



WEX-SOUTH

Quarterly Magazine of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust

Issue 194 March/April/May 2021



Lockdown version 3 meant volunteers were stood down and working parties called to a halt, but that didn't mean progress stopped completely. Canal maintenance manager Kevin Baker took the opportunity to work on the aged Hanix excavator. The machine was donated to the Trust as a non-runner some 20 years ago and rebuilt by Dave Kersley back then. It was used by various working parties, most recently at Cook's Bridge where it broke down. Kev recovered it back to Tickner's Depot and after a lot of TLC and a lick of paint the Trust now has a fully functioning machine once more.



Chairman Sally Schupke will soon be practising her weaving skills on willow that Ian Joyce has cut from Hunt Nature Park.



Skipper David Arnold isn't one to sit still so to relieve the lockdown boredom he decided to give the life rings at Loxwood a scrub and repaint.

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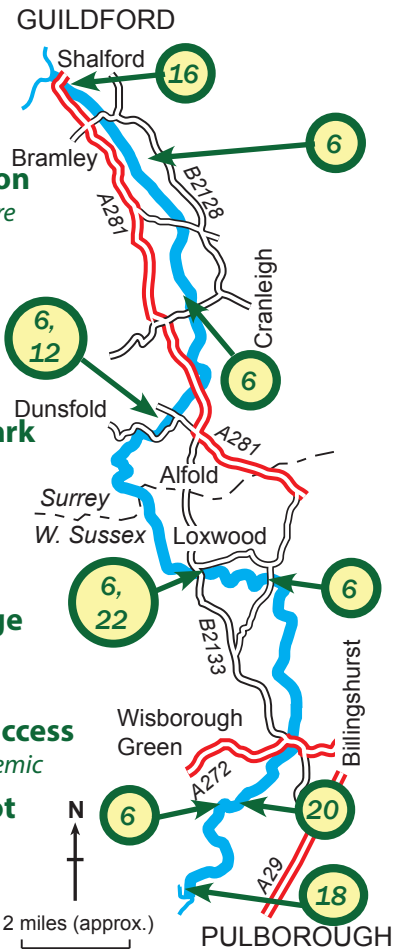
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Paper recycling scheme is ending



Wey-South team:
Sue Batey (proofreader), Gill Davies,
David Jessop (proofreader),
Julian Morgan, Peter Winter
(Working Party Roundup)

Trust website:
www.weyandarun.co.uk
Facebook: weyandaruncanal
Twitter: @weyandarun

Shalford (Northern) Office (Boat trips, Administration, Accounts and Publicity). Visitors by appointment only.
01483 505566 (support@weyandarun.co.uk)
Bridge End, Somerswey, Shalford, Guildford GU4 8EQ

Front cover: Piling machine at work on the Tickner's Heath Crossing site.

Online update to be held on 24 April as Annual Meeting moves to July

It had been planned to hold the Annual Meeting in Billingshurst on 24 April but Covid uncertainty has meant that an informal online update will be held instead.

The virtual meeting on Saturday 24th April 2021 from 2.30pm to 3.30pm approx (with time for questions) will be held by Zoom and include reports on recent and current restoration projects.

Apart from Covid-19, another reason for postponing the Annual Meeting is the sad news that the Trust's professional Independent Examiner, Nigel Singleton of BD&M Ltd, passed away suddenly in early January. Finance director Julian Morgan said he believed that Nigel had been helping with WACT's Annual Accounts since at least 2003.

"We immensely valued his careful advice and charity expertise and, inevitably, Nigel's loss means that it will take longer to finalise the 2020 Accounts," he said. A financial report will be included in the informal April meeting.

Informal virtual meeting on 24 April, 2.30pm-3.30pm

The Zoom meeting will cover the following topics:

1. Financial update
2. News from the Summit
3. Progress at Birtley
4. An update on Pallingham and Drungewick
5. Boat news and photos of the Santa trips

If you would like to join us for this meeting, register by emailing support@weyandarun.co.uk to obtain a link.

A formal Annual Meeting will now take place on **31 July** in Billingshurst Community & Conference Centre, if conditions allow. We hope that Covid restrictions may be lighter by July allowing for a more 'normal' face-to-face meeting. However, if Covid restrictions are still in place the meeting will again be held online.

Full details and agenda will be published in the next *Wey-South* magazine.

A chance to see your photos in the next Trust calendar

The Trust is launching a photography competition, with the best entrants selected to appear in the 2022 calendar.

Photos can feature scenery, people, flora or fauna and where possible should reflect the seasons of the year, but must be taken along the canal and in landscape format.

Entries will be judged by an independent panel and the competition is open to members and non-members. There is no charge for entry, but a donation is encouraged.

Full terms and conditions and details of how to enter your digital images will appear on our website.

Deadline for entries is Friday June 18.





The new (secondhand) Nissan Navara pick-up.

Nissan Navara replaces Land Rover as new works vehicle

The Trust has acquired a new work vehicle to replace the on-loan Land Rover from Harwoods of Sussex.

The Land Rover Defender delivered in December 2011 was the last of its line and was returned to Harwoods in Pulborough in October 2020 after a relationship with the dealer spanning several decades. This prompted a search for an alternative pick-up truck.

A five-year-old diesel Nissan Navara has been chosen as a replacement. It can tow up to 3.5 tonnes and carry up to a tonne, as much as a Land Rover. The four-wheel drive Navara also has room for a team of four and boasts air conditioning.

The Nissan was sourced through specialist company GWA Cars & Finance, based in Bognor Regis, West Sussex, and has been funded thanks to a generous donation.

The EWG team have already been putting the new vehicle through its paces and testing out its towing capacity.

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.

All communications and copy either by post to:

Wey-South, Wey & Arun Canal Trust
Bridge End, Somerswey
Shalford, Guildford
Surrey
GU4 8EQ

Or e-mail to:

weysouth@weyandarun.co.uk

Address changes, non-delivery, etc: please notify the Membership Secretary at the address above or e-mail to:

membership@weyandarun.co.uk

Material published in *Wey-South* represents the views of the contributors and should not, unless specifically indicated, be assumed to be the policy of the Trust.

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Wey-South is normally published in the 2nd week of March, June, September and December. Please submit copy by the end of January, April, July and October.

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 194

March/April/

May 2021

A five-star plan in place for canal restoration

Last year saw a flurry of planning applications submitted for restoration across the canal in an evolution of the previous three-site strategy.

The current list of works for now and in the future spans five key restoration sites across the entire length of the canal route. Here is a rundown of ongoing projects, those in the planning stages and future opportunities in those areas.

