

WEY-SOUTH

DUNSFOLD
SPECIAL EDITION

Quarterly Magazine of the
Wey & Arun Canal Trust
Issue 206 March 2024

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust is dedicated to restoring the former inland waterway route between the River Wey and the River Arun and to conserving and improving it for the benefit of everyone.

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

Issue 206
March 2024

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Photos in this issue were taken by
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We are grateful to Dunsfold Airport Ltd for
supplying a number of images.

Front cover: Looking north towards Compasses
Bridge after completion of desilting work.

News headlines

Dunsfold section desilting complete

Contractors working on behalf of Dunsfold Park completed their desilting work between Fast Bridge (A281) and Tickner's Heath by the end of 2023. In mid-January Dunsfold Park kindly hosted us on a visit to inspect the section, which is now an impressive length of canal. In this issue of Wey-South we focus on this key area - what has been achieved since the 1990s and what we plan for the future. *(See page 6)*

Bill Nicholson MBE

We were delighted to hear that on 30th December 2023 His Majesty the King had been graciously pleased to appoint our director Bill Nicholson as an Ordinary Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), for services to Canal Restoration. *(See page 5)*

25 years of Santa trips

December 2023 marked the 25th anniversary of the first Santa Special boat trips from Loxwood. In this issue we take a look back over the history of boat trips at Loxwood with the help of pictures from our archives. *(See page 20)*

2024 member meetings

Because of changes to the timetable for preparing our Annual Report and Accounts, in 2024 there is planned to be an informal Spring Meeting with project updates (not a formal meeting) on April 20th and our Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 19th. *(See page 4)*

Poddle 2024

Our annual sponsored walk, the Poddle, is on 2nd June this year and will start and finish at Cranleigh. The route will include sections of the canal including the two new lifting bridges at Birtley. Last year we announced that we were looking for a new Poddle organiser to succeed Margaret Darvill who worked so hard at the job for ten years. So far we have not found a new organiser so we are grateful to a small group of volunteers who have stepped up to ensure that this year's walk can go ahead. *(See page 24)*

Interim Chairman

Sally Schupke will retire as our Chairman at the end of April and our current Vice-Chairman Margaret Darvill has put her name forward as Interim Chairman. The appointment of Sally's successor will be confirmed at the May meeting of our Board.

New Finance Director

Robin Hirsch took up the role of Finance Director from 1st February, replacing Julian Morgan who was appointed to the job (initially jointly with John Talbot) in 2017. Julian will assist Robin with Finance matters, including the preparation of our statutory accounts for 2023, during a handover period and will retain Board responsibility for IT and Publications.

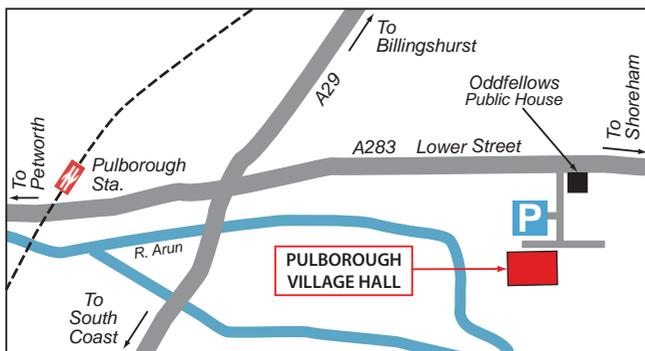
Arun Rally

After a pause for various reasons, we are pleased to announce that our Small Boat exploration of the River Arun will take place this year on Sunday 23rd June. If the junction between the canal route and the River Arun at Pallingham is a mystery to you, this is your opportunity to take a closer look. *(See page 32)*

Our Spring Meeting

Our Spring Meeting is at Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View, Lower Street, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 2BF, starting at 2.30pm on Saturday 20th April 2024. All members are welcome. As this is an informal meeting there is no formal agenda. There will be updates on projects and plans for 2024 as well as a presentation on fundraising. There will be a refreshment break and the meeting will finish by 5pm at the latest.

How to get to Pulborough Village Hall



The Village Hall is in Swan View, which is just south of Lower Street (A283), the main street of Pulborough. Take the turning by the Oddfellows pub, marked “Brooks Way, leading to Swan View”. Very shortly on the right is a public car park (pay & display, unless you have a Horsham District Council Annual Parking Disc). The Village Hall is next to the car park and has 40 parking spaces of its own. The railway station is about half a mile away.

Why a change to meetings?

The Spring Meeting will be as informative as ever, but from this year it will not be our formal Annual Meeting. Our financial year ends on the 31st December, which leaves a relatively short time to prepare our accounts for publication in time for our traditional spring Annual Meeting in April. We are required by the Charity Commission to have our finances examined externally by an Independent Examiner, which in our case is JS2 Ltd of Woking. As our organisation is now more complex and regulation is more demanding, this timescale has become challenging both for us and JS2. Final approval of the accounts by our Board would be only a few days before our Annual Meeting, giving little time for members to scrutinise the documents.

Our Board agreed with a recommendation to hold our Annual Meeting later in the year, as permitted by our new constitution. So from this year we are swapping the pattern of meetings to an informal Spring Meeting in April, with the accounts signed off by our Board and planned to be available to members in July, in good time for the formal Annual Meeting on October 19th (location to be confirmed).

Make a day of it

On the morning of the Spring Meeting you have the chance to join a guided walk on private land alongside the recently desilted canal on the edge of Dunsfold Aerodrome. This walk was not possible until recently and will include Farnhurst Bridge, Compasses Bridge and the Thricutt Slipway. The walk will start at 10.30am and registration is essential.

The route will be alongside the canal following the line of the original towpath but this has not yet been reinstated. You will need to have good footwear and be prepared for some muddy conditions. It will not be a level walk – in particular new land drainage outlets have been built and you will need to go up and down an uneven slope when walking around these. Other obstacles are possible as well.

To book for this event see our website at weyandrun.org.uk or send an email to support@weyandarun.co.uk. Directions will be sent to members who register to attend.

Bill Nicholson MBE

Bill's richly deserved MBE is for 50 years of dedicated volunteer work on canal restoration – a lot of it on our canal but on loads of others as well. In the early 1960s Bill lived at Lymm (Cheshire). On the nearby Bridgewater Canal it was common to see coal barges. From his bedroom Bill could see ships sailing across the fields on the Manchester Ship Canal. Soon afterwards the family moved to Midgham (Berkshire), not far from the Kennet & Avon Canal – then derelict.

At the age of 14, Bill joined his first working party – at Bonfire Hanger on our canal. Later he progressed to running Waterway Recovery Group (WRG) canal camps, designing canal structures and supervising construction. Bill is now our 'go to' source for all kinds of technical and practical advice.

In the early 1980s Bill founded the Newbury Working Party Group (NWPG) which initially worked on the Kennet & Avon Canal, where they built 22 bridges at Devizes, to mention just one project. The group expanded its scope to the Basingstoke Canal, our canal and up and down the country. In 1991 NWPG, with Bill as Camp Leader, ran its first week-long camp on our canal. NWPG is still active and has run at least one camp every year since, except 2020.

Bill joined our Board as a director in 2020. Bill's day job was as a local authority planning officer, most recently working on HS2 in the Chiltern area. The unique combination of Bill's practical and professional expertise, mixed in with his huge enthusiasm, is absolutely invaluable for us. Bill is also an enthusiastic supporter of our Poddle sponsored walk and always does his best to raise an impressive sum.

All of us offer many congratulations and wish Bill many more happy and successful years of canal restoration.



Bill Nicholson speaking at the opening of Birtley Bridge 1 in October 2023

Dunsfold - a happy rebirth

2024 has started with the exciting completion of desilting work on the Dunsfold section, resulting in a fully navigable unobstructed wide and deep channel for nearly 2km from Fast Bridge down to Tickner's Heath, and a canalside path.



Part of the newly restored section, looking south from and through Farnhurst Bridge

Our volunteers had made huge progress with restoration here over many years, but we were then set back by Covid. So we were very happy to step back when the final stage was taken over by Dunsfold Airport Ltd, which is behind the transformation of Dunsfold Aerodrome (which borders the canal here) into a new village, where 1,800 homes and further commercial zones will emerge. The first stage of new housing will border the canal, and Dunsfold Park's planning permission required it to bring the canal up to good environmental condition.

The 2023 desilting operation

The principal contractors for the desilting were Sir Robert McAlpine. They called on Land & Water Group Ltd, recognised commercial experts in canal desilting, who spent much of the year on Dunsfold Park's behalf on this major project with Environment Agency oversight.

First, all the fish were removed and rehomed. Many of them were large carp, with which the canal here had been stocked by the British Aerospace angling club. Meanwhile, lagoons were built on the airfield site. All the canal water in the section – enough to fill 36 Olympic swimming pools – was pumped into them.



This carp'll never fit in that bucket!



