most grateful for the assistance received from visiting groups whose contribution boosts both output and morale.

Other jobs have included the construction of a concrete gully across the access road to catch yet more water run-off; installation of gates and fences; landscaping; and completion of the wharf ready for the silt barges to tie to. Graham Hawkes built a brick plinth to house the plaque marking the generosity of the Thriscutt family, which enabled the building of the slipway, and the hard work of the Summit Team. In readiness for the opening, the group carried out bank protection on the north side of the slipway and completed the wharf area.

October saw the group move to Birtley. With support from Newbury Working Party Group (NWPG), a new towpath is being established with fencing erected along the boundaries of an area that will be in the Trust's ownership in due course. In fact, two work camps were running concurrently over the half-term period. With only one weekend's break from the successful slipway opening, NWPG were working at the back of the Birtley Courtyard to set up the site compound and install a temporary vehicle access to the canal which at



A big push from WRG and the Northern Working Party meant the Thriscutt Slipway was completed on time. (Julian Morgan)

this point lies hidden behind the Downs Link path along the former railway.

It was a nerve-wracking time, awaiting the agreement (subsequently received) of the various landowners who essentially held the key as to whether or not access to the canal would be possible. The Trust is very grateful to all parties concerned, but especially to the directors of Birtley Courtyard who took a leap of faith in allowing a construction compound to be sited on their property.

Driving plant across the car park field then along the bottom of the railway embankment would have resulted in serious rutting and damage so the decision was taken to acquire temporary plastic road sheets (the type used at festivals).

The NWPG weekend of 13-14th October attracted some 12 volunteers on each day assisted by regular Northern Team members. All the plastic road sheets were moved into position and bolted together. The entire boundary with the school to the east was fenced with stock fencing (c180m) and gate



Next stop Birtley, and Canal Camp volunteer parties made good progress with a temporary vehicle access track. (Julian Morgan)

posts installed. Dave Evans installed the gates prior to the arrival of the Canal Camp volunteers, whose first task was to dig out the bank from the access down to the brideway that provides the only route to the canal.

There then followed some six days of work with about 15 people on site each day. During this time around 400m of stock fencing was erected along the new canal boundary and about 300m of 3m-wide towpath access road laid, which will later form part of a circular walk with the Downs Link as well as providing construction access to the site of a proposed canal crossing, which we hope to tackle in 2019. A post and rail fence was erected on either side of the of the bridleway canal crossing, smartening the appearance of the crossing to the public.

The second camp comprised a WRG Forestry team of up to 20 volunteers who spent the week attending to dead and dying ash trees along the Brewhurst to Birch Copse section of the Loxwood Link. The work was aided by

the hire of a cherry-picker platform and the Trust's recently acquired tracked chipper.

The Trust is grateful for the ongoing support of the visiting groups as well to all those behind the scenes that enabled the camps to run smoothly.

**Contact: Bill Nicholson, 07791 097773,
bn@weyandarun.co.uk**

Tickner's Heath Depot

Anyone who witnessed Dennis Gillen's excellent presentation at the recent Autumn Meeting will know that dramatic things are happening at the depot. Redundant buildings and containers have been removed and a lot of overgrown areas have been surfaced in preparation for the day when the host of new Trust plant and equipment comes back to Tickner's. Here I should add that none of the credit for this falls on our shoulders, but rather should be laid at the door of the Eric Walker Group, who have put in a lot of hard graft to bring the depot up a standard that befits the Trust in the 21st century.

But the Tickner's team has done some work over the quarter! The gates and fence at the Dunsfold Road entrance have been painted in WACT colours and, in preparation for what was to come, the crew set about reducing the vegetation which was starting to take over the whole area. Redundant pumps, generators and other small items of equipment which have been hiding in odd corners of the depot have been given the once over. Those that did not pass the depot's exacting standards were deposited in one of the resident skips. Other usable items have been put up for auction on eBay and sold to bring revenue to the Trust.

The Trust was once again the beneficiary of a donation of a couple of brushcutters; unfortunately one didn't want to start even with the best efforts of 'Goliath' Keet so it had to be deposited into where? Yes, you guessed it, one of the skips.

Recently all of our efforts have been directed towards stripping the old reedcutter boat of the engine, gearbox and other components which, to be fair, made it a modern H&S nightmare. The aim is to convert it to a work boat. Mind you, it seemed that our efforts were doomed to failure as we could not fathom out how to remove the rather ancient Brunel-type propeller. Everything we tried came to naught, until a close inspection showed a screw thread and, lo and behold, with the help of our giant Stilsons plus a bit of muscle, part A unscrewed from part B and out the prop came. Now all that is needed is access to gas cutting kit which will then enable us to remove the shroud and support that covered the prop.