Key restoration areas:

1. North of Bramley

A new Information Point in Hunt Nature Park is in progress and completion is planned for the first half of this year.

A planning application has been submitted for a new/reinstated canal route initially between the River Wey and Gosden Aqueduct (Gun's Mouth Island to Tannery Lane winding hole).



Bramley Link plans begin from a point next to Gosden Aqueduct

2. South of Bramley

The aim is to have two new bridges on the Birtley length which is owned by the Trust, creating a new circular walk including a canalside section.

Planning permission for the second Birtley bridge has been granted, although work will not begin this year. A temporary deck is to be fitted on the first bridge later this year.

A planning application has also been submitted for reinstating the canal in the Rushett Farm area.

3. Summit Level (Cranleigh/Dunsfold/Alfold)

Plans here include building a new Tickner's Heath Bridge, as well as dredging and reprofiling the canal between Fast Bridge and Tickner's Heath.

A planning application has been submitted for work including a new canal bridge at Elmbridge.

4. Loxwood/Drungewick

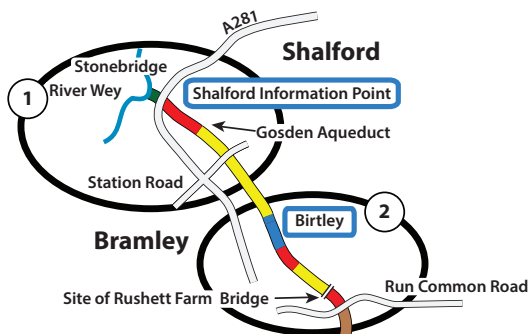
The next 12 months will see the completion of repairs and strengthening of Drungewick Lock walls and dealing with leaks in the canal bank.

5. The Arun Valley

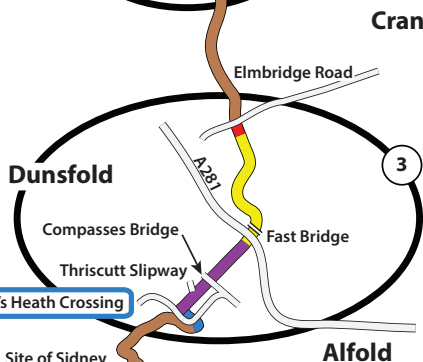
Plans for this stretch include repairs to the Lordings Waterwheel and investigations into further extensions of the restored sections in the area.

Key

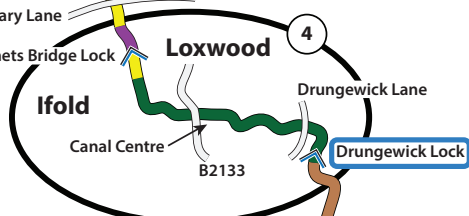
- Operational
- Navigable by small boats (subject to permission and if conditions allow)
- Construction / Restoration underway on site
- Design and detailed planning underway
- In the early stages of planning
- For the longer term



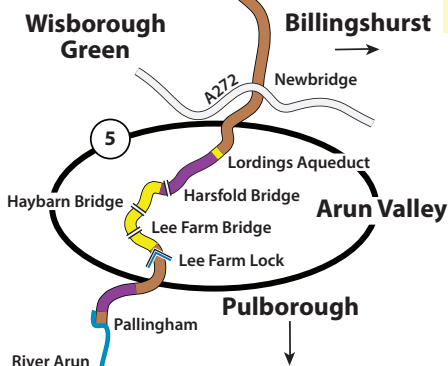
The deck for Birtley Bridge 1 will be installed this year.



Plans have been submitted for a replacement crossing at Elmbridge in Cranleigh.



Bank repairs at Long Meadow are set for later this year.



The members watching over the length of the canal

Back in the 1800s a lengthsmen would be employed to look after a stretch of road, keeping passage clear and the verges neat. Today our lengthsmen are our lookouts along the canal, ensuring all is well on the sections that are opened to the public. Here's who they are:



Alistair Loughrey
Tannery Lane Bridge to Womersley Bridge, including Gun's Mouth

Alistair got involved with the Trust in 2017 after he retired: "I came across one of the Trust's notices looking for volunteers so thought I would give it a try," he says. His interest in hedgelaying as a countryside craft led him to the Hedgelaying Group and just over a year ago he took on the role of lengthsmen. "There's not much (if any) canal in this stretch but I update the noticeboard and walk my length to ensure the canal is in good order, and report fallen trees or blocked bridges. If there is litter I also pick it up. So far, there haven't been any emergencies!"



David Hansell
Womersley Bridge to Birtley Bridge 2

David is another relative newcomer as a lengthsmen and the accessible part of his stretch is quite short, but it is in Trust ownership and so preserving access, observing the condition of the canal and reporting obstructions are important jobs.

He says: "I've always been a 'canal person' and became a life member in 2016. Although I'm retired from teaching I'm still active as a freelance musician so a 'light duties' volunteer role such as this is ideal. This length had my name on it as I cycle beside it regularly. The role will bring a new dimension to my exercise activities as well as put me better in touch with Trust activities."



Peter Topp
Birtley Bridge 2 to Run Common

Peter says he may not be the most active lengthsmen as he lives a fair way away, in Surbiton, but he still manages to keep a close eye on this length. He's no stranger to the canal as he joined in some early work parties in the 70s, "but other time pressures stopped me continuing active involvement". When he retired about 10 years ago Peter took the opportunity to join the Midweek Working Party (MWWP) and a few years later took on the lengthsmen responsibility.

"Now I identify suitable work for the MWWP and look to see that the several culverts that flow under the canal are flowing correctly (there are no old bridges but several original culverts which tend to be largely unseen). When I took on the responsibility the canal was all on private land!

There has been a big improvement with the Trust now owning part of the length and having land owners' permission to access the remainder of the stretch from Birtley up to Hazel Wood."



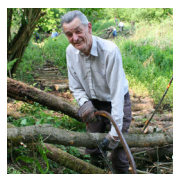
Alan Jennings
Run Common to Elmbridge

Alan's links with canals began early as he was born on the outer fringe of north-west Manchester. "My mother used to push me in my pram to see the big ships go across the fields, as she described the frequent walk we would do to the Manchester Ship Canal about a mile away."

So moving close to the Wey & Arun it was no surprise he found himself volunteering in 2004/05, joining the MWWP, and taking on the lengthsman role some nine years ago.

Much of his stretch is in planning mode and “off limits”, but Alan ensures that the area where the Downs Link crosses the canal at Whitley Manor Bridge is kept looking neat.