*Lagoons built on the airfield site to take the canal water for processing
(the canal is in the trees to the left of the picture)*

13,000m³ of silt was then taken out by a modern amphibious tracked excavator and a more traditional dragline and bucket. As far as possible it will be reused for landscaping on the development.



*Desilting in progress with the contractor's dragline (left) and amphibious long reach excavator (right)
in the section between the Thriscutt Slipway and Compasses Bridge*

The water was then cleaned by substantial process plant that uses the power of rising air bubbles to remove harmful contaminants, and returned to the canal.

Outfalls into the canal for the surface water from the airfield have been rebuilt. This will continue to serve the new developments, and it is hoped that less silt will be carried, while keeping the canal topped up.

The airfield was built in the Second World War by and for Canadian forces. During the dredging, the contractors encountered unexploded ordnance from that time which required professional disposal.

All of this would have been far beyond our own resources in equipment, manpower and finance. After planning permission for Dunsfold Park's development was granted, we wanted the canal to benefit, which has now happened. Our only major expense was the lifting and relocation of our own dredger.

Dunsfold - a happy rebirth (contd.)



Our dredger being lifted out of the Dunsfold section in 2023, prior to the work by the site owners.

Why so much silt?

Unlike most of the rest of the canal's route, this section remained in water after abandonment, despite the loss of a feeder from the Vachery Pond. Piped surface water runoff from the airfield kept this dammed length topped up – but this was a mixed blessing, as it also filled the canal with silt to within a few inches of its surface.



Initial desilting in the 1990s using a hired-in Watermaster machine

The first effort to fix the silt problem was by British Aerospace (BAE), then owners of the airfield, in the early 1990s. They deployed an amphibious Watermaster machine between Compasses and Fast Bridge. For BAE this was not a canal restoration project, but for the benefit of their staff fishing club, although our teams were allowed to clear overgrown vegetation.



Desilting by our contractor in 2013 near to the future site of the Thriscutt Slipway.

The desilting work was successful and produced a navigable section, although over time silt built up from a surface water outfall immediately north of Farnhurst Bridge. In 2012/13 a few trips on *John Smallpeice* operated until curtailed by preparatory work for the new Compasses Bridge. The section from Compasses to Tickner's Heath remained largely unnavigable.

Desilting the section south of Compasses was clearly in our sights but we knew it was a very large job. Around 2013 we met a canal supporter who owned a company operating diggers and other construction vehicles. The company quoted a favourable price and we obtained a grant to finance some desilting work, starting from Tickner's Heath. The result was a channel navigable by small boats from Tickner's Heath to a point close to the future Thriscutt Slipway, where work stopped.

Below: As part of the 2016 celebrations for the opening of the new Compasses Bridge and the 200th anniversary of the canal's opening, we transported a symbolic baton northwards along the canal route. The picture shows Richard Emsley with the baton just north of the future Thriscutt Slipway site. Richard was very determined but navigating between here and Compasses Bridge was just impossible. He had to complete the journey to Compasses on foot.

In early 2019 we invested in our own (secondhand) desilting equipment – a dredger, a tug and two unpowered barges to hold the silt. This was craned into the canal at Compasses in February 2019. We devised a desilting programme that was expected to take at least three years. The first part of the programme was to create a narrow channel – this would later have been widened after the silt had dried out. The narrow channel was created and the whole section became navigable by early 2020, at least by small boats.



In all our descriptions of the Dunsfold section, north/south/east/west refer to canal direction – north to the Wey and south to the Arun. In reality the section runs approximately north-east to south-west.

Dunsfold - a happy rebirth (contd.)



Our dredger arrives on the canal - 2019



Looking south from Compasses

Left: In 2008. Right: In 2023, after our work and before Dunsfold Park's contractor started

What's next for the Dunsfold section?

The current north end of the navigable Dunsfold section is at the A281 Fast Bridge and the south end is at Tickner's Heath. Between the 1990s and 2016 we removed all engineering blockages between these two points – leaving only the desilting work which has now been completed. Our strategic plan is to remove the public road blockages at both ends. At the north end of the section we are working on plans for a new navigable A281 Fast Bridge that in principle would open the way to Elmbridge (Cranleigh). At the south end we are working on the Tickner's Heath Crossing (see page 16) that will take the canal route under the Dunsfold-Alfold road.

Right now the section remains private land, with no public access. Dunsfold Park are happy for us to use the canal section, although this will have to be by arrangement only for the time being. There could be guided walks, opportunities to launch small unpowered boats and perhaps some use of the Thruscott Slipway for trailable boats - we are looking at rearranging the National Trailboat Rally that should have happened in 2020. There could also be some passenger boat trips, perhaps using our Wheelyboat *Walter Grove*, currently lent out for use on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal.

In the longer term, Dunsfold Park's masterplan is to open up public access and footpaths along and across the canal section. The airfield side will be a building site for the first phase of 500 houses for several years. Only then do we hope to have an accessible towpath. A canal basin on the airfield side (which we hope will include a boat turning area) is part of Dunsfold Park's masterplan although its exact location has not been finalised.

For a very long time, the Dunsfold section has looked like the best prospect for starting a second tripboat operation on the canal. Realistically any regular operation will have to wait until the Tickner's Heath Crossing is complete. This will give us a canal basin with public access and turning space for a full-size canal boat.



In 2012 we moved *John Smallpeice* from Loxwood to Dunsfold, and ran public trips on the short length between Compasses and Farnhurst Bridge, alongside Dunsfold Aerodrome (picture above) on a few days for two seasons. At that time, there was no Compasses Bridge – a causeway blocked the canal here – and the tripboat had to turn immediately after going under Farnhurst



Bridge. The water was clearly too shallow to go any further north towards Fast Bridge, although this was usually possible for canoes. The 2013 trips were the last ones, as in 2014 preparation work started for the new Compasses Bridge that officially opened in 2016.

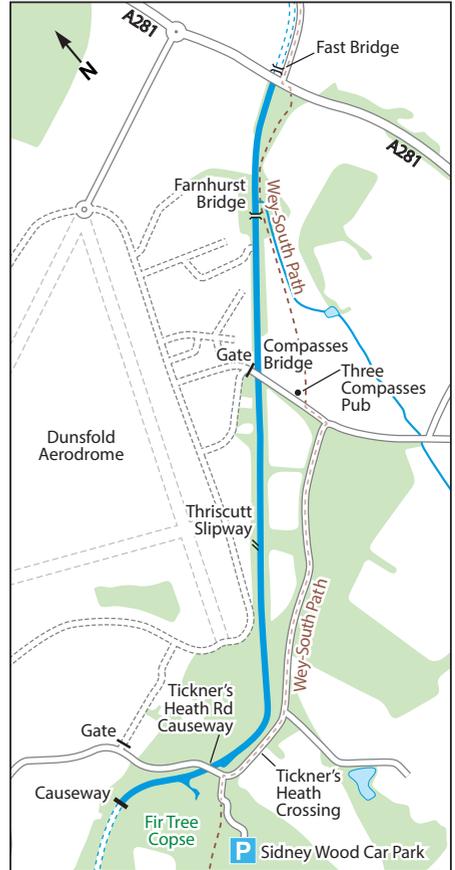
The picture on the left shows a trailable boat launching on the Thruscott Slipway in 2018.

Dunsfold - how it began

The long, straight 'Dunsfold Cutting' forms the canal's summit level, from which the canal fell away via locks, north to the Wey and south to the Arun. It was the largest single engineering work needed for the canal construction. Digging this pound below the level of the adjoining land avoided the need for more or deeper locks at each end, but the volume of material to be removed was more than the contractor Zachariah Keppell* had (literally) bargained for, resulting in his bankruptcy. He was not helped by having to dig the canal here to a depth of 6 feet, a third deeper than the rest of the canal, as specified by canal engineer Josias Jessop, as an additional water resource. All the bridges on this section were certainly built in brick and the bricks were locally made. Keppell's contract contained some very strict provisions for the bricks as well.

In fact, the Dunsfold Cutting was forced on Jessop. His original line had been a straighter one from near Fast Bridge south to Brewhurst, east of Loxwood. This would have taken the canal very close to Alfold – and Alfold had objected strongly enough to the proposed canal for a change to be made in order to secure parliamentary approval. The cutting therefore diverted the route to the south west, to a point in Sidney Wood where the descent into the Arun valley could begin, sufficiently far from the offended village. This added 1½ miles to the canal's length and 20% to the canal's cost.

* Spelling was fluid at the time, but Keppell definitely signed his name with two "I's.



Extract from the contract between The Wey & Arun Junction Canal Company and Zachariah Keppell

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads 'Zachariah Keppell'. The ink is dark and the paper appears aged.

