

WEY & ARUN



Quarterly Magazine of the
Wey & Arun Canal Trust

Issue 200 September/October/November 2022



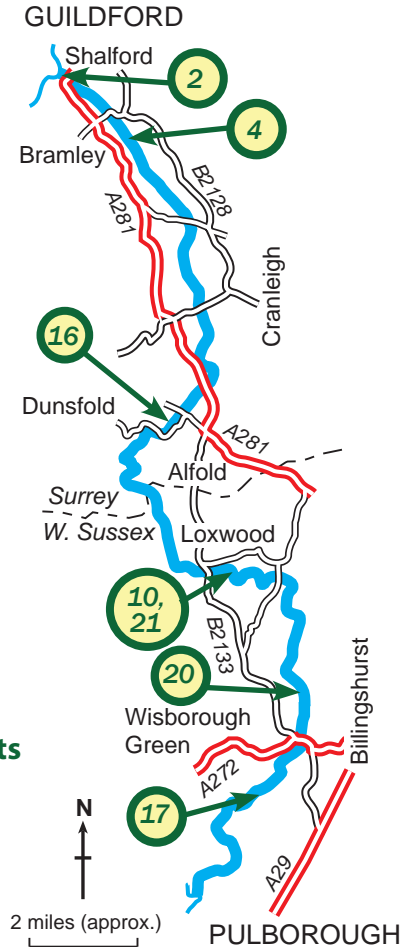
The Tickner's Heath road crossing site played host to a WRG training weekend in July. Some 40 people came along over the two days. They got to improve their skills including dumper and digger driving, using a telehandler and bricklaying with lime mortar.



We held a series of guided walks throughout the summer, led by Alan Johnson. The walks started at the new Information Centre in Shalford and Alan provided a commentary on the route of the canal from its junction with the River Wey to Bramley. With anecdotes covering everything from barge explosions to how Stonebridge got its name, the walks gave a fascinating view on times past. The picture above shows Alan (centre) with a group at Stonebridge (originally the northernmost bridge on the canal) and a boat moored at Gun's Mouth on the left.

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Front cover: The site of Birtley Bridge 2 seen from the south on August 17th. Our consultant archaeologist Martin Cook and his colleague are recording the remains of the original Birtley Canal Bridge (almost certainly a swingbridge). The concrete slab in the centre protected the gas pipe underneath (now disconnected).

Autumn Meeting at Alfold on 22nd October

The Autumn Meeting this year will be held at Alfold Village Hall, on Dunsfold Road in Alfold GU6 8JB on Saturday 22nd October at 2.30pm. We are continuing with the format of a less formal structure than the Annual Meeting, so this year's will again focus on brief updates from projects for the future and those currently underway. The meeting will give members a chance to meet up with old friends, chat to directors and project managers and ask questions.

Directions

Alfold is about 2 miles south of Cranleigh and about 1½ miles north of Loxwood.

By car: The hall is north of the village centre, next to Alfold Crossways, which is the junction of the A281 road and the B2133 southward to Loxwood and Billingshurst. The entrance to the Hall is on Dunsfold Road, the minor road leading from the A281/B2133 junction towards Dunsfold. After leaving the junction, the entrance is less than 50 yards on the left.

If you are coming from the A281, take the turning for the B2133, then, instead of turning left towards Loxwood, turn right then immediately left – the hall is on the left. If you are coming from the B2133, follow the Guildford direction until just before you would join the A281, then turn left towards Dunsfold and the entrance to the hall is immediately on your left.

By bus: Alfold Crossways is served by Compass Travel bus 42 – for times please go to www.compass-travel.co.uk.



Work on the second Birtley Bridge gets underway

In the last Wey-South we reported that our EWG team was mobilising for the start of work on the Birtley Bridges project, just south of Bramley in Surrey.

The objective is to install two new lifting bridges a few hundred metres apart. At the south end of the Birtley section, Bridge 1 is already in place with a temporary fixed deck. At the north end, we have to replace a causeway with a new bridge (Bridge 2). In the past few months we have made big steps on Bridge 2.

We always knew the Birtley Bridge 2 project was going to be a tricky one – the public bridleway and cycleway diversion, gas main relocation, tight access and soft ground all made for an exciting prospect. Safe to say, the project has had its fair share of problems, taxing our very committed EWG team.

Our first inflatable dam

Work began with a first for us – an investment in a water-inflated dam, usually put to use to protect against flooding. AquaDam Europe's mobile flood barriers are being adopted by canal teams as a fast method of creating a protective barrier during construction work.



A curved wall on the east side of the Birtley Bridge 2 site was one of the first remains of the original bridge that we uncovered.



The SpeedyDam being put into action. It created a seal in a matter of hours. Water on the bridge side was pumped out to allow excavation for the diverted gas main.

In our case it allowed volunteers to create the trench below the canal bed needed to house the relocated medium-pressure gas main. The gas main used to run under the existing causeway.

Volunteers positioned AquaDam's sausage-shaped SpeedyDam on the towpath in its rolled-up state and filled it by pumping in water, causing the dam to roll out and push across the canal. The cylindrical tube, 3m wide, created a 1.2m high barrier in a matter of a few hours, much faster and cheaper than bringing in material to achieve the same result.



The SpeedyDam installed across the canal. (Bridge 2 site in the background).

The Quarterly Magazine of

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust

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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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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.

The Wey-South team always welcomes articles and pictures for possible use in the magazine.

Issue 200

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Shifting sands

It was so far so good – until excavations of the trench across the canal bed began and the team encountered running groundwater coming from the base of the west bank. Team leader Dennis Gillen said: “Despite the recent long dry spell this was flowing at 30 litres per minute! Because of the makeup of the earth in this part of the site it created running sand.”

The solution was a lot of ballast bags, hiring in metal trench boxes to restrain the unstable earth while excavations went on and timber bog mats to allow the digger access.

Thankfully, this was a success and Southern Gas Networks (SGN) were able to lay that part of the diverted gas main. However, a delay in returning to complete the connections at each end of the pipe put back the planned start of the pilings for the bridge. The delay also meant that those attending the week-long WRG summer working camp would now be employed elsewhere on the canal (at Loxwood).