“I find it very gratifying being able to communicate with the public whilst working at Whitley and on MWWP duty. Nearly all those who stop to chat commend the work the Trust is doing. Over the years I have been associated with the Trust I have been excited by the progress and increasing momentum that has been achieved and am proud to be a part of it.”



Ian Edwards **Elmbridge to Fast Bridge**

Ian has been involved with the Trust for many years, both in restoration and as a current member of the

MWWP. When the lengthsman team was created, he was a natural choice for his section, which borders his home on Elmbridge Village retirement community in Cranleigh.

Only a short section of Ian’s patch is open, but he walks it every day in winter as he needs to keep an eye on water levels and any potential for flooding. “In the summer I unblocked a culvert and now the water runs nicely into the Cranleigh Waters. I also need to look out for any trees that have come down. I enjoy the role, especially getting out into countryside. It helps keep me fit.”



Keith Charman **South of Fast Bridge to** **Compasses Bridge**

Keith is the newest member of the lengthsman team and is waiting to report back on what he finds as he experiences his first season.



Graham Baird **Compasses Bridge to Lock** **16 in Sidney Wood**

Graham joined the Trust in 1970s, working on Rowner and Malham Lock

restorations. He became active again in 1998 when he retired and took on the role of project coordinator, working with visiting working parties, and has been a lengthsman since last June. He also looks after the milestone project.

“Only a short part of the length is in water,” says Graham, “but maintenance of the towpath is important. Fortunately, the only emergency so far has been a breach at Tickner’s Heath which reduced the water level in that pound.”

For Graham, the benefits of the role are many and varied: “I get regular exercise, watch the changing seasons in the countryside, and a feeling that I am making a small contribution to the restoration and maintenance of the canal when I am no longer able to take part in more physically demanding duties.”



Hannes Gysin **Lock 16 to Devil’s** **Hole Lock**

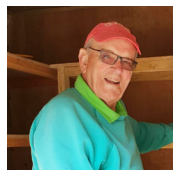
Hannes’ area is 2.5 miles long, spanning both partially restored and

restored sections. He knows the canal well, having been a member since 2003 and a regular Monday Group volunteer, but has been a lengthsman since 2015.

He walks the length every four to five weeks, more frequently along the navigable section which includes Gennets Bridge Lock area “and more in the winter when the canal can overflow into weirs or over lock gates”.

He follows a detailed list of tasks including the frequency of check-ups, “but the most difficult part has been negotiating what can be an extremely muddy towpath”.

"However, I enjoy having a walk with added interest and in the fresh air, and finding jobs done by the various volunteer groups."



Peter Hyem

Devil's Hole Lock to Drungewick Lock and winding hole

Peter has been involved with the Trust for so long

he can't actually put a number on it, and is the longest-serving skipper as well as founder of the PEST working party group. Living in Loxwood made him a perfect candidate to look after this section, and he visits most days.

Along with reporting any maintenance issues, he also keeps on top of litter (a problem in this much-used part of the canal). "We're the eyes and ears of the Trust," he says. "If a lock fails here that needs to be addressed quickly, and as a skipper I'm all too aware of the potential of safety issues such as fallen trees across the canal or banks breaking."

His role also goes further though, given the number of walkers he meets on the towpath, and Peter is always keen to stop and chat about the canal's restoration and encourage new members. "I'm happy to talk to people about the canal, it's not hard when it's something you're enthusiastic about."



Roger and Margaret Wilson

Drungewick Lock winding hole to and including Malham Lock, south of Malham Lock down to and including Newbridge

Margaret and Roger act as joint lengthsmen, "because we generally walk together, and it means that either of us can take over if needed,"

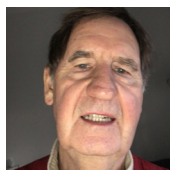
Roger explains. The pair moved to the area about 10 years ago and have been members

of the Monday Group for some six or seven years. Quite large sections of their patch are off limits to the public, "which means we have never been able to walk any of those lengths, to our deep regret" and flooding prevents access between Newbridge and Loves Bridge almost every winter.

Alongside liaising with the public and reporting back on damage due to vandalism or bad weather, the pair keep the leaflet boxes topped up and even go so far as to make their own laminated information leaflets.

"We enjoy the role as it gets us out regularly and keeps us in touch with the Trust. We talk to the people we meet and try to pass on our own enthusiasm. Quite a lot of walkers are curious about the Trust.

"It's easy to think that because we know about things then so does everyone else, but that isn't true and we do encounter walkers who have very little idea of anything to do with the canal. Indeed, some are just lost!"



John Lee

South of Newbridge on the A272 at Wisborough Green to Lee Farm Lock

John's involvement in the Wey & Arun Canal Trust

started about 10 years ago when he watched with interest the Loxwood Road Crossing being constructed and got talking to a neighbour who was part of the MWWP and signed him up. Several years later, when the Newbridge to Lee Farm Lock stretch became available, John took it on.

"It's a fairly long section, but the part from Haybarn to Lee Farm Lock is a private towpath and this cuts down the amount of canal I need to walk," he says. "It can be difficult to get to my length when the river is in flood and the fields are under water, though. I can walk to the canal from my house, but when the river has flooded, it's a five-mile drive via Pulborough.

"A couple of years ago when I was walking from Harsfold Bridge to the flood gate bridge, I found a large tree down across the towpath and it was extremely difficult to get past. When I got to Lordings I met a couple who were doing a trial walk of the canal for a group of the University of the Third Age from Haslemere. The walk was the following Monday, and this was Friday afternoon. When I got home I emailed the office and someone came to cut the tree up over the weekend.

"I have never seen that couple again, but I am sure they were most impressed."

For John, being a lengthsmen makes him feel he is playing a small part in the restoration of the canal. "In my case there is so much work going on between Lordings and Lee Farm Lock that it is most encouraging to think that this section may actually be in a usable state before too long."



Nigel Gibbons

A mile south of Lee Farm Lock to the River Arun

Nigel's involvement in the Wey & Arun Canal Trust can be traced back to 2006 when

he bought Oakhurst Farm in Loxwood, which the canal ran through. At that time all that was there was a neglected section of disused canal, but today is Gennets Bridge Lock.

Nigel came to share the Trust's vision and, having a background in property, soon found himself involved in liaising with landowners along the canal. Last year he also signed up as a lengthsmen.

"My stretch has only one public right of way that crosses over at Pallingham Bridge. More often than not, it's just a good walk for the dog, but the recent Storm Bella reminded me of the damage that floods and fallen trees can do along the canal.

Last year, with the cooperation of the landowners, the volunteers did great work restoring much of the length and, now that

it is in water, there is a transformation to something approaching its former glory."