The depth of the Canal to be Four feet and six inches below the surface of a full Pond every where except on the summit Pond which is to be Six feet to allow it to be drawn down a foot or more if necessary. The width on the surface of the water to be Thirty three feet and the slopes to be eighteen inches horizontally to a foot perpendicularly but where the bridges are built the cuts are to be constructed to a Twelve feet bottom and gradually increased to the full width at the distance of Forty Yards from the bridges

In the deep cutting on the summit ... the towing path to have a benching or recess nine feet in width and Six feet on the opposite side the recess to be two feet above the surface the slopes to be a foot horizontally to a foot perpendicular ... the earth not to be deposited within the distance of Ten Feet from the edge of the cutting nor to be raised more than Six Feet above the present Surface of the Ground and to be left with a regular surface to receive the soil.

The Dunsfold section - a guided tour

The Original Fast Bridge

Fast Bridge (called Browns Bridge on the 1840s tithe map) is just to the north of the causeway where the A281 Guildford-Horsham road now crosses the canal route. In the canal's operational days it was only a minor road that crossed the canal here.

By the 1970s, Fast Bridge was still intact although now only in use as the access road to Fastbridge Farm. The bridge was extensively restored by our volunteers in the 1990s. Future restoration plans are not expected to affect the bridge.

Fast Bridge A281 Causeway

Next to Fast Bridge, the canal was blocked by a causeway constructed by Canadian engineers in 1942 to carry the diversion of the Guildford-Horsham Road around the new airfield.

This remains, as a major obstruction to future restoration. We are working on plans for a navigable crossing to replace it. Although this will be difficult and expensive, the new roundabout constructed by Dunsfold Park to



Fast Bridge before restoration started



Fast Bridge restoration in 1991



Kayakers at the south side of Fast Bridge A281 Causeway

the west has helped by reducing the speed limit from 60 to 40 mph, and therefore the standard to which the new bridge will have to be built is lower.

Farnhurst Bridge

This seems to have been only a farm crossing and Farnhurst Lane (now only a footpath) ran along the east bank of the canal to the Three Compasses pub.



Farnhurst Bridge before restoration

By the 1970s Farnhurst Bridge was still intact, but now serving little purpose since the secure airfield zone was on the west side. The bridge was restored by our volunteers in the 1990s (with a new deck and parapets).

Compasses Bridge

This was where the main Guildford-Horsham road crossed the canal in operational days. Famously, this was the site of the canal's official opening on 28th September 1816.

The original bridge was replaced by a concrete causeway; we believe this was part of road improvement works in the 1930s. Remains of the original bridge were uncovered when we demolished the causeway. Between 2014 and 2017 (official opening October 2016) we built a new bridge to the south of the causeway, then removed the causeway. Contractors were responsible for the main bridge structure and the roadway. Volunteers carried out the rest of the work.



2016 - Compasses Bridge on Opening Day



2016 - Compasses causeway demolition



Compasses Bridge in 2024

Simmond's Bridge

This was slightly north of where the Thriscutt Slipway has now been built. By the 1970s the bridge had been replaced by a causeway. We removed the causeway in 1995. The site of the bridge and causeway are still visible as dips in the canal bank on either side.

Right: Pooh and Piglet in the Hundred Acre Wood? Actually it's two of our Communications Team at the site of Simmond's Bridge in 2024



Wey-South 206



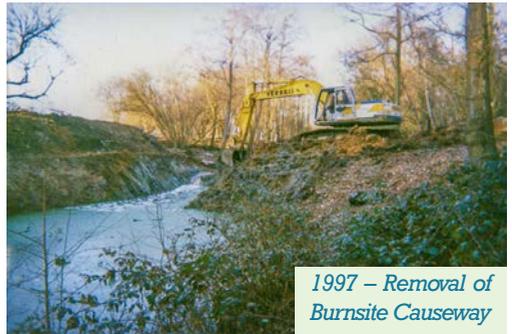
2018 - Opening of Thriscutt Slipway

Thriscutt Slipway

We opened the Sydney Thriscutt Slipway, just south of the Simmond's causeway site, in September 2018.

Burnsite Causeway

This had been built across the canal during WWII to give access to the airfield from the Dunsfold-Alfold road. The Burnsite was an area on the airfield side where firefighters practised. We removed the causeway in 1997.



1997 - Removal of Burnsite Causeway

Three canal crossings at Tickner's Heath

Tickner's Heath Crossing

A new Tickner's Heath Canal Crossing is under construction. Initially this will only enable access to a new basin east of the road; in a subsequent phase this basin will be linked to the original canal route south of the Tickner's Heath causeway.



2024 - Tickner's Heath Crossing site

Tickner's Heath Bridge

(Ticknersheath on Ordnance Survey maps)

This was not where the Dunsfold-Alfold road now crosses the canal, but slightly further to the north. The bridge was removed, probably in the early years of the 20th century, when the road was realigned.

One of our members has suggested that the postcard on the right – “Near Alfold” – could be the original Tickner's Heath Bridge. We are not completely sure about this but it would certainly have looked similar.

Tickner's Heath Causeway

This is where the Dunsfold-Alfold road now crosses the canal. The causeway will eventually be bypassed by our plans for the new Tickner's Heath Crossing.

A culvert passes under the causeway and we have done work to improve the management of water flows and alleviate possible flooding.



2014 – Tickner's Heath Causeway

Important note – very limited public access along this section

The canal and its banks between Fast Bridge and Tickner's Heath Causeway are private land, except for a short section of common land on the west (airfield-side) bank next to Tickner's Heath Causeway. You must not enter private land without specific permission. South of Tickner's Heath Causeway the towpath is on common land until another causeway at the north end of Firtree Copse. It is not possible to continue further along the towpath from here.

There is a public right of way (part of the Wey-South Path) close to the east canal bank between Fast Bridge and Farnhurst Bridge – the path continues across a field to the Three Compasses (see map). You can walk across Compasses Bridge up to the airfield security gate on the west side but the only right of way between Compasses Bridge and Tickner's Heath is via the public road.

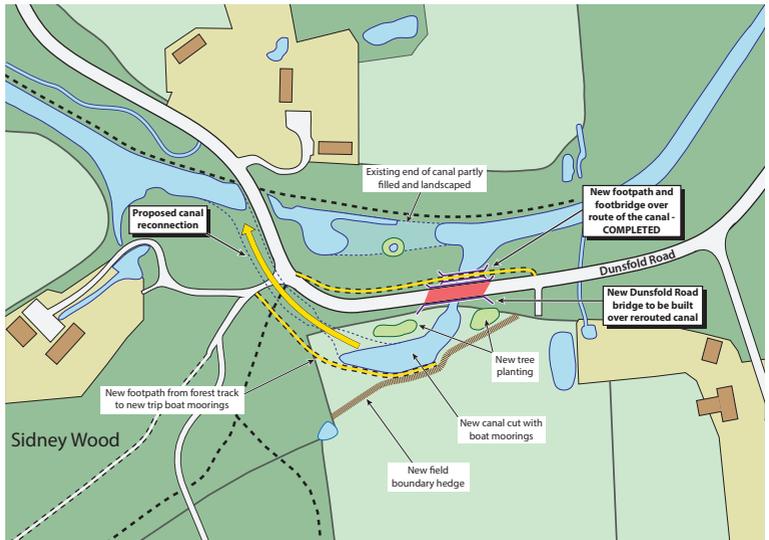
Tickner's Heath Crossing

We asked Project Manager Tony Ford for the latest on the Tickner's Heath Crossing project. In October 2023 we announced that we were restarting work towards completing the Phase 1 work - the new canal bridge under the Dunsfold-Alfold road. The next pieces of work will have to involve contractors as they will affect the public highway.

It was virtually impossible to push forward contractor activities while Covid had created chaotic conditions in the construction industry. The last significant work on site was in early 2022 when our teams completed work as far as possible on the new canal cut (up to the public road) and the temporary road diversion. The footbridge delivered in June 2021 is complete and open to the public.

Tony Ford tells us that the five separate elements where we need contractor work are:

1. Pipelaying for the water main diversion over the footbridge
2. Thames Water connections to complete the water main diversion
3. Piling for the highway bridge
4. Concrete bridge construction
5. Permanent road construction



Currently we are weighing up the pros and cons of a 'one contractor' approach. At Compasses Bridge we used a single main contractor (CJ Thorne). Although we were generally happy with their work, we felt that the single-contractor approach did not necessarily offer us the best value for money. So our original planning was to manage the Tickner's project ourselves, appointing separate contractors for each element.

On the other hand we have become aware that the interaction between the various activities will mean some significant risks and constraints that could be very challenging for us. With this in mind we are also talking to companies that could act as an overall main contractor.

Whichever way we choose, we should be clear that completing the project will be a heavy financial commitment. Compasses Bridge, opened in 2016, cost us around £750,000 and our initial budgetary estimate for Tickner's Heath was a similar amount. A wonderful gift of £500,000 from the estate of our former Vice-President Peter Flatter has financed work so far, but there was always a shortfall. Nearly eight years later, costs have risen hugely so when the quotations come in we have to be prepared for some large numbers.