Diverting the bridleway

The team pressed on with the bridleway diversion, building up the path with earth and type 1 aggregate surface. Gabions (metal cages filled with stone) have been placed around the west bank and edge of the canal bed to create stability and Platipus anchors inserted through the cages just below the bridleway diversion. The anchor system worked well at Drungewick Lock and again the company were very supportive.

SGN reappeared to connect the gas main and the bridleway diversion was completed in early August with the circular walk here also reopened to the public.

Having done its bit, the SpeedyDam was emptied and transported to Tickner’s Depot to be stored until it is called on again for future restoration projects.

The next job is for the causeway at the site to be removed. Then the piling contractors should arrive and we can make a start on the bridge.



Water flowing into the canal bed from the west bank created a problem.



Metal trench boxes were part of the eventual solution.



The temporary bridleway under construction.



Gabions and Platipus anchors provide stability to the west bank.



Looking east across the site in mid-August. The bridge site is on the left and looping round to the right the completed bridleway diversion is in place.

Update on the Birtley funding appeal

At our Meeting in April and in the last edition of *Wey-South* we announced a funding appeal for Birtley Bridges. We have an estimated funding gap of £150,000 to complete the project.

At the time of writing this (mid-August), we are pleased to announce that this

year's fundraising towards the project has reached at least £31,000. This is an excellent figure in these current tough times and we are extremely grateful to everyone who has kindly contributed to the fund.

The appeal will remain open as we push ahead with this important project – our largest investment so far in the northernmost part of the canal. Please go to <https://weyarun.org.uk/birtley-appeal>.



Arundel MP is impressed by our progress

In late May, Andrew Griffith, MP for Arundel and South Downs, paid a visit to meet volunteers and find out more about progress on the canal. His visit coincided with National Volunteer Week. Andrew met directors and volunteers and was then given a short trip onboard Josias Jessop. He was even put to work opening a lock.

We also took Andrew to see the new Lee Place Bridge near Wisborough Green, part of his constituency. Andrew commented: "It is hugely impressive what the Wey & Arun Canal Trust have achieved so far in bringing this historical equivalent of a motorway back to life. I'm a big fan of a country walk along a waterway and at a time when there is such a focus on mental health, it is terrific what the Trust has done to open up some stunning walks."



Top: Andrew Griffith with our director Giles Eyre; Middle: At the tiller of Josias Jessop, supervised by director John Reynolds; Bottom: At work at Brewhurst Lock.



Geographical Information System offers opportunities



Phil has been developing the GIS.

Technology has certainly moved on since the pioneers of the early 1970s embarked on their mission to restore our canal. We wonder what they would have made of the latest GIS that we are now using.

A GIS

(Geographical Information System) creates, manages, analyses and maps all types of data and for us that means it's well suited to logging any amount of information about the canal, from the route itself to locks, bridges, culverts, weirs, footpaths and boundaries.

The GIS was started by Peter Taylor some years ago and volunteer Phil Medicott picked up the baton to develop it further in 2019. Phil responded to a call for a volunteer to take the project forward and believes the system could be a huge asset to us, providing a vast amount of useful information about every part of the canal with a simple click. "It's a very powerful tool," he explains. "Essentially, the system can be used to map all elements of the canal, presenting geographical data as polygons (shapes), lines and points. In our system, canal sections and locks are expressed as polygons, mileposts and bridges are points," Phil explains.

We can add whatever information we need, so click on the shape that represents a lock and up will pop a table that could include information such as when the lock was last restored, who provided the lock gates, its dimensions and so on. Links can also be added which when clicked take you to, for example, our website or a pop-up image.

To get the information onto the system Phil drew the features directly onto a base map (an electronic version of an OS map, for example)

as well as taking old maps and aligning key features. The system then geo-referenced this to fit the base map. This way Phil has been able to add features such as Land Registry drawings and even the original canal route.

Flexible system

As well as a desktop version there is an online portal and a mobile phone app for both Android and iOS devices. The mobile app allows anyone to use it when out walking or on boat trips, providing facts, figures and images about features of the canal they may be interested in, future restoration plans for that area, as well as footpaths and picnic sites.

The beauty of the GIS is that it can be tailored to however much detail we decide is needed and helpful, and data can be shared publicly or restricted to specific groups within WACT.

To put our GIS to the test, download the free mobile app **arcGIS Explorer** and input WACT or Wey & Arun Canal to find the relevant maps.



The mobile app provides an array of information about the canal and its features.

Team work helps get BKL back in action

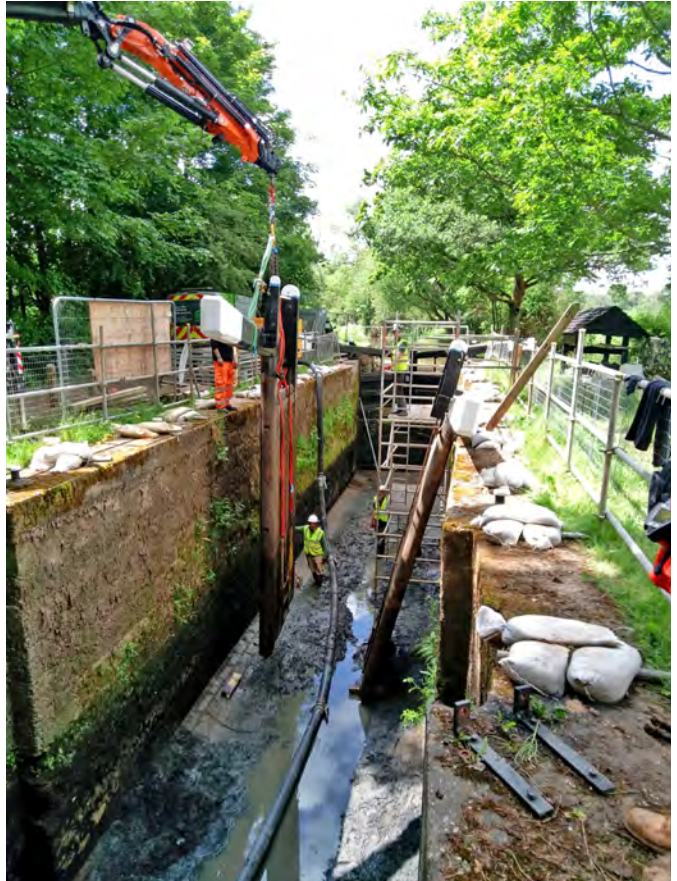
When Operations Manager Dave Evans and his volunteers began investigations into the leaking Baldwin's Knob Lock they hoped for the best – it would be a quick and simple fix. As canal restoration and maintenance often seems to go, the project instead turned out to be a difficult, messy and drawn-out affair.