Julian Cheek

Co-ordinating all the lengthsmen is an important role, and Julian has been doing it since 2013, having been a volunteer since 1995.

"I joined Eric Walker's Sunday Group (TSG), as I was still employed then. TSG was working to restore Devil's Hole Lock. At that time, the canal was in water only from the Onslow Arms to the site of the slipways at Drungewick."

Julian worked on various projects but realised the Trust needed to formalise the maintenance work needed after the various structures had been restored, so started working at the Northern Office.

"I think my role has four main elements: Organisation of the Restoration Group meetings; Liaising with the lengthsmen – receiving reports, passing on issues, and seeking replacements when lengthsmen step down; Keeping the maintenance schedule up to date; and arranging PAT for the Canal Centre.

"I'm really enthused by the idea of bringing this 200-year old industrial artefact back to life, even if it will be for different purposes (leisure). I won't see it finished, which is a small regret, but I'm continually impressed by the work done by so many people in the Trust who give up so much of their time. Every restored bridge or lock or another stretch of canal opened brings a smile.

"So I enjoy doing what I can, in the background, to help take that forward."

If you are looking for a volunteer role within the Trust, whether it's one behind the scenes or as one of the working parties, please register your interest by emailing support@weyandarun.co.uk.

Tickner's Heath



Moving forward at Tickner's

Progress can only be described as stop-start at the Trust's latest major restoration project at Tickner's Heath in Alfold, Surrey, thanks to Covid. However, volunteers led by site restoration supervisor Dave Evans managed to end the year on a high by setting up the compound and readying the site for piling contractors to begin in February.

The project involves creating a new canal cut and the construction of a road crossing and pedestrian footbridge in a project lasting several years and volunteers have been working at the site since late summer.

Managing the mud in the compound became a priority as the year drew to an end and the weather turned. Matting used at the Birtley Bridge project was called into use and many tonnes of hardcore and limestone scalplings laid to create an access route, car park and working area.

Just before Christmas cabins were craned in and a 24/7 security system from PID Systems, a division of the SmartWater Group, set up. Alongside the high-tech security units, all equipment on site has been tagged with SmartWater.





Breaking ground

Once the eight cabins were in situ and the compound was shipshape, Dave Evans (volunteers now on lockdown) had to create a flat and stable bed for the piling mats ahead of the contractor drilling on the canalside of the site.

More hardcore deliveries later and the area was ready for the Neil Foundations team to begin.

It was a tightly organised operation with as few contractors on site as possible and social distancing, but the job was completed within just a few weeks. A Continuous Flight

Auger system was used, in which the spiral drill bit is driven to a seven-metre depth then concrete is pumped through as the drill is being withdrawn.

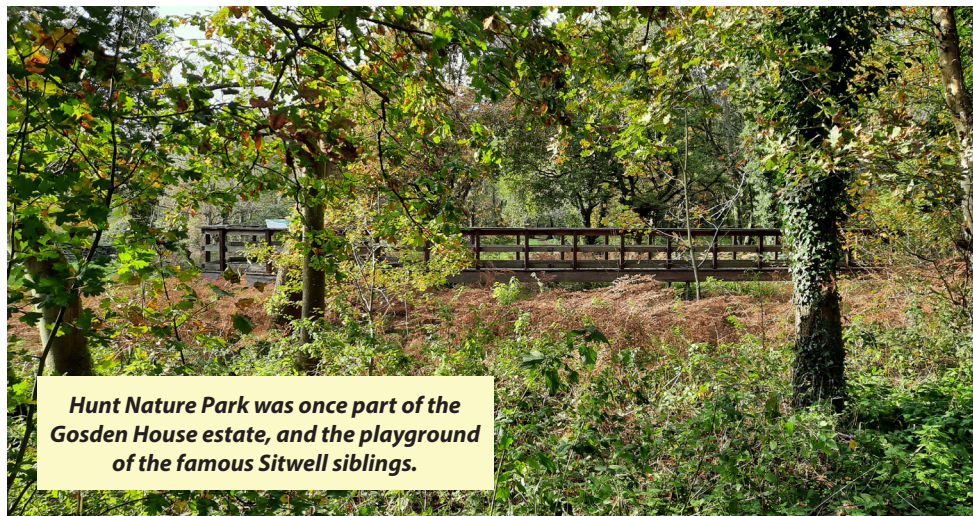
A reinforcement cage is then placed through the wet concrete.

While the heavy lifting was being carried out, back in the compound a steel fixer was creating the steel rebar cages, speeding up the process.

Four bored piles were created for the footbridge and 40-plus for the training walls of the bridge.

Construction of the footbridge will begin once volunteers have been given the green light to restart work.





Hunt Nature Park was once part of the Gosden House estate, and the playground of the famous Sitwell siblings.

Step inside the Hunt Nature Park of the past

Hunt Nature Park, established by the Trust in Shalford in 2013, was previously part of the grounds of Gosden House, a mansion built in 1794 by John Sparkes, a yeoman shrewd in property dealing.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the house had passed to Sparkes' great-granddaughter, Mrs Emma Eastwood. By 1890 the Eastwoods had built a larger house at Milford and so agreed a 30-year lease on Gosden House with Lady Louisa Sitwell, paternal grandmother of the Sitwell siblings: Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell. The trio were later to gain fame as leaders of the English literary and artistic avant-garde of the 1920s.

Although the family seat of the Sitwells is Renishaw Hall near Sheffield, they regularly visited 'Granny Sitty' at Gosden, with the first such visit recollected by Osbert in the second volume of his autobiography *The Scarlet Tree* (published in 1946).

His memoir makes clear the children's affection for the house and its setting, as well as the slow pace of life in Victorian rural Surrey. By 1898 the Wey & Arun Canal had been closed for a quarter of a century, hence it is not mentioned in Osbert's account (neither is the

railway which formed the eastern boundary of the Gosden House estate).

Osbert writes: "Surrey was then still a very rural county. We were bounded by a wall, so that house and grounds represented an island floating, as it were, upon surrounding commons, wherefrom arose the quacking of ducks and the quavering of goats – modelled upon the talk of their owners, smocked and fringed peasants today only to be seen upon the stage of a revived musical comedy."

Other than the kindly attentions of their grandmother, the children were in the care of their governess: "Sometimes Miss King-Church would take us to continue the building of a house of twigs in a copse in the grounds.

Under the shadows of the twigs that, if the sun struggled through, lay like a crackle upon the surface of the ground, flowed a little stream. The damp earth



The primroses recalled by Osbert are still a feature of Hunt Park.

Photo by Dave Verrall.

near it was covered with starry clumps of primroses and anemones, only their heads showing out of the thick golden-green moss."