As usual, there has been the usual number of other repairs: wheelbarrows which have the effrontery to get punctures – locks which decide not to function and lawn mowers which refuse to start – all of which keeps us on our toes. As they say, variety is the spice of life.

**Contact John Smith 01903 235790,
depot@weyandarun.co.uk**

Eric Walker Group

As can be seen in John Smith's report of happenings at Tickner's Heath Depot, the Eric Walker Group has continued to take time off from its normal major construction projects to carry out refurbishment of the Depot.



The Eric Walker Group taking a well-earned break.

An essential part of this work has been clearance of redundant machinery and equipment. As well as saleable scrap, there was a mountain of concrete and general rubble hiding under the weeds. With the help of a hired concrete crushing machine, this is being turned into usable hardcore.

The timber shed previously used for storing scaffolding has been declared unstable so, thanks to the donation from a volunteer of some plastisol-coated profiled metal sheets and aluminium purlins as used to clad warehouse buildings, the group has been erecting a new purpose-designed scaffold store. This will accommodate all the scaffolding that is under renovation or being stored in various other parts of the depot.

Having received quotations for the removal of the asbestos roof sheeting on the existing workshop, scaffold shed and fuel store, the group is hoping that this work will be carried out during November.

The large Nissen hut has been improved by strengthening the end gable and installation of uPVC windows (again acquired by a volunteer). This will become the new main workshop for John Smith's group. The plan is to engage a specialist contractor to spray the complete internal roof with polyurethane foam. This will encapsulate the asbestos cement roof sheeting, as well as provide waterproofing and insulation.

Renovation of the outside surface of the sheeting, however, is not such an easy task as it is covered with delaminating bitumen paint and moss, which has to be carefully removed without disturbing the surface of the asbestos.

We have taken delivery of three new (second-hand) metal storage containers and created an area for them. We will start to take occupation of these in the next few weeks.

The Trust has appointed a contractor to install mains electricity from the nearby



The clearance unearthed a mountain of items, some of which could be repurposed or sold.

sub-station to the site (with our volunteers excavating and backfilling the cable trench and building a new 'kiosk' to accommodate the termination/switch boxes). The group will install the cabling from the main cable termination box to the new workshop and Nissen storage sheds. This can't come too soon as the generator that John and his team have relied on for years has been out of commission, and proved difficult to repair.

Contact Dennis Gillen,
dennis_gillen@weyandarun.co.uk or **John Reynolds,**
john_reynolds@weyandarun.co.uk

PEST (Passenger Environment Safety Team)

Chris Jones writes: PEST aims to keep the navigation clear of obstructions that would inhibit the safe operation of our boats. Since our last report the team has been busy throughout the navigable section (currently Southland Lock to the Drungewick Slipway) despite the suspension of boat operations due to low water. Our work included clearing the overgrown vegetation in the winding holes and around the landing stages at Southland, Devil's Hole, Brewhurst and Baldwin's Knob Locks and removing obstructions from the water. We continued to clear growth from the banks along the navigation where it could not be reached by the land-based working parties.

While the boat trips were not running, thick and dense weed managed to grow extensively

between Barnsill Bridge and the slipway. When trips resumed, this caused skippers to have to make frequent efforts to clear the weed from propellers, delaying journeys and detracting from the usual calm progress of the trips.

Clearing this infestation became a priority for the team during the past month. However, it soon appeared that mechanical means will be required to effect a complete solution.

The end of the growing season will give the team an opportunity to make further inroads into the growth of canalside vegetation. For anyone wishing join the working party, please make contact as below.

Contact Peter Hyem, 01403 752393,
Chris Jones, 07745 793243,
chris_jones@weyandarun.co.uk

Judicial Review rejects Dunsfold housing challenges

The High Court has rejected the challenge brought by POW (Protect Our Waverley) and CPRE against the planning permission granted to build 1,800 homes at Dunsfold Park. Earlier this year the then Secretary of State Sajid Javid approved plans to build 1,800 homes on the aerodrome, following a Public Inquiry.

Dunsfold Aerodrome is the largest brownfield site in Waverley and is allocated for residential development of up to 2,600 homes in

Waverley Borough's Local Plan, which was adopted earlier this year.

The Canal Trust is neutral on the question of whether building new homes at Dunsfold Park is a good idea, but if development goes ahead we would like to ensure that it benefits the canal.

Are you a good talker?

Thanks to our publicity work there is strong demand from local groups for talks about the canal. Members of our Talks Panel are usually happy to give up their time and spread the word. Sadly two members of the panel are currently out of action so we would very much like to reinforce the group.

If you are comfortable giving presentations to small groups, the Trust will provide all the equipment you need, such as a screen and projector, along with slides from other presenters. You will also have access to our extensive archives to develop your own materials. Typically our presenters give three or four talks a year.