Draining the lock began back in March with the task of inserting the stop planks and pumping out the chamber itself. Four pumps, including a super-pump hired in specially, were employed to create a dry working area and allow the team to see what the problem might be. A scaffold tower was erected and the investigations began.

What was revealed was an awful lot of silt and debris sitting against the bottom gates, which of course had to be removed (by hand). Once clear it became evident that the problem lay in a failure to the lower cill, which would have to be removed completely and reconstructed with reinforced concrete.

The two lock gates would also have to be lifted out of the way.

Martin Allnutt, who helped with the original Loxwood bridge crossing when working for Tony Gee & Partners, stepped in to provide a design brief and work began in earnest at the beginning of June with the hope of getting the lock up and running as soon as possible for use by our tripboats. Members of the Northern



The remedial work required the hiring of a specialist crane to lift out the lock gates and deliver steel bracing props.



Once the steel props were in, volunteers could begin removing the cill and stonework.

Working Party plus EWG all lent a hand to get the job done.

The work entailed removing the 2-tonne weight of two lock gates and so a specialist 18-tonne spider crane on tracks was hired from GM Lifting Ltd for the job. One of only three in the country, it made its (very slow) journey along the towpath to the site, before extending its legs and jib to lift the gates with ease. The crane also helped move the heavy-duty steel props now needed to brace the chamber side.

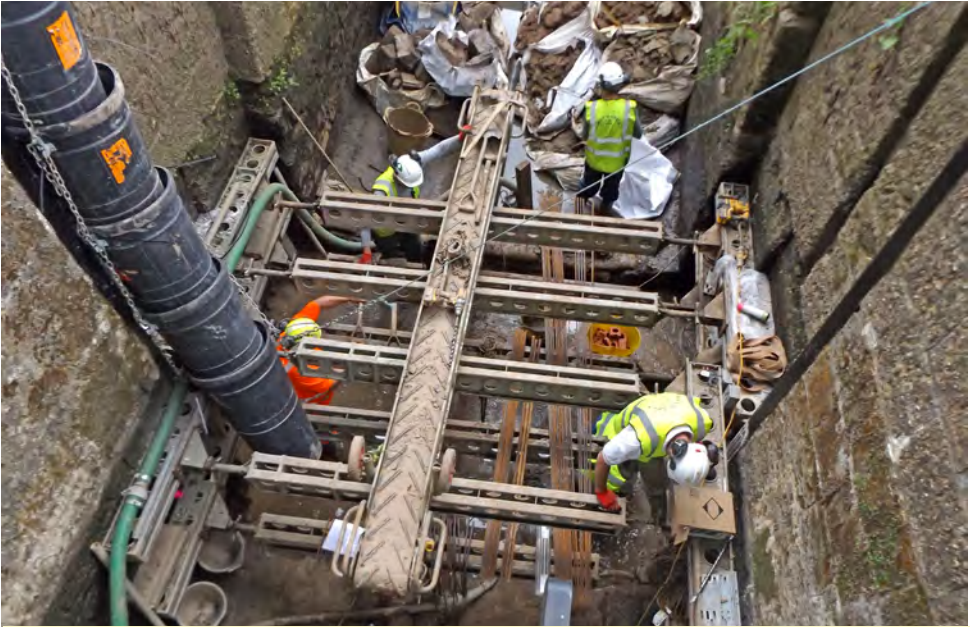
Now for the fun part. Picks, shovels and pneumatic drill were used to dig out the worn stonework and old wooden mitre from the lock floor, a painstaking job. Some 20 tonnes of clay were removed from the lock floor, much of

which will be used to plug leaks at Brewhurst Lock. A trench approximately 5 metres long by 2 metres wide was excavated, a task made all the more difficult by the tight working space as a result of the steel bracing props.

Reinforced concrete was then poured into the trench and new, very large (and heavy), oak timbers were cut and installed for the mitre on the lock floor.

By the end of June the crane was called back to replace the lock gates and remove the many bags of clay, and the lock refilled with water.

It might not have been an easy ride, but the remedial work means that thanks to the teams' efforts the lock should have many more years of life ahead of it.



Ready-mixed concrete was delivered from the towpath above into the excavated trench, but the small working space made progress difficult.



New oak timbers were cut to form new mitres and further reinforced concrete was poured and shaped behind them to complete the construction work. The year was then inscribed in the concrete for posterity.



Tonnes of clay and debris had to be removed from the lock by crane.



By the end of June we could remove the stop planks and put the lock back into water.



Planning and organising the annual Poddle

Our annual sponsored walk, the Poddle, takes a huge amount of organisation effort. Normally planning starts at least a year before the actual date. Currently the main people who make this happen are Chris Tavener, who plans the routes and acts as ‘Last Man’ on the day, Jim Nunn, who looks after direction signs on the route, and overall organiser Margaret Darvill.

An important milestone in the process each year is the pre-walk, when Chris hands the draft route guide to a small group of volunteers and invites them to find their way to the other end. If the directions aren’t clear enough, they will get fixed after the pre-walk. Chris himself will already have explored the route several times and checked various options.

The 2022 Poddle pre-walk in early April. Top: Jim Nunn (left) and Margaret Darvill (centre). Bottom: Chris Tavener at Dudley Swingbridge on the Chichester Canal.



A change of scene for this year's Poddle

This year's Poddle sponsored walk deviated from the Wey & Arun Canal to discover the peninsula south of Chichester known as 'The Hundred of Manhood'.

The 12-mile route featured not only the picturesque Sidlesham Quay and Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve, but also the former Selsey Tramway, Chichester Canal and marina. Some 120 walkers enjoyed the scenic route in perfect walking weather, as well as the usual delicious food and drink provided.