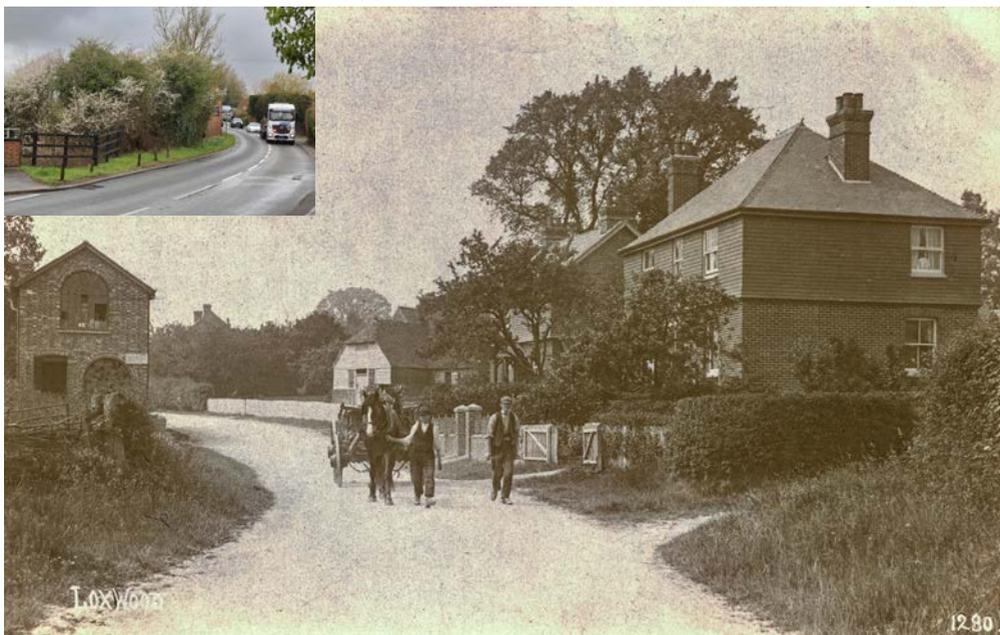
Loxwood History

Between our Loxwood Canal Centre and the Onslow Arms you may have seen a new Loxwood History display board. This is an initiative by Keith McIntyre who moved to Loxwood and found that his new home (Church Cottage) was the oldest property in the village – tree ring dating has established that it was built using timber felled in the winter of 1404. Church Cottage was close to the pond in the centre of Loxwood; the adjacent chapel was demolished in 1903 after a new parish church had been built on the other side of the river and canal.

Keith has devoted many hours to researching Loxwood history. For him, history is much more about people than events. Of course our canal is an important part of Loxwood's history and its arrival from 1813 onwards must have changed the village profoundly. For Keith, the story of the canal in Loxwood is closely linked to the Napper family who were major landowners in the area. John Napper became Chairman of the Wey & Arun Junction Canal in 1855. In the 1930s, Ifold Manor House, built by Edward Napper just over 100 years earlier, was demolished to provide land for new houses.

We in the Canal Trust are very pleased to have made contact with Keith. There is obvious potential for events that have a historical and a canal aspect. That wouldn't be a completely new idea. The very first edition of Wey-South magazine came out in May 1971 to coincide with "Loxwood 1871", a fete and tableau commemorating the 100th anniversary of the canal's official closure. Our own small history research group has also picked up on some ideas for sharing knowledge.

The excellent Loxwood History website (loxwoodhistory.co.uk) has some fascinating material.

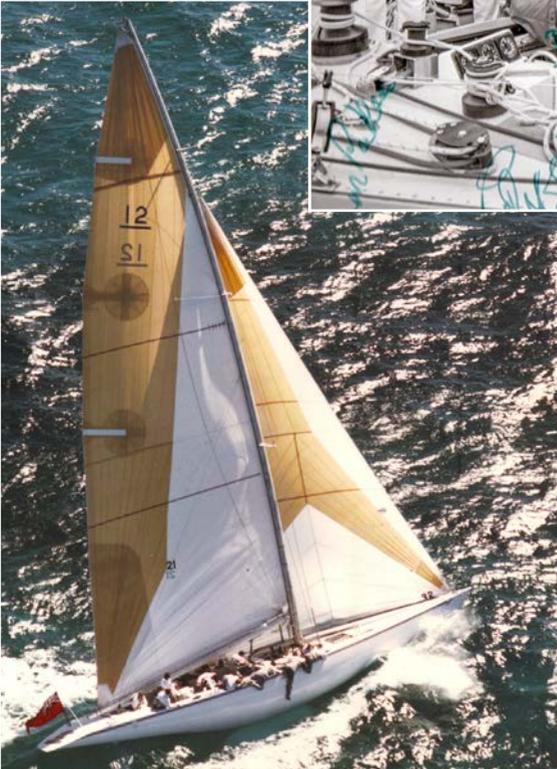


This postcard from the early 1900s shows the view up Loxwood High Street towards the village centre. Behind the photographer are the canal and the Onslow Arms. If only the photographer had stepped back a short way so we could see what the canal crossing looked like. Such a clear view is no longer possible but the inset photo shows the warehouse to the left of the lorry and the canal bridge parapet on the extreme left.

David Arnold

It's true that David Arnold's boating CV didn't look too bad in 2016 – driving the UK's first nuclear submarine, Admiral's Cup navigator for former Prime Minister Ted Heath (see crew picture below with David at centre left), 14 years running Antigua Sailing Week, author of a textbook on tides and currents (as well as three works of fiction), qualified as an Extra Master. It was enough to get him a first interview for the prestigious role of skipper on Loxwood tripboats. He was a keen lad who worked hard and before too long he was also handed the key job of Boat Maintenance Manager – surely the pinnacle of his career.

After 2023 Boxing Day trips and over 4,000 passenger journeys under his command, it was time for David to give the signal “finished with engines” for his last time on the canal. A special cake and a glass of something fizzy marked his retirement. David has done a magnificent job on boat maintenance, piloting the tripboats through the many hazards of the annual MCA inspections and supervising the major refurbishment of our narrowboat *Zachariah Keppel* in 2020. He will now step back from frontline duties but we hope that we be able to draw on his expertise for many years to come.



Loxwood boat trips 1991-2024

It's a real shame that we couldn't have a proper celebration for the 25th anniversary of public boat trips at Loxwood – this had been planned for 2020. 28th May 1995 was probably the biggest day in our history up to then, when the narrowboat *Zachariah Keppel* was officially named and Baldwin's Knob Lock and Brewhurst Lane Bridge were officially dedicated. Soon afterwards public trips started and continued until the end of August when water supplies ran out – some things never change.

Zachariah Keppel was launched into the canal at Barnsill Bridge on 9th May 1994. Crew training had started in 1994; in April 1995 six skippers received their Boatmaster's Licence and the boat passed its inspection by the Marine Safety Agency (predecessors of today's MCA - Maritime & Coastguard Agency).



1995 - *Zachariah Keppel* turns below Brewhurst Lock

In 1995 trips could operate from below Brewhurst Lock (the lock itself was still being restored) to the winding hole at Drungewick Lane where the slipways now are. The boat was usually moored at Barnsill Bridge. Crews had to reach it via the farm track from Station Road – there were some basic storage facilities at an old shooting lodge.



Zachariah Keppel at Drungewick Lane
(future slipway & aqueduct site)

Right: *Launching Roffs*
(later *John Smallpeice*)

In 1996 we acquired a 12-seater boat – *Roffs* – that we renamed *John Smallpeice*. She had an electric motor provided by Seeboard but this did not cope well and we later fitted a petrol-driven outboard motor.

John Smallpeice made its official maiden voyage on the canal in May 1998 when the section of canal up to the Onslow Arms also officially opened. This was a huge step forward in making



the canal more visible. Trips now operated to a winding hole immediately south of Loxwood High Street – this was only just large enough for the 50-foot narrowboat to turn. To speed the operation up, a crew member usually took a rope and pulled the bow of the boat round, just as a horse would have done in the old days.

Now it's hard to remember what crew life was like until the Loxwood Canal Centre opened. One of the crew duties was to take the cash box and collect fares for public trips onboard. The shore base was the corrugated iron 'black shed' on the side of the Onslow Arms. The boats had no proper windows, only transparent plastic sheets that had to be rolled up in good weather and clipped back into place at the end of the day. And as for the WC – well, let's not talk about that.