If you are interested in this important aspect of the Trust's work, please contact our Talks Organiser John Dodwell (talks@weyandarun.co.uk) or via the Northern Office - details on page 3).

We're on the lookout for an optician

The latest Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) licence form for skippers now includes a vision assessment alongside the usual medical checks. As such the Trust has its eyes peeled for an optician amongst its membership to help our crews complete this section.

If you think you could help, or know someone who could, please contact our Loxwood office (details on page 3).



In this 2002 picture from our archives Alan Dyer is with Elspeth McCreadie, our official 1,500th member. Alan is less smartly dressed than Elspeth because he was also a crew member on the celebration boat trip.

Looking after our members

Our Membership Secretary Alan Dyer has let us know that he would like to retire early in 2019. Alan has done three stints in the job, for a total of 19 years starting in 1988 (and even before that he had been Covenants Secretary since 1981). So no-one can possibly disagree that Alan deserves a break from Trust work.

The job of the Membership Secretary is to handle all routine communications with our members, particularly contact details and subscriptions. Alan has kindly agreed to supervise a smooth handover to a new volunteer (or volunteers). The job is one that can be done from home, with no fixed hours. If you are interested in helping with this important work, please contact the Northern Office (details on page 3).

Be in it to win it

The winning tickets in this year's Christmas Draw will be picked on 15th January so there's still plenty of time to get yours. The top prize is £200 so head to the Canal Centre to buy a ticket or two. The centre is open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday until 23rd December.

Keep it clear in 2019

The date has been set for the Trust's annual sponsored walk. Next year's Puddle will take place on Sunday 2nd June.

Organiser Margaret Darvill tells us the walk will start at Bramley Village Hall, with lunch at Farley Green Church Hall. The route is planned to take in the new section at Birtley, along with Albury and Blackheath.

Membership Report

We had 2,941 members at the end of October. We would like to extend a very warm welcome to the following new members.

Steve & Pauline Berry

Chris Blow

Sue & Kevin Boast

Sue Broomfield

Jeremy Croucher

Alison Davies & John Lewis

Vanessa Ford-Robbins & Nicholas Huddy

Clare Ford-Wille

Duncan & Linda Gill

Lionel King

John Lawes

Andy Lear & Bea Hepburn

Brian Pellant

David Perks

Kate Peters & Graham Ososki

Michael & Shirley Powell

David Prince & Tracey Miller

Paul Raubusch

Peter Sanders

David & Ruth Selo

Peter Stafford

Doug Stevens

David Styring

Geoff Wells

We have learned with regret of the death of:

George Etheridge

Joyce Lennard

Pat Giles

Norman Marchant

Dennis Giles

Mary Thorne

For information about how we use your personal data, see our privacy policy at www.weyarun.org.uk/privacy-policy. If you would like to receive a PDF version of our magazine in future and help keep our costs down, then please e-mail me.

Alan Dyer, Membership Secretary
(membership@weyandarun.co.uk)

Dates for your Diary

**Sunday 16th,
Friday 21st, Saturday 22nd and
Sunday 23rd December ***

Wednesday 26th December *

Tuesday 1st January 2019 *

Tuesday 22nd January 2019

Wednesday 20th February 2019

Thursday 14th March 2019

Sunday 31st March 2019 *

Saturday 27th April 2019

Sunday 19th May 2019

Sunday 2nd June 2019

Santa Cruises at 11am, 12noon and 2pm.

Boxing Day Boat Trips at 11am, 12.15 and 2.15pm.

New Year's Day Cruises at 11am, 12.15 and 2pm.

Volunteer Taster Day. Details later or contact Northern Office.

Volunteer Taster Day. Details later or contact Northern Office.

Volunteer Taster Day. Details later or contact Northern Office.

Mothering Sunday Relaxers at 11am, 2.15 and 4.30pm.

Annual Meeting at Billingshurst Village Hall (2.30pm) with events in the morning. More details in the next issue of Wey-South.

River Arun Rally - launching from 1.30pm. All types of small boat welcome. More details in the next issue of Wey-South.

Annual Puddle (sponsored walk) from Bramley Village Hall. More details in the next issue of Wey-South.

***For all boat trip information please contact the Loxwood Office (details on page 3). Bookings can be made with the office or online at weyarun.org.uk/trips. Booking is essential for all special trips and recommended for Boxing Day/New Year's Day trips.**



Above: Moving the cherry-picker down the narrow towpath south of Brewhurst Lock was a painstaking job - WRG Forestry leader Nigel Lee is driving the vehicle, guided by very precise signals from the banksman in front of him.

Below: Rich autumn colours were on display up and down the canal in November. The picture shows the view from Compasses Bridge along the section where desilting work is scheduled to begin soon.