The event attracted lots of first-time Poddlers, who said how much they enjoyed the walk and how well organised it was. Thank you to organiser Margaret Darvill and all those who made the event run so smoothly. The walk raised around £10,000 to go towards the Birtley Bridges project.



1: And they're off... the start of the Poddle 2022. **2:** An 18th century cottage at Sidlesham Quay. **3:** The yachts at Chichester Marina. **4:** The walk provided some stunning views. **5:** The scenic Chichester Canal. **6:** The remains of the Selsey Tramway bridge.



The refreshment stops manned by our volunteers were very much appreciated by the walkers.





The pedestrian footbridge at Tickner's Heath road crossing has been completed and is now open to the public.

Tickner's footbridge opens to the public

Both northern and southern approaches to the pedestrian footbridge at Tickner's Heath Road Crossing in Alfold were finished by the end of May with help from a three-day visit from NWPG, allowing the pedestrian footbridge to open to the public.

The southern section incorporates a 100m length of two-metre wide footway alongside the road as far as the access from Dunsfold Road into the Sidney Wood car park.

The ramps made use of clay excavated from the temporary road diversion, compacted and overlaid with rolled type one aggregate between timber edge boards.

Sections of tree protection fencing along the canal that are no longer required have been taken down and volunteers have prepared as much as they can for the road diversion, but

they can go no further on this until various permissions are in place.

As reported in the last issue of *Wey-South*, we are still waiting for Surrey County Council agreement of the design and legal agreement for the road alterations.

Added to the frustration is the complication of Thames Water moving the water main from under the road to its new position in housing alongside the pedestrian bridge.

Thames Water have advised us that because later this year they will be re-tendering the construction contract which covers their entire area we are best waiting until that has been settled before we pursue our detailed piece of work with them.

Sadly, this means no more work is likely to be carried out on the project until 2023 and the works compound constructed next to the bridge site will be temporarily closed until work can resume here.



Before (March 2019).



Lordings Waterwheel

Brian King (pictured below) and his team have been working on Lordings waterwheel for some months and can now report that the major parts of the refurbishment have been completed.

Unfortunately, until water levels in the adjacent River Arun rise the wheel can't be put to the test. It looks like we will have to wait for the autumn to see whether more adjustments are needed.

A full report on the wheel's restoration will appear in the next edition of Wey-South.

Speaking up for the Wey & Arun Canal

Thanks to a quiet band of volunteers an increasingly wide range of people are learning more about the canal and what we are up to. Our Talks Group have presented to everyone from the Morris Minor Owners Club to Central Sussex Beekeepers Association, the WI to U3A, helping to spread the word about canal restoration.

“Our speakers talk to a very diverse range of groups and we reach a wide selection of the public,” says John Dodwell, who co-ordinates bookings for the six team members: David Beadman; Ian Ellis; Alan Johnson; Simon Knapman; Tony Pratt and Richard Shenton.

John took over organisation of the group in September 2017 and in that time more than £6.5k has been raised in booking fees and donations from talks – and countless more from boat trip bookings as a result of a talk.

However, John sees the advantages as much more than financial. “I see the benefit as primarily a publicity thing. It keeps people updated and lets them know the canal is alive and kicking. The money is the icing on the cake,” he says.

John takes the bookings and then co-ordinates with the speaker who lives nearest. When the pandemic struck, the team moved online with John helping to arrange talks via Zoom instead of in person. “We gave talks to the Wiltshire & Berkshire Canal Trust, the Derby Canal Trust and the IWA West Midlands Branch. We would never have been able to travel to those places so Zoom widened the range of people we spoke to,” he explains.

Things have returned to normal now however and the bookings are rolling in as groups get back to meeting face to face.

Richard Shenton has been a speaker with our Talks Group since 2018 and is a seasoned presenter; he’s also a Blue Badge Tourist Guide for the South-East of England. Standing in



front of a crowd doesn't faze him and his time as a coach driver and 40 years in the Royal Navy have stood him in good stead. “The parade ground voice might help”, he admits. “What I enjoy is meeting people and delivering the message about the our work and getting a positive reaction,” Richard explains.

Simon Knapman has given 20 talks already in his two years of being part of the talks team and his day job teaching leadership and management at Brighton Uni means he is also happy in front of a crowd. “I enjoy presenting,” Simon says. “I’m part of the boat crew too so I have a good day-to-day knowledge of what’s going on, but I also enjoy doing research about the canal,” he says.

All the speakers tend to provide a broad presentation covering the canal's history, early restoration, right up to what's happening today, and keep up to date with new developments. John says anyone considering joining the team doesn't need to have a detailed knowledge of the canal. “They can learn that from listening to others and all the help and support they need can be provided.” So if you are outgoing and happy to talk to a crowd, get in touch and help spread the word about our aims far and wide.

To book a talk or get in touch about volunteering, please email john_dodwell@weyandarun.co.uk.

The lock of love

As romantic settings go, Gennets Bridge Lock may not be up there with the Eiffel Tower or Taj Mahal, but for members Louise Williamson and Stewart Paton, it's just as special.

On a typically autumnal day in November 2018 as the leaves were falling around them Stewart proposed to Louise at GBL, making it a place that would for ever hold special memories.

To mark the occasion Stewart picked up a fallen acorn, brought it home and put it in a pot. He hadn't really expected it to grow, but grow it did and now it is ready for replanting and where better to put it than Gennets Bridge Lock.

"We wanted to have a legacy of us coming together as a couple and this way people can see our mark on Loxwood and the canal as we love the place so much," says Louise.

The couple met back in 2016 by chance when Louise stayed overnight at rooms in Stewart's local in Essex, there for a job interview from Chertsey. Stewart was back then a confirmed bachelor and Louise facing difficult times in her life, but it was meant to be and several years later the couple found themselves leaving city life behind and living the dream in a cottage in Loxwood.

"We really discovered the canal when we got Weasel, our first dog (soon joined by pooch number 2, Ferret). It's such a nice place to walk the dogs and it's free for everyone to enjoy," explains Stewart. The pair are keen on conservation and love to spot the varied wildlife the canal attracts. "We've seen adders swimming, badgers, mink, loads of wildlife," says Stewart. "We just fell in love with the canal," Louise adds. "It's so inspiring seeing



Stewart and Louise with their oak tree, which will be planted at Gennets Bridge Lock where the acorn came from and where Stewart proposed.

the work all the volunteers do, it fills us with an enormous sense of community. It's just amazing."