Osbert says that the governess did not bring the children to this spot as often as they would have liked, "for she did not altogether care for it; a smell reached us at this particular point from a distant tannery".

Tannery Lane, the northern boundary of Gosden Meadow, is so called because at least two tanneries stood close to (and used water from) the Cranleigh Waters. The rivulet remembered by Osbert would have drained into this main watercourse.

Although the kitchen and formal gardens of Gosden House formed part of the lease granted to the Sitwells, the Eastwoods retained the land close to Horsham Road (A281) and Osbert describes illicit excursions into this territory: "In this county we owned no land, and I learnt here to trespass. Sweet were its joys, the excitements of snatching kingcups from the marsh, all the time in fear lest a foot should sink into the

squelching ground, and still more terrified of the harsh voice of authority; even the bluebells acquired a fresh value if grabbed from under the unseeing eyes of Mr Eastwood's keepers." Needless to say, Osbert was caught and chased out of the woods by an old man shouting "No trespassers 'ere!".

The dowager Lady Sitwell surrendered the lease on Gosden House in 1908. A further lease to a businessman followed, ended by sale of the house and grounds in 1919 to Lord Wandsworth, resulting in conversion of the property to Gosden House School by November 1920, a role the house continues to fulfil to this day.

However, Osbert's childhood reminiscences, set down in his middle age, capture the charm of the Hunt Nature Park as it is still enjoyed by so many today.

Extracts from Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography with kind permission of Alexandra Sitwell.

Alan Johnson



The replacement footbridge at Baldwin's Knob Lock is now in place. The Tickner's Depot team began fabricating the bridge last year but lockdown prevented them finishing the job. Kevin Baker stepped in and he and his team have installed the finished article.

Pallingham Bridge



Pallingham Bridge repairs give it a new lease of life

Pallingham Bridge, or Pallingham Quay Bridge, is the most southerly on the canal. The brick parapets to the bridge were completely rebuilt by the Trust and the Pulborough Society back in 1975 when the bridge was in such disrepair it was deemed unsafe and plans made to replace it with a low-level causeway. Volunteers worked each Saturday for a year to complete the work and save the bridge.

Since then the movement of the bridge foundations has caused the brickwork to deteriorate, so much so that in addition to the usual movement cracking a significant section of the north east wall had become detached and was deemed structurally unsafe.

The main task in the current Pallingham Bridge repair was to provide an additional foundation and support for that part of the bridge parapet. The solution, designed by Gary Courtndage, was a reinforced concrete beam extending from under the area where the brickwork had subsided and cracked into the ground beyond the east end of the parapet wall.

The remedial work has been carried out by the Eric Walker Group (EWG) over the past year.



***Pallingham Bridge in 1975
before restoration began.***

Their first job before tackling the bridge work itself though, was to unearth and divert a BT cable, which was on the line of the new beam.

Following the excavation and casting of the beam, the brick parapet wall was rebuilt, where possible using the recovered original bricks. There were a number of other small cracks in the brickwork parapets and these were repaired using "helical" stainless steel ties set into the horizontal mortar joints and repointed.

By the end of 2020 the parapet brickwork had been completed, except for a small amount of outstanding mortar joint repointing.



**The remains of
Pallingham Docks.**

Not long after starting the work on the bridge, the EWG group discovered the old foundations of the towpath wall that passed under the bridge.

On this section of the canal the records show that men, not horses, pulled the barges and this is confirmed by the size and location of the towpath beneath the bridge, which could not have accommodated a horse.

It was decided to clear the foundations and rebuild the stone towpath wall in its original position, install stop plank channels into the original recesses in the stone bridge support walls, and replace the timber stop plank base.

The severe cracking between the bridge foundation stone walls and the facing brick walls meant it was necessary to stabilise these by installing four "Cintec" anchors through the brickwork into the stonework. A specialist contractor has been employed to install the anchors and work on this will recommence when both weather conditions and lockdown regulations allow.

The Midweek Working Party also paid the bridge area a visit in the latter part of the year, with their clearance unearthing what are thought to be the remains of the entrance to Pallingham Docks.



This early OS map shows the location of Pallingham Docks and Bridge. Mention is made in P.A.L Vine's *Lost Route to the Sea* that the docks were the only spot on the route between the Wey and the Arun where repairs to barges took place. Vine also notes that the barge *Active*, the last owned by Bramley wharfinger, lockkeeper and coal merchant William Stanton, was under repair at the docks in August 1870.



Haybarn Bridge – a long way from home

OK, so the bare facts are that Haybarn Swing Bridge, deep in the Arun valley between Billingshurst and Pulborough, was officially opened in 2005. WACT volunteers installed the swing bridge to replace a fixed concrete farm bridge. But the most intriguing fact is that the bridge was not new – it came from Keighley, Yorkshire, on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, specifically from Bar Lane.

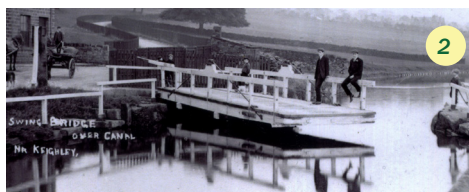
That was about all I knew when I came across a historic photo of a canal swing bridge near Keighley from around 1900. It looks very much like our bridge at Haybarn – could the picture be Bar Lane? That was an intriguing thought but the answer turned out to be ‘no’. Thanks to Alistair Shand at *The Keighley News* I learned that the bridge is Granby Lane at Riddlesden, the next bridge east of Bar Lane. A near miss.

My next mission was to see if there were any pictures of our bridge in place at Bar Lane. A look in WACT archives turned up some pictures of Bar Lane, but the bridge was a new one. By that time our bridge was already sitting, looking very neglected, in a canalside yard.

The Keighley News didn’t have any pictures, but they kindly printed a letter. Great news – Colin Thunhurst of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society had captured our bridge at Bar Lane in 1977.

The icing on the cake came when a young lady in my household, a bit of a jigsaw enthusiast, got a new puzzle – The Old Swing Bridge. It’s the right type of bridge. The side of the bus reads ‘Keighley’. Could it be? Sadly this was Morton Lane, further east still from Bar Lane, a charming painting by artist Trevor Mitchell. Rats – another near miss, but the looking was a lot of fun.

Julian Morgan



- 1. Haybarn Bridge on the Wey & Arun in 2005.**
- 2. Granby Lane Bridge in about 1900.**
- 3. A Bar Lane bridge, but too new to be ours.**
- 4. Bar Lane bridge in 1977 (by kind permission of Colin Thunhurst).**
- 5. Morton Lane Bridge as immortalised in jigsaw form (by kind permission of Trevor Mitchell).**

The sponsored walk is always a favourite event among members and supporters.