Zachariah Keppel at the Onslow Winding Hole

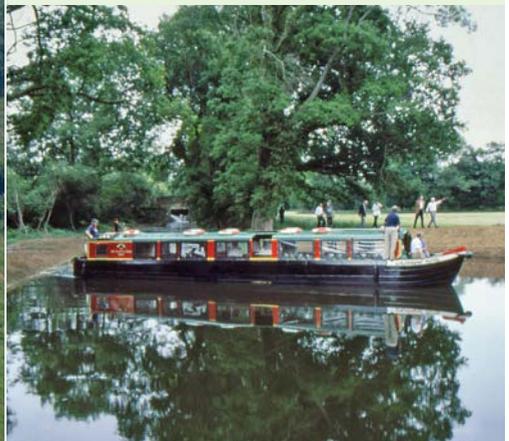


2003 – Official Opening of Drungewick Aqueduct - no slipways yet

In 2003 the navigable length became longer with the opening of Drungewick Aqueduct, allowing boats to go under Drungewick Lane and through Drungewick Lock to a new winding hole just beyond.



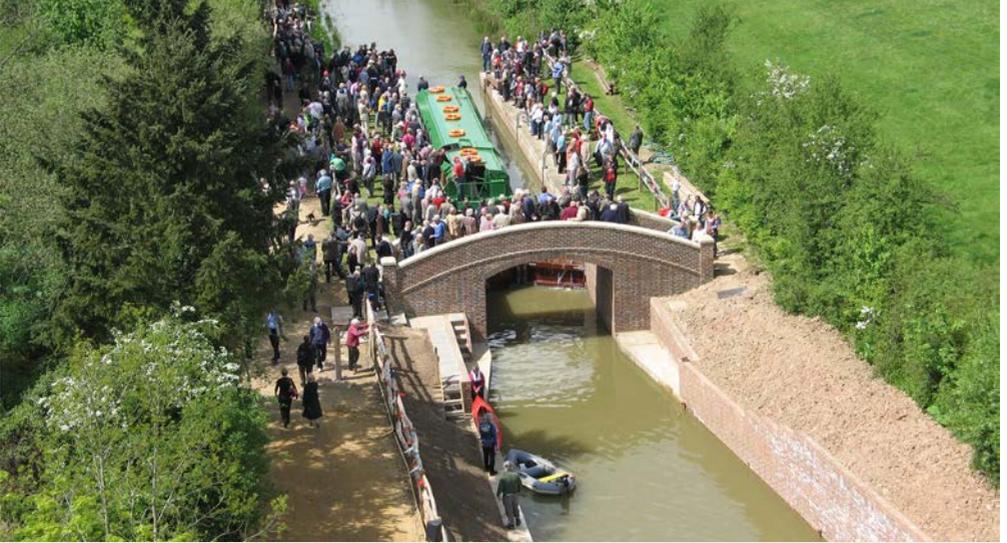
2003 - The black shed and sales stand



2003 - Zachariah Keppel at Long Meadow Winding Hole below Drungewick Lock

Loxwood boat trips 1991-2024 (contd.)

2009 saw the arrival of *Wiggonholt* – our first wide boat and our first electric boat. It was a tight race to have the boat signed off by the MCA in time for its historic 9th May 2009 journey under Loxwood High Street and into Loxwood Lock. The boat had to back out afterwards as there was nowhere for it to turn above the lock. Trips in both directions from the Onslow Arms did not start until 2010 and the opening of Devil's Hole Lock, with its winding hole.



2009 - Wiggonholt in Loxwood Lock - the top gates are open as if the channel was clear to Devil's Hole Lock, but in reality the boat would soon have run aground.



2014 - Josias Jessop at Southland Lock

Also in 2010 another small boat arrived and was named *Josias Jessop* after our canal's engineer. She replaced *John Smallpeice* which later moved to the Dunsfold section. The Loxwood Canal Centre opened in 2012. Trips through Devil's Hole Lock had to wait until 2014 when Southland Lock and its winding hole opened.

From the early days we operated public 'turn up and go' trips (bookings were possible) and private ('charter') trips for groups. We soon realised the potential for growing our income by running special trips. The first Santa trips ran over just one weekend in 1998 with a total of 195 passengers. And yes, we believe they have run every Christmas since then, including 2020. In 2004 the first Boxing Day trips ran and we later added New Year's Day.

In the early days the special trips had a strong 'amateur dramatics' flavour – there were always



1998 - Santa cruise



2004 – first Boxing Day trips

characters in costume on and off the boats. The Easter Bunny first appeared in 2002 and sometimes there was even a full script for the trips. Pirates & Princesses featured a sea battle, complete with ‘cannon’ (fire extinguishers) in the winding hole at Brewhurst Lane and the rescue of the princess. And no-one who was there will forget the Halloween performance that featured “Count & Countess Viggonholt, Lord & Lady Lox, a highwayman, a headless horseman, a zombie, cats, bats, goblins and a respectably sized coven of witches.”

Wiggonholt is equipped for night cruising, with lighting at Brewhurst and Baldwin’s Knob Locks. This was used to run sunset dining trips, such as “Pimms & Ploughmen”, that would return in the dark as the customers happily ate and drank. Navigating on one of those trips could be a magical experience, with starlight and bats swooping over the canal.



2013 – Halloween

Nowadays the vast teams of volunteers that used to staff our big events are just a memory, although the cast member with the white beard is still essential at Christmas. Our focus is more on trips that will bring us a good income with fewer resources. Cream Tea trips are always popular and the Onslow Arms provides the food. Before we had *Wiggonholt*, a typical Santa day consisted of five trips, every hour from 11 to 3 with no break, on up to seven days. In 2023 we ran on 11 days, but with only two or three trips on each day – no car parkers, no lock-keepers and usually only one elf. ‘Less is more’, they say.



2023 - Loxwood Santa Cruise - *Wiggonholt* at Brewhurst Lock

We have tried Valentine’s Day but it is a cold time of year and the season usually starts with Mothering Sunday, as it will in 2024. Apart from special trips, scheduled public trips are in decline. It is very hard to predict how many passengers will want to come and frustrating to have only a few on board when we could have used the crew and boat for a more rewarding private or special trip.



Boating before *Zachariah Keppel* arrived

Zachariah Keppel was not the first passenger boat on the Loxwood section since restoration. From 1991 *SeeWey* was seen on the canal. This was an electrically-powered launch owned by the electricity company Seeboard and kindly lent to us for publicity trips. As the boat had to be kept in immaculate condition it could not be used for public trips. *SeeWey* continued to appear on our canal until 1995 and is now in service with the National Trust at Dapdune Wharf, Guildford.

In the picture above *SeeWey* leads *Zachariah Keppel* northwards from the future site of Drungewick Slipways and Aqueduct - both still dreams in 1995.

Poddle 2024

The last Poddle that included sections of our canal was in 2021 (rearranged from 2020). Although it was great to range further afield and even take in sections of the Portsmouth & Arundel Canal, this year the annual sponsored walk comes 'home' to the northern section in Surrey. The date is Sunday 2nd June, the start is at Cranleigh and the route, devised by experienced planner Chris Tavener, roams northward to Birtley and Shamley Green. By special arrangement, the route will include sections of the canal bank that are not normally open to the public.

This is our major fundraising event of the year and your support is really valuable. If you don't feel up to walking the whole route (usually 11-12 miles) then you are welcome to walk the morning or afternoon section and we will get you back to your starting point. Or if walking is not your thing, please consider sponsoring the Last Man or perhaps volunteer to help on the day. For more information and registration, please see the sponsor form included with this issue or visit our website.



Birtley Bridge 1 - included in the 2024 Poddle route

Walking the towpath

A herbalist's view

I first fell in love with the waterways of Britain when my father took me on a canal holiday when I was a child. It was the Brecon and Monmouth canal and I can still remember seeing an otter for the first time. After I grew up and got married it was the Kennet and Avon. We would stop on our frequent trips from Dorset to Wales at Bradford on Avon and walk the towpath before going back to the café for a hot chocolate with whipped cream and marshmallows. I did my first herbal towpath walk there and when we moved to Sussex was instantly drawn to the Wey and Arun.

My passion for plants started way before that as my grandmother would walk me around the lanes of Enmore Green, just below Shaftesbury, Dorset telling me all about my herbalist great grandmothers who I have since been able to trace back to the 16th century. These stories initiated my desire to train as a medical herbalist which I did in 2011.

As a herbalist and ecologist I absolutely love walking the towpath. There is always something new to see; comfrey used medicinally for sprains and strains as its old name knitbone suggests, meadowsweet, from which the chemical which makes aspirin was originally extracted, for pain and also for stomach ulcers, hawthorn flowers and later in the year berries for the heart, selfheal, a lovely little herb which does what its name suggests, elder flowers and nettles for hay fever amongst many other things, and elderberries, shown to be effective against many strains of influenza. Just being outdoors in such a beautiful setting fills the soul with calm and joy and reminds us of the interconnectedness of everything around us.