When they have more time, in between work and restoring the cottage, they hope to join the volunteers one day. In the meantime the pair have become cheerleaders for us, cajoling fellow walkers and visitors to drop a donation into the Canal Centre or sign up as members.

As Stewart says the Wey & Arun Canal has become a massive part of his and Louise's lives and they are thrilled that their oak tree will have a place to grow.

The sapling will be planted in the autumn and the pair plan to marry in the next year or so.

Plaque to remember John Cherriman

A plaque to the late John Cherriman has been unveiled at Northlands, near Billingshurst. John was a great supporter of our work and his legacy allowed us to purchase the Northlands section at Newbridge, in the south.

John's wife Eileen was keen for John's love of the canal to be remembered and the plaque pays tribute to John's affection for the canal and his support over the years for further restoration.

The Midweek Working Party have been in action here over past months, erecting a gate and fence posts with a rope to help people down the hill. Volunteers have also created a log circle for visitors to sit on.



Top picture: The plaque erected in memory of John next to Northlands Lift Bridge (picture by Mark Feeney). Right: John and Eileen enjoying a special boat trip in happy times.



New pump put to use

We have been the lucky recipient of a Godwin pump kindly donated by Xylem Water Services Ltd.

The 4" diesel pump had been used for R&D purposes and when no longer required the company was keen for it to be used for canal restoration. It will be a great asset as we had faced spending a substantial sum on repairing an existing pump. The EWG team at Birtley wasted no time in putting it to good use.



Drought takes its toll

The driest July for 35 years continued a run of drier than average months and despite our best efforts we were forced to call a halt to boat trips on July 31st. With no significant rain and no possibility of extracting water from the River Lox, some meticulous water management was called for and all credit to John Reynolds, Dave Evans and others for ensuring boat trips ran for as long as possible.

Thankfully all our booked private trips and most public trips up until July managed to operate, including this private birthday cruise on JJ (left) and the Queen's Jubilee trips.



Wildlife to spot in Autumn

As summer eases into autumn and temperatures begin to fall visiting birds leave our towpaths and hedgerows for the warmer climes of Africa. However, there are some species that prefer to spend their winters here, migrating to our shores to make the most of our abundance of fruiting trees and hedgerows or less intense weather conditions before heading off once more in the spring. You might be surprised to learn that even some of our more common birds may just be visiting over winter. Here are some to look out for from September onwards.

Greenfinch

Greenfinches often travel to the warmer south of England from Scotland during autumn/winter.

Starling

Our native starlings are joined by thousands of migrant birds from Eastern Europe looking for food in a warmer climate.



Blackbird

Up to 20 million blackbirds come here later in the year, migrating from Northern Europe and Scandinavia. Many have duller bills than our resident birds.



Blackcap

Usually wintering in Spain and Morocco, blackcaps have changed their migratory behaviour and are now often spotted here in winter.

Redwing

The redwing is the smallest of the thrush species found in Britain, identified by the orange-red patches under its wings and by the creamy stripe over its eyes. Most arrive here in the autumn to feed on berries before leaving again in March and April.



Fieldfare

The fieldfare with its grey head and rear is larger than the redwing and song thrush but smaller than a mistle thrush. It arrives here from October onwards.



Roger Penny retires

At the end of July, Roger Penny retired from his part-time role as Accounts Assistant. We were very reluctant to lose Roger's services but we have to admit he has fully earned his extra free time.

In 2016, as we became a lot busier, we looked round for extra help with our finance administration. Roger is a waterways enthusiast and at first he was inclined to volunteer, but after a bit of thought we all agreed that a part-time paid role would work best. Roger took on the job of dealing with our suppliers, checking their invoices and handling queries.

In his professional career Roger was a railway signalling and telecoms engineer and became a senior manager responsible for over 600 staff. IT, Finance and a highly organised approach come naturally to him.

We thanked Roger for his excellent work with a drink in the Onslow Arms at Loxwood in mid-August. We don't expect this to be 'goodbye' as Roger & Linda live at Plaistow, not far from Loxwood, and Linda is one of our boat crew volunteers.



River Arun Rally: rain when we really didn't want it

As I am writing this in mid-August, it is hard to remember what rain is like, but on the day of this year's River Arun event (May 15th) we had plenty. This inevitably reduced the number of boats taking part, but the turnout was still much better than 10 or more years ago. The purpose of the event is to demonstrate that the River Arun is navigable. Thanks to clearance work by a small group from our Midweek Working Party, several boaters reported they had reached Pallingham.



Paddlers made it from Pallingham to the River Arun, proving navigation rights.

Working Party Roundup

It's been a warm dry period for our work parties who have been working on restoration projects and maintaining various sections of the canal. As you will know it all got a bit too hot some days.

Unfortunately the duration of the dry spell has led to the suspension of boat trips and some of the associated activities.

Peter Winter

peter_winter@weyandarun.co.uk

Boat Group PEST

On our first work day in May six volunteers took two boats out. The team on *Wasp* travelled down to Drungewick Slipway, clearing the canal as they went. Thousands of tadpoles were observed near the banks on both sides of the canal from Baldwin's Knob Lock (BKL) down to the slipway.

Meanwhile the team on *May Upton* cleared the canal north of BKL. The canal both north and south of here now looks much better, with four boatloads of material removed from the water.

We had a couple of productive days in June, helped by two new volunteers. On our first outing the team took *May Upton* to the pound above Devil's Hole Lock and removed three trees that were obstructing the navigation. Removing and cutting them into manageable sections for transport before taking them to the disposal site became a full day's work.

On our second working day six members headed out on *May Upton* to work north of Baldwin's, retrieving some large sections of tree trunk from the canal. While it is important not to remove vegetation that might disturb nesting birds, it is also important to clear growth such as brambles that risks injury to passengers and crew, particularly now that we are travelling with windows open and passengers are on the bow or entrance steps. Similarly we need to keep sightlines clear for the skippers on the approaches to bridges and



The PEST team cleared four boatloads of material north and south of BKL.

landing stages. With everything growing fast, this is quite a challenge.