Events



Boat rally date set for June 27th

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust is set to hold its annual River Arun Rally on Sunday June 27th.

Each year scores of paddleboarders, canoeists, kayakers and small crafts have joined the free event in a celebration of watersports and to prove navigation rights still exist on the River Arun.

Participants are expected to launch at either Pulborough at 2.45pm or Stopham Bridge at 3.30pm, with the aim of reaching Pallingham Quay, the highest navigable point for boats on the Arun.

To take part, please register online at www.weyandarun.co.uk.

Annual Poddle set for Sunday 6th June

It is hoped that this year's Poddle sponsored walk will take place on Sunday 6th June. The event is one of the Trust's major fundraising events and a highlight for many supporters.

This year's route will take in the West Sussex countryside and canal. The 11-mile walk around Loxwood and Plaistow will begin from North Hall, Loxwood, and take walkers along the canal as far as Brewhurst Lock and then through countryside and woodland to Winterton Hall in Plaistow.

The afternoon route follows paths north of Plaistow and back to the canal at Bonfire Hanger, then return to North Hall, Loxwood.

The usual format is that lunch is provided, along with refreshment stops along the route, and as *Wey-South* went to press plans for this remained in place. Given the current uncertainty over Covid regulations please check the website for updates on arrangements ahead of the event.

Sponsorship forms are available to download on the Trust's website.

For more information, please email the event organiser at margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk.

Boat trips

Operating the traditional Santa trips under Covid safety regulations certainly called for some thinking outside the box. However, volunteers managed to run a full season safely and give families some much-needed fun with their canny solution that involved giving a socially-distanced Santa his very own boat (and screened workshop).

A festive-looking Wiggonholt took a limited number of passengers along the canal, where they were served hot food and drink, while Santa was busy making toys in his workshop (Zachariah Keppel). On Wiggonholt's return children could visit Santa one by one and collect their Christmas gift.

Thanks must go to boat crew, Canal Centre staff and our Santa, who all worked incredibly hard to deal with fast-changing regulations and customer needs, in difficult circumstances.

As with the summer and autumn trips demand for tickets was high as the public looked for entertainment. As Wey-South went to press, boat group volunteers were finalising details of spring and summer cruises. Please check the website for full details and to book.



Many thanks to Tickner's depot manager John Smith

For the past 11 years John Smith has run the Tickner's Heath depot, the Trust's very own *Repair Shop*. And if ever there was a man suited to the role, it is John. His 24 years in the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, originally allied to a toolmaker, proved perfect training for the demands of working party leaders to breathe life into flagging equipment and fix the unfixable. But now John is handing over the reins as depot manager to Ian Prior.

With his background in working with skilled craftsmen "rubbing off", John can pretty much turn his hand to anything and so when he came forward as a volunteer more than a decade ago the Trust was quick to sign him up, commandeered by then restoration manager Turlough Bamber to help establish a small workshop on the site on Dunsfold Park at the Summit. "All I went for was to carry out some small item maintenance," he remembers.

Working party leaders were soon bringing in brush cutters, pumps and lawn mowers for repairs. "We slowly built up a team and we looked after all sorts of kit. The items were usually all of quite some age – archaic even – although they could still do the job."

John puts part of his long service down to the people he has worked with. "Over the years we have had a total of 13 working at one time or another as part of the Tickner's crew, all hard-working souls with a multitude of skills. I just sat back and let them loose on whatever darkened our door. We have always had a good team."

The depot has seen big changes under John's tenure, one of the biggest being the modernisation of the workshops. When John first arrived they were a collection of old farm buildings and WW2 Nissen huts, with no mains electricity or lighting. "It was all fairly rundown," he recalls. "We also shared the buildings with other entities, including a chap who repaired electrical vehicles."

John pays tribute to the "marvellous" job the EWG team have done in transforming the depot



John has managed the Tickner's depot for more than a decade.

and creating a "magnificent" workshop, making the team's work much easier.

"Since the workshop improvements we've expanded more into manufacturing items. We made the large wooden Easter Eggs (which were decorated and put in the Canal Centre)," he says. John is also proud of the work he and the team put into manufacturing the new bridge for Baldwin's Knob Lock, work which was sadly curtailed by the first lockdown. "We were all ready to put the bridge together then lockdown came. Luckily Kevin Baker managed to finish the job."

The current team of three haven't managed to work for some months due to Covid restrictions, and it's clear John misses the work and the people. "It's the camaraderie that I enjoy, as an ex-serviceman I'm used to people around me, the banter and the crew that I get on with. I also miss being able to do something concrete which helps the Trust.

Luckily for the Trust John isn't hanging up his tools just yet, as he'll still be volunteering on Wednesdays.

Wildlife on the canal

Spring is my favourite time of the year. Birds are singing, flowers are appearing, and blossom is on the trees. Butterflies, damselflies and other insects can also be seen.

The canal corridor through the beautiful Sussex and Surrey countryside provides a natural link between a rich variety of habitats and this provides a wonderful opportunity to see wildlife.

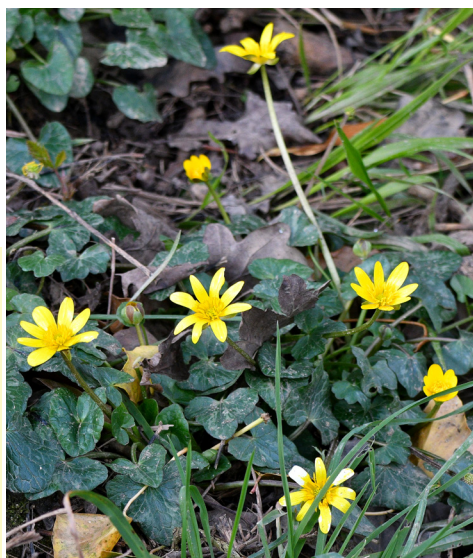
Azure and Large Red are the first damselflies to be seen, while a few butterflies including the Peacock have survived as adults during the winter. At this time they are emerging from hibernation, but the majority have overwintered as larva. They then form a chrysalis/pupa from which the adult butterfly emerges. One of the first to see is the Orange-tip. Males have the orange tip while females are white with a smaller black wing tip.

Wildflowers are starting to appear. Look out for Lesser Celandine. These early flowers provide an important source of nectar for insects.

Listen out for birdsong too, as male birds sing to attract females for nesting. They are also singing to mark their territories which they defend, especially from others of the same species.