Comfrey and Bee



Self heal and Hawkshead Moth

I hope to run another towpath herb walk this summer. We identify plants and talk about their uses both medicinally and in folklore and ethnobotany, and make herbal tinctures, teas and vinegars to take home. Meanwhile you can find me at www.thedroversdaughter.com, or on Instagram @thedroversdaughter. I work as a medical herbalist from my home near Plaistow and from Meadows Wellbeing in Billingshurst. *Kate Scott*

Restoration and Maintenance News

Nine teams of volunteers are out most weeks, restoring the canal and maintaining what we've restored. Come and join us! You'll use your skills, learn fresh skills and make new friends. Learn more about each team under 'Volunteers' on our website.

The full story of these efforts is recorded monthly in Working Party News – see under 'News' on our website – or send an email to listadmin@weyandarun.co.uk to receive an electronic version. Working Party News lists the contacts for each team.

Gimme shelter

Our working party teams regularly have to cut down trees, particularly because of Ash Dieback and work on new lengths of restoration, most recently at the newly-acquired Bonfire Hanger section. We can sell larger timber to a contractor, for chipping, but smaller stuff has no commercial value, yet it has to be disposed of. It could be burnt on site, but we prefer to have it burnt offsite – in the log-burning stoves of local residents, where it will at least generate some valuable heat, as well as some useful donations. Logs for stoves have to be dry, so the Northern Working Party has erected a cover over our Depot's log bays (picture below), under which the logs can be stored for drying.



David Arnold signs off – with a flourish

One of David's final duties before retiring as Boat Maintenance Manager was to oversee the recertification of our tripboats *Wiggonholt* and *Zachariah Keppel* by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The new passenger certificates were duly obtained – all in a one-week window at the end of November. As a retired Master Mariner, David has ensured over six years that our boats always meet the highest standards – but he did find this particular MCA surveyor particularly pernicky. The surveyor told us to reposition the loadline freeboard marks – the 'Plimsoll lines' – slightly on both boats (*Wiggonholt's* line is shown in the picture on the right). While *Wiggonholt* was ashore, her hull was repainted.



May Upton earns her keep - and makes a rare trip

With the resumption of normal water levels, workboat *May Upton* has been kept busy. In November, the Thursday Group took her* to Drungewick to refit the stop planks at the aqueduct, which had been forced apart, jammed with debris and caused to leak as a result of recent storms (picture below).



In January, the Thursday Group took *May Upton* across Drungewick Aqueduct and along Long Meadow, removing floating debris, then through Drungewick Lock, to turn her in the winding hole below it, locking back up for return to the aqueduct. We believe this was the first boat movement through the lock since 2017. Official reopening of this section has to wait for bank repairs - and they need drier weather - but let's hope the day is not too far off.

* The tradition is to refer to boats, *May Upton* included, as 'she'. But did you know that the actual person May Upton was a 'he'? Upton was the civil engineer on site, overseeing the canal's construction.

Another move for our dredger

Our dredger was lifted in April 2023 from Dunsfold and trucked to Loxwood. Because of low water levels it was initially impossible to get the boat past Barnsill Bridge but it is now moored at Drungewick (picture below). At the same time as the dredger, we also moved our tug



and two barges from Dunsfold to Loxwood. This extra kit has been extremely useful for forestry work along the canal banks.



Above: Using the tug to clear fallen trees at Brewhurst (Lock) Winding Hole. Below: Tug and barge at Brewhurst Lane Bridge - the large tree to the left of the bridge was a victim of recent storms.



Thursday Group rescues Sally

You're our Chairman. You're working in the Loxwood Canal Centre in December. Spookily, a gust of wind slams closed the Centre's only outside door, so hard that it's jammed and you can't now open it. You're trapped. Who you gonna call? – Ghostbusters (West Sussex branch)? No, wait - it's Thursday! So the Thursday Group, working nearby, was summoned to release Sally, with help from a large screwdriver and some muscle.

The picture on the right shows Brian King (second from right) with Sally and the group.



Bonfire Hanger footpath gets some steps up

The footpath towards Alfold from the towpath on the canal's western side, between the sites of Lock 10 (Bonfire Hanger) and Lock 11 (Westland Copse), starts with a footbridge. At that point the section of canal it crosses is on a slight embankment on its eastern side, and so the stile that was installed there had a steep drop into the field below. This was not user-friendly, even for fit walkers.

The stile has now been replaced by gated steps down into the field, thanks to the hard work of the Northern Working Party. With the towpath there not yet restored, access was a problem – the closest point to which materials could be easily transported was the restored bridge at Gennets Bridge Lock, 700 metres to the south.

So it was decided to use the resources of Tickner's Depot to prefabricate the elements of the new steps. This required a careful site survey to ensure correct offsite cutting of the Plastecowood planks and their supports. Despite the lack of daylight, the team carried all the new components from Gennets Bridge to site by hand, removed the old stile and installed the replacement steps - all in a single day. The footpath was out of public use for that day only. They returned later to add a self-closing gate and side rails to deter inquisitive livestock.

Public reaction has been very favourable, judging from social media comments.



Before (left) and after the improvement work.

Loxwood pump repairs

Repairs after the serious criminal damage in April 2023 are progressing well, with most of the electric cabling now in place. However there have been frustrating delays to the delivery of the new pump control systems. We hope to have better news to share in the next issue of *Wey-South*.

Chris parts with hazel – and gains a hedge

Hedgelaying needs lots of hazel for stakes and binders, and we're fortunate that volunteer Chris Tavener has a hazel coppice which he makes available to us. The Hedgelaying Group reaped its regular harvest there in November, stocking up with enough material for 200 metres of hedging. After seven years of this exploitation, the coppice is fully productive, with rapid regrowth. Enough hazel for immediate needs can be cut very quickly. As a 'thank you' to Chris, and for good practice of hedgelaying techniques, the Group has started to lay a hedge fronting Chris's coppice.

The Earl of Egremont Needs a Canal

The story of our canal (contd.)

The end of the 18th century saw the rapid growth of canals and river navigations that provided the new factories of the industrial revolution with raw materials and took their products to market. The canals also served the growing population with food and fuel. Thousands of miles of canals were being built, piecemeal and largely at the initiative of private investors and speculators, there being no national strategy.

The most southerly arm of this ad-hoc network was the river Wey, comprising the Godalming Navigation from that town to Guildford and the Wey Navigation thence to the Thames at Weybridge, both long-established. For George Wyndham, the third Earl of Egremont, the Wey was tantalisingly close to his Petworth estates, which would benefit from connection to the river Thames and the canals. He researched the building of a 32-mile canal from a Petworth branch of his Rother Navigation north to the Wey, but the benefits were outweighed by a cost that would be too strong even for one of the richest aristocrats in the Kingdom.

Grand schemes come – and go

Others had their eyes on linking the Thames with the south coast, in particular from London to Portsmouth. There was strategic sense in avoiding the hazards of the sea route, those hazards for sailing ships in pre-steam days including the tortuous river from London to the Nore, the Goodwin Sands - and the French, this being a time of war. Egremont watched while several extravagant schemes, some of them potentially beneficial to him by using the Arun which he controlled, were proposed but never matured. If he were ever to get a waterway link north, the Earl was on his own. Could he succeed where others had failed?

Better prospects for the Earl

The simplest solution – and the one soon to be adopted – was a relatively short ‘broad’ canal from Newbridge on the Arun Navigation to the Wey’s Godalming Navigation at Shalford, for onward connection with the Thames. Unlike the tamed Wey, there were as yet no locks on the Thames downstream of Windsor, and the Thames was tidal past Weybridge as far upstream as Staines. Hitherto, any extensive reliance on the Thames had been an unattractive prospect. However, plans were now in hand for a series of locks from Teddington (which opened in 1811) to Windsor, as well as a towpath. Using the Wey and then the Thames now looked more inviting.

INTENDED SURREY AND SUSSEX CANAL.
Guildford, May 15, 1811.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a Meeting will be held at the White Hart Inn, in Guildford, in the County of Surrey, on Saturday, the 1st day of June next, at One o’Clock in the Afternoon, for the purpose of considering the propriety of making a Navigable Canal, to connect the Rivers Wey and Arun from New Bridge, in the Parish of Wisborough Green, in Sussex, to Stone Bridge, in the Parish of Shalford, in Surrey, a distance of only 16 miles.

The Thames was also an increasingly useful link to the rapidly growing canal network of England and Wales. At Reading, the Thames met the Kennet & Avon Canal (completed 1810) giving access to and from Bristol and the Somersetshire Coal Canal (1805). The now hugely profitable Oxford Canal (1790) led north from that city to the Midlands, whilst the Thames and Severn Canal had been open from 1789. Down the Thames from Weybridge, via the river locks to be

completed by 1815, there was not only London itself but also the Grand Junction Canal (1805: later to become the Grand Union Canal) from Brentford to the Midlands. In theory, an Arun - Wey link would enable a suitably-sized boat to get from Littlehampton to Ripon in Yorkshire.