With a good turnout on our first working Friday in July we took out two boats, *May Upton* and *Josias Jessop*. One went north and one south from Loxwood. To the south we removed a tree from above Baldwin's Knob Lock. To the north we went to Southland Lock and cleared vegetation from around the lock entrance. Heading back to Loxwood we stopped to clear growth before Devil's Hole Lock. Despite the lack of rain and water in the canal the trees and brambles continue to grow!

Chris Jones

Monday Group

May was another busy month for the Mrs Bucket Group to 'keep up appearances' by extensive brushcutting, strimming, raking and cleaning. The group visited Gennets, Southland, Devil's Hole, Loxwood and Brewhurst Locks (all twice) and gave the Drungewick slipway and aqueduct site their attention too.

The permissive path from Drungewick Lane Bridge to the lock and all around the winding

Lordings before...



... and after.



The Monday Group have been out all along the canal keeping the key areas seen by the public in good condition. Much effort goes into maintaining such sites throughout the year.

hole was cut, the last pile of reeds was disposed of and the mileposts and benches in that section were cleaned. I sometimes wonder if we do more maintenance on our canal than the Canal & River Trust does on theirs!

In June and July the group visited Gennets and Compasses Bridge (both twice), Southland, Devil's Hole, Loxwood & Brewhurst (all 3 times). A visit was made to Barnsill Slipway and Baldwin's Knob lock.

In early June, Malham received its first attention of the year, as well as Newbridge, and a very hot day was spent clearing Lordings Lock. Finally, in the last week Tickner's roadside and Tickner's Yard were tidied up.

This is only really a summary of visits but, as members will appreciate, there is a lot of work involved in all the sites mentioned above which require regular attendance to keep them looking tidy and a credit to the Trust.

Nick Wood

Northern Working Party

For information on what the Northern Working Party has been up to please see the articles on Tickner's Heath and Baldwin's Knob Lock.

Bill Nicholson

Midweek Working Party

In May we spent much time at Northlands, clearing trees from the canal. We put in a gate and fence posts with a rope to help people down the hill and placed large logs in a circle for people to sit on. We also prepared for the spreading of the ashes of the late supporter whose legacy paid for this section of the canal.

A group of four took a boat from Pulborough Bridge down the River Arun to clear it in preparation for the River Arun Rally. Others worked hard in Hunt Park. Keeping it looking like a semi-natural nature reserve is almost becoming a full-time job.

In June the main work was at Alfold Road where we cleared along the line of the canal near Fast Bridge and took large branches and trunks out of the canal to the south. Gosden Aqueduct has also been tidied up and now looks cared for.

One of our group has scraped and put two coats of undercoat and a top coat on the electrical cabinets at Brewhurst and Birch Copse. Barnsill landing stage area has been brush cut again this summer. It seems to have been growing like crazy this year.



The canal from Fast Bridge received attention from the Midweek Working Party during the summer.

July started with the group and partners attending our summer barbecue. Some 55 people attended and it was enjoyed by all.

Then it was back to work with the culvert at Farnhurst being cleared and a tree taken out of the canal. The canal from Fast Bridge is now clear down to the land boundary and, although not open to the public, it is very rewarding to see it look so good. The canal bed at Rooks Hill has been strimmed and all the new growth on trees in the base of the canal has been removed.

We have now started a large job of clearing the bed of the canal at Mill Farm.

Margaret Darvill

Boat Maintenance

The boats started out working hard carrying passengers and most of our work was concerned with routine maintenance and the fixing of minor defects. Ian has done a full, formal survey and maintenance of the wheelchair lift on *Wiggonholt* including hand pumping the lift up to full height.

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust signs were split so we replaced them with new aluminium backed ones.

There is a problem with the water tank on *Wiggonholt* which seems to be leaking into the bilge in the region of her heads. A well-intentioned skipper managed to open the port hatch of *WH* in the hot weather and then couldn't get one of the pins back in when he

tried to secure it. It hasn't been fully opened in living memory so I'm not surprised.

A new hatch handle has been fitted to *Zachariah Keppel* as the wood ridge was coming loose. The hatch tracks have also been greased to aid their smooth running. Small jobs like this improve the working of the boats for the volunteers who operate them.

With the suspension of boat trips we have an opportunity to get the boats up to a high standard. However, we are still unable to get to the slip to deal with the leak problem near *JJ's* weed hatch. Ian is intending to weld the wasted away water catchment channel under the forward engine hatch of *JJ*. At the moment if it rains this will pour water directly over the engine. Some hopes!

David Arnold

Eric Walker Group

For information on what EWG has been doing, please see the article on Birtley Bridge.

Dennis Gillen

Sign up for the full newsletter

The monthly *Working Party News* contains up-to-date info on all that's happening with our volunteer teams. To receive it email listadmin@weyandarun.co.uk asking to receive *Working Party News*.

Letters to the editor

The request for feedback in the last issue of Wey-South on future restoration, the railway and diverting from the canal's original course sparked some correspondence. All letters to the editor are welcome so please share your views. We really want to hear what members think is the right option for the way forward. Please send them to weysouth@weyandarun.co.uk.

Restoration is the goal

I fully support the Trust's objective of restoring the canal link between the Rivers Wey and Arun, finding alternative solutions when issues and obstacles preclude the use of the original route. The objective is surely the restoration of the overall route and some necessary diversions are part of achieving this. We are fortunate that so much of the canal still exists in one state or another and to find solutions to overcome issues where they exist is both sensible and pragmatic.

I congratulate the board on their skills and hard work in finding these solutions.

John Thorp

Railway reopening is a pipe dream

I was aware of Waverley's retraction of your planning permission under threat of a judicial review. The real reason seems to have been that Waverley cannot afford the cost of a judicial review. For example, the Stop Dunsfold Aerodrome appeals ran and ran on successive appeals and reviews by the applicants and cost fortunes to defend.

A Guildford to Cranleigh and/or Horsham railway or tram is a pipe dream which was determined uneconomic some time ago. I live next to the Downs Link and much of it, especially the bridges, are now incapable of carrying the loads [needed]. It is a shame the railway line was closed by Dr Beeching, but that is history.