Dave Verrall
dv@weyandarun.co.uk





Clockwise from top: Azure damselfly; a Peacock butterfly; Lesser Celandine; a Large Red damselfly; Song thrush; a male Orangetip butterfly.

If you have seen some wildlife and are not sure what it is, visit the wildlife photo page on our website. It has seasonal wildlife information and more than 300 photos. Go to www.weyarun.org.uk/wildlife.

Working Party Roundup

Well, 2020 was certainly a start-stop, start-stop, start-stop year! Yet it was also a year of significant progress with the completion of Harsfold Bridge, the refit of *Zachariah Keppel*, and the commencement of work at the Tickner's Heath road crossing site. Mention must also be made of the continuing efforts by the groups that keep our waterway navigable and in good shape.

But for now, as I write this in February, we're in another National Lockdown and all activities are suspended. We'll all be ready to restart just as soon as conditions permit.

Peter Winter

peter_winter@weyandarun.co.uk

Monday Group

In November we managed a visit to Sidney Wood, where we cleared from Firtree Copse to just beyond the first bund, including culvert 1 which, not unexpectedly, was choked up with leaves.

When we were able to resume in December, two groups were out, tidying up at Gennets and the overflow weir above the lock, changing the signs on the information post and starting to remove the spirals off the plants as recommended by the adjacent landowner. We also gave attention to Loxwood car park, the pump house and at Devil's Hole Lock.

We finally returned to Sidney Wood in mid-December, working in two groups from both ends of the section; the Firtree Copse end where we left off in November and at Lock 16. In addition, a third group very carefully cleared interwoven brambles from around both newt ponds at Gennets Bridge Lock and set up an information post on the site of Lock 9 by Gennets Wood footbridge.

Nick Wood

mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk



Loxwood after a Monday Group tidy-up.

Hedgelaying

Hedgelaying started again this winter with two sessions coppicing hazel to provide stakes and binders. As required, the group consisted of a maximum of six people on site, with no shared tools, and everyone responsible for processing any material they produce from cutting, through to the finished products, including removing brash and creating anti-deer stockades around the cut stools, to allow regrowth to take place.

Coppicing requires us all to work at least two tree lengths apart, so there is no problem with maintaining social distancing. However, I had to tell six potential hedgelayers that we cannot take anyone new while Covid precautions are in place. Hedgelaying training requires close supervision and as most people do not have their own tools when they come to us, it is much better for them to try a range of our billhooks before buying as they are very much a personal choice.

After successfully cutting well over 100 stakes and a similar quantity of binders, the team moved on to do some actual hedgelaying



A Hedgelaying Group of three managed one day at Loxwood before lockdown.

at Loxwood. The intention was to continue from where last season's sessions stopped, with six people each working on their own 11 yard section in order to maintain social distancing. So far, so good in theory, but then Tier 4 restrictions stopped half the group being able to travel to Loxwood. One day was completed under the new regime with just three members of the team on site.

Hopefully, we will manage some hedging before March, not least as we have a large number of stakes and binders which can only be used this season, as they will dry out.

Nick Baxter
hedgelaying@weyandarun.co.uk

Canal Maintenance Unit

With the lockdown curtailing most of our activities, I have been looking at upgrades of our lock pump control systems to make them all dual-level. This will save money in the future by allowing a lower level in winter months and in times of water shortage while still keeping enough to allow boat movements.

Having discovered the damaged lower sensor at Devil's Hole, I made a replacement and fitted it, but this revealed that the relay had also failed! So a new one was needed, and this in the usual fashion produced another problem as the replacement is wider and would not fit, so a partial rewire ensued to enable the fitting. As part of this, Don, one of my team, came in and between us we were able to draw a new cable through to the top sensors. All is now working correctly again.

As Christmas approached the team set about the replacement of the footbridge at Baldwin's Knob Lock. In the most atrocious weather, the team removed the old bridge, saving the deck for reuse as temporary stop planks elsewhere. The task was not made any easier by the deck being bolted down with barely any room to get a spanner in to release them, but with persistence it was eventually removed.

The new bridge had been fabricated at the depot by the volunteers and painted by myself over a period of three weeks of daily painting. The parts were transported to Loxwood and loaded into *May Upton* which not only took the



MWWP in action between Harsfold and Lordings.

pre-assembled parts to site, but also provided a work platform.

Although the weather has been a hindrance, we've pressed on with various repairs including Brewhurst Lock, which suffered a failed paddle. Thankfully, we were able to repair it in time for the Santa cruises. However, the other paddle has now thrown the bottom stop rail, and this will require a full drain down of the lock as soon as conditions permit.

Kev Baker
kevin_baker@weyandarun.co.uk

Midweek Working Party

We worked in the first week in November and then started again at the beginning of December, cutting down the hedge on the side of the towpath starting from the gate about 200 yards from Harsfold Bridge. This stretch of hedge has not been cut for at least 15 years and in some patches was full of brambles. We completed taking the hedge down to 4ft for most of the way as far as Flood Gate bridge, despite the fact that one week there were only four of us due to atrocious weather conditions and two weeks when the Arun was flooded and it was difficult to get in the field. A small group have been working on the hedge over

the bridge and now as you cross it you get a magnificent view over the countryside.

Margaret Darvill
margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk

Tickner's Depot

After leading activities at the Tickner's Depot for about 11 years, John Smith is going to change his role to looking after maintenance and repair of smaller items of equipment. Meanwhile, we extend a warm welcome to Ian Prior, who will take over management of the depot. Ian has a strong interest in industrial heritage and his career was in the aviation industry working in logistics and store keeping. Ian will be on-site at the Depot on Mondays while John will continue in his Wednesday slot.

Ian Prior
ian_prior@weyandarun.co.uk

Eric Walker Group

Work continued at Pallingham with the intention of completing the project. Progress was been somewhat slower than planned because of the wet weather making working conditions difficult. The parapet brickwork is now complete, except for a small



Rain hampered work building the towpath stone wall under Pallingham Bridge.

amount of outstanding mortar joint repointing. Work on building the towpath stone wall under the bridge however, was severely disrupted by the amount of water flowing down from the northern section.

By creating a bund and constant pumping we were able to complete the stonework to the wall and a start was made on backfilling with stone and concrete. With little prospect of the weather improving, we decided to cease operations for the Christmas break. The compound has been secured and the plant and equipment transported back to secure storage until such time that we can resume.