If joining the Arun to the Wey could be made attractive to investors and potential users in general, it would be even more beneficial for investment by his Lordship. It would simplify the carriage of his estate's imports and exports. It would also give him a share of the expected operating profits.

With such apparently favourable auspices, in 1810 Lord Egremont began the process that would result in the building of the Wey & Arun Junction Canal from Shalford to Newbridge.

How to get a canal built

There was neither a national strategy nor government finance for the canal network. Instead, each canal was a separate private venture, whose promoters would provide the capital cost of construction. An Act of Parliament was essential, to set up and empower a Company to acquire the necessary land, build the canal and charge tolls on the resulting traffic. Investors naturally expected a good dividend from the canal's profits.

The first stages were to win public support for the project (via public meetings on the line of route) and to find subscribers, who would ultimately be some of the company shareholders and who, in the meantime, would:-

- Engage an engineer to survey the route,
- Design and cost the canal and its structures, and
- Fund the costs of the legislation,

all this under the supervision of a committee made up from their numbers.

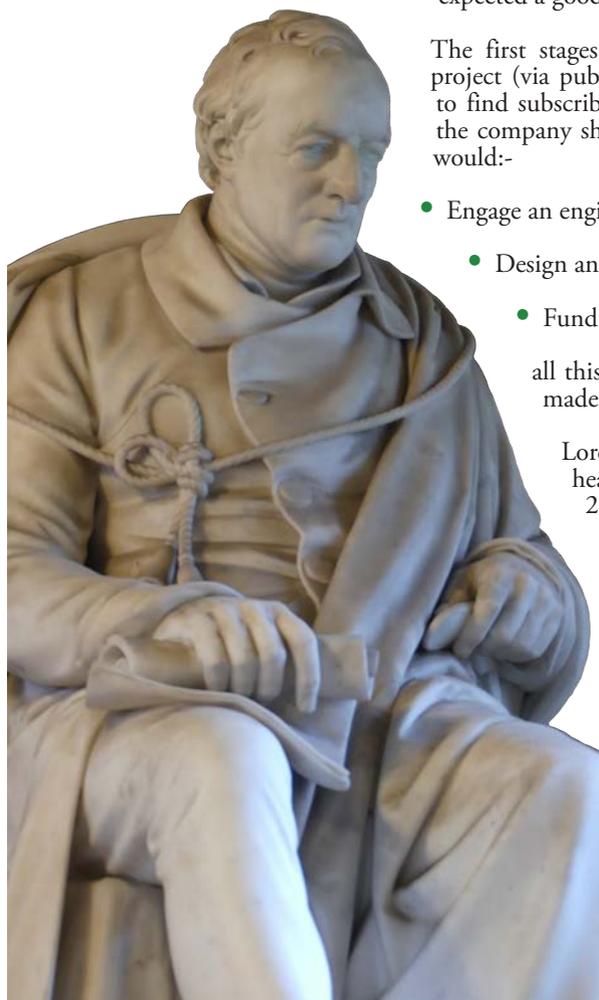
Lord Egremont was always destined to head the project, putting up £20,000, 22% of the projected cost of £90,000.

Egremont had no landholdings on the line of route, and he took care to engage the support of the Earl of Onslow who also held the title of Baron Cranley (today's Cranleigh). Onslow subscribed £2,000. The full £90,000 was pledged very quickly, and the preliminaries were started.

We next meet the chosen engineer – Josias Jessop.

(To be continued)

A memorial to Lord Egremont in the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Petworth



Arun Rally 2024

It is excellent news that after a break in 2023 our Arun Rally will take place again in 2024 - on June 23rd. We took over the organisation of this event from the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) in 2013. Its aim is to demonstrate that the River Arun is usable for navigation.

Any type of craft that can be launched on the river is welcome. If you have a larger boat you will need to use the public slipway at Pulborough (by Swan Bridge). Canoeists and paddleboarders may prefer to launch at Stopham (by the road bridge on the A283 that now bypasses the 15th century stone bridge). The recommended launching times are from 1415 at Pulborough or 1445 at Stopham. For more details and registration, please see our website.

The River Arun is managed by the Environment Agency and there is a traditional right of navigation at least as far as Pallingham Farm Bridge, the tidal limit (where the Wey-South Path crosses the river about 300m north of the junction with the canal). This is some 25 river miles (40km) from the sea at Littlehampton.

The normal objective for the Rally is to reach Pallingham Farm Bridge but on the day of the Rally it is sometimes possible to continue further north. Some of the route is straightforward but there can be challenges thanks to fallen trees and branches and shallow water. Normally a working party does its best to clear vegetation beforehand. Water depth depends on the state of the tide and how much rain there has been. We try to time the Rally so that boaters get the benefit of the tide in both directions. The section between the junction with the canal at Pallingham and Pallingham Farm Bridge can be particularly difficult, with a fast-running stream.

There are no public landing stages on the route but it is usually possible to land at Pallingham Farm Bridge and from here it is a very short walk to Pallingham Bridge on the canal and the remains of the docks that have recently been uncovered (see Wey-South 202, March 2023). Pallingham Lock and the junction with the canal are on private land; there is a public footpath that runs along the edge of the property.

Exploring the attractive and isolated Arun Valley can be a fascinating adventure. Please support the event if you can.



Arun Rally boaters at Pallingham Farm Bridge - river conditions must have been favourable for the dinghy to reach this point.

Christmas Raffle Winners

We are very grateful to everyone who bought tickets for our 'Christmas Draw' (drawn on 23rd January). We sold 4,097 tickets at £1 each, of which 66% were bought online – considerably more online sales than last year, so a saving in bank charges for us. Many of our generous supporters added donations to their purchases - on most of these we will claim Gift Aid, so the total proceeds will be over £5,000. As usual, sponsors very kindly donated the prizes and paid for ticket printing, so our costs are minimal.

The lucky winners were as follows:

1st prize (£200): Beckwith, West Chiltington

2nd prize (£100): Judd, Cranleigh

3rd prize (£75): Sprules, Pulborough

4th prize (£50 M&S voucher): Robinson, Fareham

5th prize (£40): Boast, Ifold

6th prize (£30): Reid, Billingshurst

7th prize (£25 M&S voucher): Claber, Billingshurst

Peter Jackman

We are sad to learn that Peter Jackman has died at the age of 91. He had been unwell for some time. Peter was the second leader of our Midweek Working Party after its founder Colin Gibbs and took up the job, initially as Acting Leader, around the start of 2004. He served until 2011 and was an energetic and highly practical volunteer. Peter lived in Send, close to the River Wey, and owned a narrowboat (*Triggs*) that he brought to various events on the Wey Navigations and the Basingstoke Canal.



Membership report

8 new members joined us in the last quarter and our membership now stands at 2,819. We would like to extend a very warm welcome to the following new members.

Helen & Mark Akers
Gary Sheehan

Richard Everitt
Sarah & Andrew Speers

David Power

Robert Rudwick

We have learned with regret of the death of:

Shaun Browning
Trudy Beach

Malcolm Brunning
Gemma Stockwell

Miss E.D. Cleavelly
Peter Jackman

Alan Lathey
Geoffrey Preston-Jones

We are still seeing some members not renewing. No doubt the economic situation does not help, but our subscription rates are very modest. So we would ask our members to stick with us if at all possible. And if you have any friends or contacts who are not already members, perhaps you could persuade them to join?

John Tovell
membership@weyandarun.co.uk

Meet the volunteer - Giles Eyre

When and how did you first become aware of the canal?

Canals are a major interest of mine and have been since a child. I first found the Wey-South Path when out walking, in the 1980s.

When and how did you first start volunteering?

I have been volunteering for much of my adult life but had to fit this round work and family life. When I retired from working as a barrister in 2016, I decided I wanted to tackle the physical side of restoring the canal. I joined the Northern Working Party (NWP), working in the Tickner's area and helping improve several sections of towpath. I've done a lot of physical work in all weathers and I learnt many new skills, including driving a dumper.

You're one of our directors and our company secretary. How did this come about?

A volunteer was sought to assist in managing various aspects of our work and I felt after a few years volunteering and learning about our organisation that I could contribute. I was then asked if I would consider becoming a trustee (director), which I did after attending a number of Board meetings.

My NWP experience is very helpful in my Board work, even though my Board duties now mean less time is available for outdoors work.

How does our Board operate?

The 12-member Board meets most months for a couple of hours or so, usually in person. The meetings are a mixture of formal decision-making, such as authorising expenditure on projects, the purchase of plant, the employment of staff; and receiving written or oral reports which allow for discussion on topics such as restoration projects, maintenance priorities, agreement of formal management policies, arrangements for public meetings etc. Decisions are technically by a majority, but in practice by consensus.

Being on the Board is very rewarding. It allows me to understand what is happening within the Trust and to discuss the different priorities in the works of restoration and maintenance of our wonderful canal, balancing competing calls on our attention, our finances and our volunteers, and to contribute to those debates.