I hope you will have the courage and resources to apply [for planning permission] again.

Derek Ames

To divert or not to divert

May I add my thoughts to the debate regarding whether we should stick rigidly to the original line of the canal for our restoration work or allow ourselves some short divergences?

Canals were created to allow water-borne movement from origin to destination. 'Our' canal provided this between the Wey and the Arun rivers to link London to the Channel coast. It seems to me that restoration of the canal should be focused on the restoration of this throughout link. It follows therefore that we should follow the old route of the canal wherever possible but, where later development/regulations preclude this, it is preferable to make a short diversion rather than to have a break in the throughout route.

We are doing this to link together two stretches of the old canal route at Tickner's, where modern road regulations preclude replacing the causeway carrying the road with a bridge. As a bonus we are creating new wetland, a new marina and a new bridge/walkway for pedestrians/equestrians – surely a great benefit for the canal and the community?

I am therefore firmly in the camp that says that short diversions, in the interests of re-establishing the through route between the Wey and Arun rivers, are acceptable.

I believe Waverley Borough Council's decision regarding the Trust's proposed diversion in the Rushett Common area was inappropriate as:

1. There currently exists a long-distance foot/cycle path along the line of the old railway – any proposal to reinstate the railway would result in a huge outcry

from the loss of this path and thus make railway reinstatement much less likely to be approved.

2. The canal proposals did not involve removal of the path and so were compatible.
3. The canal proposals exist now and could be funded – note that, with hindsight, not allocating funds before receiving planning consent may have been a strategic error – perhaps we should have allocated funds ‘subject to planning permission’.
4. There are no active proposals to reinstate the railway.
5. Railway reinstatement is most unlikely to proceed as, in addition to the costs of replacing the track, structures and drainage, cost would also be incurred for a new junction with the mainline, signalling, rolling stock (£1.5m-£2m per carriage – at least two would be needed), staffing and a level crossing over the A281.

This latter is actually unlikely ever to be approved by the safety authorities, leading to no railway or a very expensive road over rail bridge.

The only revenue to offset any of these costs would be that earned from passengers between Cranleigh (I assume that would be the terminus) and Guildford which I estimate would be about £7 off-peak return per passenger. Even if each passenger travelled every day the number required to cover the cost is likely to far exceed the population of Cranleigh and Womersley combined!

Socio-economic benefits could be ‘prayed-in-aid’ to seek government subsidy for the costs but this part of Surrey is hardly a socially-deprived area and the relatively few people likely to travel would make little inroad into reducing road congestion on the A281.

Given the above, I wonder whether the Trust has a case to appeal against the decision of Waverley Borough Council?

Malcolm Pheasey

Include rail reopening in our plans

I wanted to follow up on the request for comment concerning the old railway corridor. The issue has been around for most of the 20 years I’ve been involved in the Bramley Link, but keeps getting bogged down by arguments over the merits of a rail project.

There are many who would like to see the railway from Guildford to Horsham reopened, and who therefore regard the canal project as a new obstacle, to be opposed. This concern will continue to dog the canal project until it is addressed in an effective manner. I believe the Trust can turn this issue around by embracing the concept of a future rail line and taking account of it in the design of the Bramley Link without significantly compromising the canal design or adding to its cost.

Absent any funded rail project, there is no entity with whom rail design details can be usefully furthered, and some risk that any attempt to do so will embroil the Trust in open-ended discussions with no useful outcome, so it needs to be kept conceptual.

One of the biggest obstacles to rail reinstatement will be the impact of trains next to the bridleway that presently occupies the old rail alignment. Through Bramley and at Rushetts the canal project could provide some distance by placing the canal channel between the rail line and the bridleway/towpath. Elsewhere, the canal towpath will provide an alternative route for the bridleway remote from the rail line, releasing the rail ROW for a rail line. Of approximately 10km between the river Wey and Cranleigh, the canal towpath would allow about 8km of the bridleway to be removed from the railway ROW, to the considerable benefit of the rail project.

At Rushetts, perhaps the new canal bridge should be a lift bridge (depending on the levels). If the railway is added in the future, a new bridge could be built here over the canal and railway, with the additional vertical clearance needed for the railway.

Gerald Fox

Get ahead for Christmas and help our fundraising

This year's Christmas Cards, Christmas Draw tickets and 2023 calendar are now on sale, the proceeds from which make a vital contribution to future restoration work.



The Wey & Arun Canal Trust 2023 Calendar

The artwork for our Christmas cards has once again been provided by talented artist Oliver Lake and sponsored by our member Julian Nowell, while photos for the 2023 calendar span the breadth of the canal throughout the seasons.

Both the cards (£5.00 for a pack of five cards) and calendar (£8.00) are available to buy online at our website, or via the Canal Centre at Loxwood, and will be on sale at the Autumn Meeting to be held in October.

Once again there are big money prizes up for grabs in this year's Christmas Draw. For members who receive *Wey-South* by post, we have enclosed raffle tickets with this issue. However, the raffle is also running online. Entering can be done easily via our website

which saves us both manpower and money. Just go to www.weyarun.org.uk/raffle.

Alternatively you can return the counterfoils with a cheque made payable to Wey & Arun Canal Trust in the usual way. The closing date for entries is 17 January 2023.

Dave Evans extends role

We're pleased to announce that Dave Evans is taking on the new role of Operations Manager with a remit that also includes maintenance work that was formerly Kevin Baker's responsibility. Dave has worked for us for more than four years and has played an important part in projects at Birtley and Tickner's Heath.

Volunteer opportunities

We are looking for volunteers with experience (or an interest) in producing maps for our publications and publicity material. We use Adobe Illustrator to draw a range of specialised maps and can draw on data from our Geographical Information System.

We are also looking for volunteers with an interest in managing and developing our photo library. Virtually all our material has been digitised and now we would like to exploit this valuable resource more. If you have any experience of Digital Asset Management we are especially keen to hear from you.

For more information please contact support@weyandarun.co.uk.

Tickner's Heath Walk on Autumn Meeting Morning

In the morning before our Autumn Meeting at Alfold (22 October), Project Manager Tony Ford will lead a walk around the Tickner's Heath Crossing Site. The meeting point is the Forestry Commission car park in Sidney Wood.

For a map and more details please see our website. The event is free but numbers are limited - please register on our website, www.weyarun.org.uk.

Membership Report

Another 59 new members joined us in the last quarter and our membership now stands at 2,951. We would like to extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:

Alexis & Gareth Barnes	Liz & Steve Birks	Peter Borrett & Yanick Driscoll	John Burford
John & Lynn Child	Alan & Sylvia Chilvers	Ian Clarke	David Cole
Judy & Mark Knight	Michael Gilbert	Keith Gooders	Tina Jenner & Robin Cole
Andrew Griffith	Carolyn & Kevin Wise	Samantha Rippington & Earl Hewett	Mike Hood
Jorry & Pip Humphreys	Annie & Patrick Irving	Lorraine Jackson	Raymond Jessup
Peter Milner	Ian & Margery Merry	Andrew & Helene Johnson	Karen Machin & Christine Scott
Richard Totty & John McAleely	Karen Cruden & Martin Jones	Guy Milnthorpe	David & Margaret Milton
Andy & Sarah Mortimer	Paul Nancollas	Lesley & Matthew Payne	Tom Perriment
Matt Pinches	Ellen & John Portess	Simon Stockdale	Linda & Wayne Webb
Elizabeth & Ray Wescott			

We have learned with regret of the death of:

John Bloore	Colin Lay	Michael Gates	Brian Oxborough
William Henderson	Janet Bristow	Geoff Thomas	Jan Spencer

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

Bob Bentley steps down

Dr Bob Bentley has retired as a director of our trading company, W&A Enterprises Ltd. We are grateful to Bob for his long and faithful service. He joined the board in 1990 and served as Deputy Estates Group Leader, assisting Peter Foulger with landowner liaison.

From 1997 Bob was our Conservation Officer and also became a director of our trading company, which had then only just been founded. Many of our volunteers only start when they are at or near retirement, but Bob has combined his WACT career with professional work as a scientist with University College London, most recently at the Mullard Space Science Laboratory in Holmbury St Mary, Surrey.

Numbers Game winners - it could be you

May: First prize (£100) number 172, second prize (£30) 156, third prize (£10) 39.

June: First prize (£100) number 120, second prize (£30) 114, third prize (£10) 162.

July: First prize (£100) number 85, second prize (£30) 69, third prize (£10) 103.

You could be among the lucky winners by taking part in the monthly Numbers Game. To join or to add more numbers, please email support@weyandarun.co.uk, or call 01483 505566.

MDV summer visits prove a roaring success

The Mobile Display Vehicle and events team were busy from March to September, attending village fairs and events.

From Loxwood Fete to Cranleigh Carnival, Coultershaw Wharf and Beam Pump open day to the River Wey Festival, the range of events is certainly varied.

The purpose-built vehicle came into its own during our scorching summer, providing shade and shelter and much more stability than a gazebo.

Getting out into the community provides the opportunity to not only sell memberships and promote boat trips, but tell the public about current restoration projects. This year many people have stopped to ask about the Tickner's Heath road crossing project having driven past and seen its progress, while those living in Cranleigh were keen to hear about plans for the Elmbridge Road bridge.

One question the team always gets asked is 'When will the canal be fully restored?'

If only we had the answer to that.

If you would like to get involved in volunteering with the events team, either manning a stand or organising or towing the MDV, please email support@weyandarun.co.uk.



Events manager Roger Beazer with the Cranleigh Lion at Cranleigh Carnival, just one of many events attended over the summer.



The Wey & Arun 2022 Christmas Card and 2023 Calendar are now on sale



- * A5 size card with envelope
- * The inside of the card reads "Season's Greetings"
- * Picture on front of card is by Oliver Lake
- * Price: £5 per pack of five
- * Postage for up to two packs: £2.50



Back of card



The Wey & Arun Canal Trust 2023 Calendar

- * Large (A4 size) wall calendar
- * One page for each month with a large box for each date
- * Limited edition - order yours now to avoid disappointment
- * Supplied with envelope for posting
- * Price: £8, Postage for up to three calendars: £3



- On sale at the Loxwood Canal Centre, (01403 753999, canalcentre@weyandarun.co.uk). Open Friday, Saturday & Sunday 11am-3pm, until the end of December.
- Or visit the Trust's website and buy online:- www.weyarun.org.uk/shop.
- Or to order by telephone please contact the Loxwood Canal Centre, details as above.
- Or to order by post please use the form below.
- The cards & calendar will be on sale at the Autumn Meeting at Alfold Village Hall on Oct 22nd



To: Wey & Arun Canal Trust, The Granary, Fritchfold Farm, Loxwood RH14 0RH

Please supply Packs of Christmas Cards at £5 per pack (&/or) 2023 Calendars at £8 each

Name:-

Address:-

.....

Telephone:-

Email:-

- Please add £3 postage for up to three calendars and £2.50 postage for up to two packs of cards.
- For a combination of cards and calendars or extras please contact the Loxwood Canal Centre to confirm postage.
- Cheques payable to: W&A Enterprises Ltd.
- For card payment contact the Loxwood Canal Centre.

Christmas Raffle 2022

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WEY & ARUN
Canal
Trust
Registered Charity No. 265331

CHRISTMAS DRAW 2022

First Prize: £200
Second Prize: £100
Third Prize: £75
Fourth Prize: £50 M&S voucher
Fifth Prize: £40, Sixth Prize: £30, Seventh Prize: £25 M&S voucher

*The draw will take place on Tuesday 24th January 2023
at the Northern Office, Bridge End, Somerswey, Shalford GU4 8EQ*

Promoter: Sally Schupke, Bridge End, Somerswey, Shalford, Surrey GU4 8EQ
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For members who receive a printed copy of *Wey-South*, we have enclosed Christmas Draw raffle tickets with this issue. Of course this isn't possible for electronic subscribers. However, the raffle is also running online. All tickets will be entered into the same draw.

Entering via our website saves the Trust both manpower and money and can be done so easily at weyarun.org.uk/raffle. If you would like to buy paper raffle tickets, please contact the Northern Office (northernoffice@weyandarun.co.uk, 01483 505566).

Only tickets purchased by 17th January 2023 will be entered into the draw.