Dennis Gillen
dennis_gillen@weyandarun.co.uk

Boat Maintenance

As the trip boats are now ready for passengers, we helped Kevin Baker with *May Upton*; Ian putting in a new wooden deck aft and in the cabins, and myself cutting the worn bits out of the long mooring ropes and resplicing them. She is now tied up on short mooring ropes opposite the Canal Centre. Otherwise it was a case of taking away step boxes and boathooks for refurbishment at

home and Ian ordering melamine-topped tables to be fitted to *Zachariah Keppel*, which currently has only chairs on board. The tables will be adjustable (as are *WH's*) and removable, completing *ZK's* big refit.

Ian has riveted the front door back on *Josias Jessop* after it fell off. He has also swapped her battery and charged it fully. It is necessary to rotate the battery for *JJ* as it is needed to power the automatic bilge pump. I put two coats of primer and a coat of white gloss on the deckhead of *WH's* engine room and it now looks much smarter and brighter as it was all bare plywood before.

David Arnold
david_arnold@weyandarun.co.uk

PEST

The team were able to restart for a while in December but achieved only one day of work rather than the usual two. With six volunteers available we were able to use the optimum 'Covid-compliant' arrangement of two boats (*Josias Jessop* and *May Upton*) with a crew of three on each. The day's activity focused on the stretch of the navigation used for our Santa trips, removing debris from the water and any overhanging or encroaching

growth. From a boat operations perspective the currently operational section of the canal is in good order due to the work of maintenance staff and volunteer work parties. We look forward to the reopening of the navigation to Drungewick Lock. After a couple of years out of use this should provide plenty of opportunities for long-distance PEST forays.

Chris Jones
chris_jones@weyandarun.co.uk

Northern Working Party

At the Tickner's Crossing site, work continued but the November lockdown severely restricted progress. However by working four days per week with up to six volunteers on each day, we caught up on the time lost.

The first task was to build the timber hoarding fence and construct the new vehicle access onto Dunsfold Road. There is now access to a car park which keeps cars separate from the construction activities.

Then there was the battle with the ground conditions. The heavy rainfall and the Wealden clays do not make a good combination. Add to this an old (perhaps Victorian) land drain running across the site (6ft down) that decided its contents were better deposited in the compound rather than in the canal. Many tons of hardcore and much patience eventually provided a workable surface.

The next job was to install the services and the concrete bases for the cabins and containers. Volunteers completed the concrete pads in time for the haulage contractors to move everything for the short hop across the canal from the Tickner's Depot. The third Saturday working party then completed the internal surfacing, steps and ramps to the cabins, front gates security together with a general tidy up. It is great that the site has a fully functioning operational base and we look forward to starting on the bridge proper.

Bill Nicholson
bill_nicholson@weyandarun.co.uk

Introducing staff members

Max Byfield



Max worked in IT for a big insurance company for most of his working life and retired in 2018, at which time he joined the Trust intending to

volunteer with one or more of the working parties. "However, I found that I couldn't commit to full days. When Julian Morgan posted in the monthly newsletter about looking for people with IT experience to work in the back office I thought that would be interesting and applied and began working for the Trust part-time last year."

Max's job title is administrator and he deals with all the regular office tasks, IT and telephony issues as well as responding to enquiries, organising the printing and distribution of Wey-South magazine and "generally helping out with whatever jobs need doing from day to day".

Gayle Davis-Tyrrell



Gayle joined the Trust at the same time as Max. Having lived in Loxwood for seven years and locally before that, she had been able to follow

the works carried out by the Trust. She makes good use of the towpath on regular walks and runs along the canal with her Spaniel, Bouff.

Gayle's role at the Trust is as administrator in accounts, supporting the finance director with business accounting such as supplier payments and staff salaries, reconciling company accounts and basic bookkeeping.

"I love being able to work for the charity that is in my village, where I can see and benefit from the progress of the work it does. I am an outdoors person so having the canal on my doorstep has had a hugely positive impact on my life," she says.



Newspaper scheme folds

The newspaper recycling scheme at Loxwood will draw to a close in March after

many decades of success.

Historically, the Trust has made good money from the scheme. In *Wey-South Bulletin* issue no.10 in 1974, Chris Dragonetti wrote: "Every newspaper is worth just under one new farthing - if such a thing exists. Multiply this by the number of members who have a newspaper every day and the Trust could have a weekly income of nearly £17."

Up to a few years ago our suppliers would take the bins away and pay us for the paper, and West Sussex County Council would pay us a recycling credit on top. However, several years ago those suppliers went out of business and now the council credit is coming to an end, which means it is financially unviable for us to continue. The bins will remain until the end of March, but please email canalcentre@weyandarun.co.uk before bringing stockpiled paper. Please too do not leave paper after the bins have gone as we will have no way of disposing of it.

Thank you to all who have supported the scheme and not only helped the environment but raised funds for the Trust at the same time.

Talks team takes to Zoom

The talks team have seen demand for their service increase over past months as groups and clubs hold meetings virtually instead of face-to-face. The team have given presentations via Zoom to other canal trusts around the country as well as local groups. If you would like to request a speaker for your club or group, please visit our website or email john_dodwell@weyandarun.co.uk.

Christmas draw is a winner

Six lucky winners had a new year bonus when their tickets were drawn in the Christmas raffle.

First prize of £200 went to Ken Garman, while runner-up Brian Tidbury won £100 and Mrs R Wilkinson scooped £75. Margaret Moncur received an M&S voucher, Mr D Trout won £40 and £30 went to John Thorp.

A huge thank you to Tim Lewis for his support in organising the draw and to everyone who bought tickets, especially if you added an extra donation. We expect the income to be at least £4,500.

Membership Report

Our membership stands at 2,881. We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members.

Nick Barron	Stephen Bennett	Philip & Debbie Best	Jane & Kevin Claber
Clifford & Jenny Elgie	Graham Everson	Annja & Tim Haynes	Charlotte & Octav Gurkanli
Nigel Jeffries	Keith Knee	Janosch Oppermann	Andrew & Lucie Paulson
Jane & Ken Peters	Ian Prior	Kelvin Rudd	Ian Sesnan
Alan & Judy Sparkes	Glenn Turner	Nigel Waterson	Charlotte & Michael Whitaker
Justine & Keith Williams			

We have learned with regret of the death of:

Ann Armstrong	Frank Telling	Robert Goldsmith	Clifford Foster
Elizabeth Prudence Jones			

For members currently paying by cheque, please can you consider changing to payment by standing order or direct debit? It would help reduce our administrative costs and effort.

John Tovell
membership@weyandarun.co.uk



Mother Nature helped to create some spectacular scenes along the canal over winter. Julian Nowell had an early start to capture a misty Hunt Park in Shalford, while Julian Morgan braved the snow to take this picture at the site of the future Birtley Bridge 2.