What makes your day?

A good cappuccino in the morning, preferably while at the helm of a narrow boat, and accompanied by my wife and our dog.

Do you visit other canals?

Several times a year, we are cruising the canals all over the country on our shared narrow boat. I like visiting other restoration projects, most recently walking the Stover Canal in Devon.

What are your other interests?

I enjoy researching canal history and writing about it. I live in London alongside the Regent's Canal. Since 1985, I have been involved in managing a charity operating two community narrow

boats, one of which is fitted out for residential trips. These are extensively used by local community groups – young and old, and those with special needs or health issues – and also together with the London Canal Museum for educational trips.

Away from the canals I enjoy travel, theatre, and exploring the countryside with our spaniel. And I still use my legal skills in training expert witnesses for court work.

What's are the canal's biggest challenges in the next few years?

As a volunteer myself, I have been extremely impressed by what the sheer hard work and dedication of our volunteers and supporters has achieved. Our future depends on money and people and we need a larger regular income to cover the cost of maintenance and administration. With more major projects in the pipeline, we have to increase the number of volunteers out on the working parties.

It's not just working party volunteers we need - more office and administrative help would make the running of the Trust more efficient and make time for the Board to concentrate on 'big picture' projects – whether fundraising or restoration.

How can volunteers help with office and administration work?

We need help with all of the functions of a big organisation, such as communications and publications, fundraising, monitoring health, safety and welfare provision and working up planning applications. Flexibility and working from home are always possible.

Whether you already have the skills, or are willing to learn and adapt, volunteering with us provides the opportunity to make a real contribution and to meet many like-minded people. Get in touch by emailing support@weyandarun.co.uk.



If you could change or improve one thing about how we're restoring the canal, what would it be?

Because of my experiences of inner-city life and the Regent's Canal, I would like to see greater diversity in this project – in age, social background, ethnicity – both in those enjoying the facilities we are producing and maintaining along the Wey & Arun, and those volunteering with us. It is great that so many retired people want to join the working parties, but my 10-year plan would be to involve more younger people from more diverse backgrounds and to reduce the average age of volunteers by 10 years!

Giles at the helm of his own narrowboat



On a wet January 25th the new eastern approach to Dunsfold Park from the A281, now named Canada Avenue to honour the Canadian forces who built the airfield, was officially inaugurated. Holding the ribbon are Gerry Forristal of Rutland Group and Colonel Jonathan Bouchard, Air Force Advisor to the Canadian Defence Liaison Staff in London. At the wheel of the Smart car is Jim McAllister, Chief Executive of Rutland Group. The Stovolds Hill (north) entrance to Dunsfold Park is now closed and the entrance via Compasses Bridge over the canal is for light vehicles only.



Storms in January brought the highest water levels on the Cranleigh Waters at Shalford since late 2019. Our Shalford Information Point stayed clear of the flood, but to explore the boardwalk fully you would have needed your boots.

WEY & ARUN Canal Trust

You are invited to take part in

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust's 51st Annual Poddle Sunday 2nd June 2024



Birtley Bridge 2 - opened on 29th October 2023

What is it?

The 2024 Poddle is a 12-mile sponsored walk around Cranleigh, Surrey, raising money towards the restoration of the Wey & Arun Canal.

Who can do it?

Almost anyone, with the exception of the very young, infirm and pushchairs as the walk has some stiles. Dogs are welcome especially if sponsored!

What do I need to do?

Register at weyandarun.org.uk/poddle
Complete the sponsor form overleaf and raise as much money as you can – minimum £25 please (refreshments are provided) then just turn up and walk.

Where, when, how?

- ◆ The start is at Snoxhall Community Centre, Knowle Lane, Cranleigh GU6 8JW. Knowle Lane is off Cranleigh High Street - the turning is opposite the Richard Onslow pub. Turn left if you are coming from the Horsham/Ewhurst direction, right if you are coming from Guildford or the A281. Follow Knowle Lane for 300 yards and you will see a sign on the left for Snoxhall Fields. Turn here and follow the lane to the Community Centre. There is car parking at the Centre but if spaces run out then parking is free on Sundays in Cranleigh public car parks - the nearest is Village Way (GU6 8AF, follow signs for Cranleigh Leisure Centre).
- ◆ Arrive between 9am and 10:30 to check in and receive your Route Guide and start walking the whole route, or only the morning route. If you only wish to walk in the morning, we will provide transport from the lunch stop back to the start .
- ◆ If you wish to walk only in the afternoon, come to Arbuthnot Hall, Hullbrook Lane, Shamley Green GU5 0UA. Hullbrook Lane is off the B2128 road between Shalford/Wonersh and Cranleigh, by the village green in Shamley Green - the turning is by Shamley Green Stores. Turn left if you are coming from Cranleigh, right if you are coming from Shalford/Wonersh. Arbuthnot Hall is about 100 yards on the left. Arrive between 12 and 1.30pm to check in and receive your Route Guide. We will provide transport from the finish back to Shamley Green.

The Wey & Arun Canal Trust, which is working hard to restore 23 miles of navigable waterway linking the River Arun at Pallingham to the River Wey at Shalford, organises a sponsored walk each year. This is our most important fundraising event and makes a vital contribution to pushing the restoration effort forward.

This year's Poddle is on Sunday 2nd June. We are going to walk from the Snoxhall Community Centre, Cranleigh, to the Arbuthnot Hall at Shamley Green where snacks and hot and cold drinks will be provided (walkers should bring their own packed lunch), and then back to Snoxhall Fields in the afternoon. For those who would prefer a shorter walk you can choose to walk in the morning or afternoon only. Morning and afternoon refreshment stops will be provided at Run Common and Smithwood Common.

The morning walk is about 6 miles and passes along sections of canal at Elmbridge, Whitley, Run Common, Rooks Hill and the restored Birtley length featuring the two new lifting bridges. Lunch is at Shamley Green. The afternoon the walk is via picturesque country footpaths, Smithwood Common and the Downs Link from Rowly for the walk back to Snoxhall Community Centre for a well deserved cup of tea and cake (about 6 miles).

Did you know we offer 50/50 sponsorship? If you enter as a 'Team' and raise more than £200 sponsorship (minimum £25 each) we are happy to split funds equally with another charity or organisation of your choosing. If you or your organisation wish to take part as a team please complete individual sponsor forms as usual but please also contact the organiser, or look on our website for a 'group' form.

If walking isn't for you, why not

- ◆ Sponsor the Last Man?
- ◆ Make cakes for the walkers?
- ◆ Help on the day as a marshal or at a refreshment point?

Please contact the Poddle coordinator for more information or to offer assistance - all help is greatly appreciated.

To contact the coordinator
poddle@weyandarun.co.uk or 01483 505566

For more details of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust and its aims, contact our office.
✉ support@weyandarun.co.uk
☎ 01483 505566

Wey & Arun Canal Trust Annual Poddle Sponsorship & Gift Aid Declaration Form

Please hand in this Sponsor Form - it will be given back to you at the finish when you check out.

Please sponsor me to walk the 2024 'Poddle' on Sunday 2nd June 2024 in aid of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust.
(name of walker - CAPITALS PLEASE)

We, who have given our names and addresses below and have ticked the box headed "Gift Aid?", want the charity named above to reclaim tax on the donation detailed below, given on the date shown. We understand that each of us must have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year.

Surname (CAPITALS PLEASE)	First Name (CAPITALS PLEASE)	Home Address (essential for Gift Aid)	Postcode (essential for Gift Aid)	Amount £	Date Paid	Gift Aid? (✓)
Remember: Full name + Home address + Postcode + (✓) = <i>giftaid it</i>				£		

(To be completed before arrival - IN CAPITALS PLEASE)

Walker's Details

Full Name

Address

..... Postcode

E-mail address

Gift Aid

Please ensure that if any of the above donations are to be Gift Aided by you or a donor that you / they are a taxpayer, aware of your / their commitments, and that you / they have recorded the first line of their address and their postcode and ticked the Gift Aid box. By doing this their donation increases by 25%, i.e. 25p for every pound. If all are able to do this it will mean that the total amount raised is increased by 25%.

Signature: **Date:**

Please tick here if you are a member of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust

Please collect your sponsor money as soon as possible and transfer to:

Sort code 20-35-35, account number 50961949
 Barclays Bank, account name "**Wey & Arun Canal Trust Ltd**" - please add "Poddle" and your name as a reference.

Alternatively please send a cheque payable to "**The Wey & Arun Canal Trust**" to: The Treasurer, Wey & Arun Canal Trust, Bridge End, Somerswey, Shalford, Guildford, GU4 8EQ

If you have more sponsors, please download a form from weyarun.org.uk/poddle (or continue on separate sheets of paper).

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Walker Number: