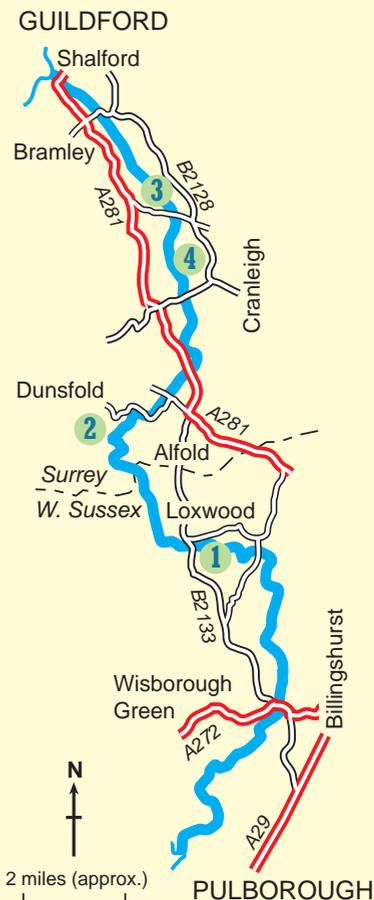


# WEY & ARUN

The Magazine of the  
**Wey & Arun Canal Trust**  
Issue 212 February 2026

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*Photos in this issue were taken by  
Keith Lyall, Julian Morgan, Gordon Powell,  
Dave Verrall, Trevor Lewis, Jonathan Copeland,  
Richard Meinertzhagen*

*Front cover: A frozen canal  
near Baldwin's Knob Lock on  
a cold day in January 2026  
Photo by Gordon Powell*

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# News headlines

## Rooks Hill on National TV

The BBC's Morning Live programme on 7th January featured the work of the volunteers of the Waterways Recovery Group at Rooks Hill. Read the full story on page 7.



*Walking for funds - the 2025 Poddle*

## New postal address

Our postal address (also for Boat Trips, Administration, Accounts and Publicity) is now : The Wey & Arun Canal Trust, Canal Centre, Onslow Wharf, High Street, Loxwood, Billingshurst, RH14 0RD

## Diary dates

**Saturday 18th April** – our Spring Meeting, 14:30 at Alfold Village Hall. See page 8.

**Sunday 17th May** – the Arun Small Boat Rally, launching from Pulborough at 13:00 or Stopham at 13:30.

**Sunday 7th June** – it's our annual 12-mile Poddle walk, starting from Brinsbury College, via the mediaeval bridge at Stopham to the lunch stop at Fittleworth Village Hall. The return route includes a walk along the Arun Navigation past Haybarn Swing Bridge and Lee Place Bridge, then back to the college. Further details and registration on our website in March.

## New name for the Poddle?

We are considering a change of name for the event, hoping to attract wider participation from the local community as well as from our members. More news to follow on our website and at our Spring Meeting.

## Rooks Hill appeal – update

We need to raise a further £57,000 to complete Phase 1 at Rooks Hill. At the time of going to press, we had reached £196,000 of funding with the expected costs now at £253,000. Since the last *Wey-South*, when the funding gap stood at £110,000, cost reductions of £12,000 have been identified and a further £41,000 of donations have been received. If you haven't already donated, can you help achieve our full funding target and ensure we can continue to build quickly and prepare for Phase 2? Your generosity (or help with fundraising) will be much appreciated. See our appeal on the back cover.

## Board news

Until a new Chairman is identified, the existing Board members will ensure that we continue to operate effectively, by taking it in turns to chair Board meetings and keeping all key governance and board oversight responsibilities in force.

Margaret Darvill will remain the external contact for landowners and key supporters. Other duties previously carried out within the Chairman's role will be shared by other Directors.

Mark Akers joins the Board as Finance Director, a role for which he is well qualified. Mark has volunteered with the Midweek Working Party for more than two years.

# Annual Meeting

## Saturday 18th October 2025

Interim Chairman Margaret Darvill welcomed 110 members at Shalford Village Hall to our 52nd Annual General Meeting.

Reviewing 2024, she said it had been a year of consolidation, with the start of several projects frustratingly being delayed while awaiting planning permissions, a process that had become more prolonged. We had nevertheless been able to continue with projects under our control - the refurbishment of Drungewick Lock and Long Meadow, and the removal of a large number of dead and unsafe ash trees, with associated extensive replanting of trees. Following criminal damage in 2023, we had replaced, upgraded and made more secure the locks' pumps, controls and equipment cabinets.

Work on longer-term projects in 2024 included continued dialogue with Surrey County Council over the Council's plan at Elmbridge to replace the low, narrow bridge with a wider one of navigable height, and a road design for solving the similar problem at Fastbridge, Dunsfold on the A281 had been developed in co-operation with landowners. A review and redesign of the Russetts Common scheme (the next section south from Rooks Hill) was carried out following the refusal of the previous planning application.

The 2025 picture to date was much improved, with planning permissions granted. Work had started and was progressing well on the new Rooks Hill bridge, supported by an appeal to which members were still generously responding. Phase 1 of the new Rye Farm towpath had been started and completed, with Phase 2 now beginning. At the Tickner's Heath Crossing, the water main had been diverted and work was starting on the road diversion that would create the room to build the new road bridge.

Margaret said that we were in talks with landowners with a view to acquiring further sections of the canal, and had appointed a new Operations Manager, Stuart Dawson.

Boat trips had had to be suspended from July because of low water levels and Environment Agency restrictions on replenishment.



*Giles Eyre (purple jumper) presents Julian Morgan (red) with a gift for his time on the board*

Margaret presented gifts to Julian Morgan and Dennis Gillen who were retiring from the Board. Margaret herself was stepping down as Interim Chairman, while continuing as a director. Giles Eyre announced that the Board had reviewed the need to use its subsidiary W&A Enterprises Ltd to operate its boat trips and merchandise sales. With professional advice, it was decided that there was no legal requirement, liability benefit or tax advantage in operating our trading separately from the charity and it incurred the cost of keeping two sets of books. So from 2026 onwards it was planned to channel all trading income directly into the Trust and to make the trading company dormant.

Margaret reported a financial surplus of £117,000 for 2024, reflecting a reduction of staffing costs and underspending because of the delay to starting major projects. Income had benefited from a generous donation from the MJ Camp Charitable Foundation, which had also made a further donation that would boost 2025 income. As a result, despite the resumption of significant expenditure, another year-end surplus was expected.

Reporting for W&A Enterprises Ltd and thanking all volunteers, Julian Morgan said that, with a limited number available to run boat trips, it had been decided to concentrate on cream tea and charter trips at the expense of public trips. Our narrowboat *Zachariah Keppel* was less used, and the cost of an annual MCA survey would be avoided by limiting it to trips for 11 passengers or fewer. Low water levels had made it impossible to run boat trips for several months of 2025.



*Keith Lyall was not at the Annual Meeting so received the Jack King Cup from Margaret Darvill at a later time. You can tell he's happy to be either end of a camera!*

The Jack King Cup was awarded to Keith Lyall for his work with the Tuesday and Thursday groups, for organising our 'Drive a Digger' experience at the Surrey Hills Wood Fair and for his extensive photography for *Wey-South* and our 2026 Calendar. The John East Trophy was awarded to Lorraine Feeney for her work as Archivist and in assisting with the monitoring and collection of paperwork from volunteers.

With elections made, accounts received and refreshments taken, the meeting heard next from Bill Nicholson on the successful start, in hot but dry conditions, of Phase 1 at Rooks Hill. This phase is to create the new bridge, 100m of retaining wall for the canal bank, an overflow weir and to repair the drainage culvert under the canal. Much of the work to date had been done by the Newbury Working Party Group, the Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group and the Waterway Recovery Group. An average of 15 volunteers were working on any one day.

It was hoped to start Phase 2 in mid-2026. 300 metres of new canal would be dug south from Birtley to the new Rooks Hill bridge, including a 3-metre-wide permissive footpath. South of the bridge the canal's new west bank would be created as far as the Fanesbridge boundary. A significant amount of spoil from excavating the new cut would have to be disposed of, despite reusing as much as possible on site. This was a logistical and financial problem.

Phase 3 would be the rebuilding of Fanesbridge Lock just south of the current worksite. Planning permission had already been granted. This phase might be combined with the next section to be restored south of the new lock – the Rushetts scheme for which we still need planning permission.

Gordon Powell closed the meeting with a presentation on priorities, fundraising and other updates. As well as projects previously mentioned, Phase 2 at Rye Farm (a further 180m of towpath) had just started. In the Loxwood area remedial work on the Bonfire Hanger path had been completed. Our communications included *Wey-South*, the monthly eNewsletter and nearly 6,000 followers on Facebook. We were face-to-face with our public with the Mobile Display Vehicle and Canal Centre teams. Grants of £30,000 had been received from Asda in connection with Bramley, £10,000 from Surrey Hills Farming In Protected Landscapes scheme for new equipment, £19,300 from Loxwood Parish Council for further equipment and for towpath repairs – and Wienerberger had donated all the bricks needed for facing the new Rooks Hill Bridge and restoring the culvert outfall there.

The Rooks Hill appeal donations continued to flow in. It had proved possible to reduce the total amount needed, but £106,000 was still needed. One source of cost reductions was to lock into the buying power of three generous local firms – Axtell, Guildford Tipper and Thakeham Homes when procuring materials.

Finally, there was a continuing need for volunteers for home-based roles.  
Email [volunteering@weyarun.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@weyarun.org.uk)

## Our trophies

The Jack King Cup (also known as the “Eager Beaver” Award) was first presented at the 1982 Annual Meeting. It was given by Mrs Lulu King in memory of her husband who had died in January 1980. Jack King was a farmer from Paplands Farm, near Wisborough Green, and was the first landowner to give permission for canal restoration on his land. The cup is awarded to an individual (other than a member of our Board) who has made a significant personal endeavour during the previous year. The winner is normally a front-line worker.

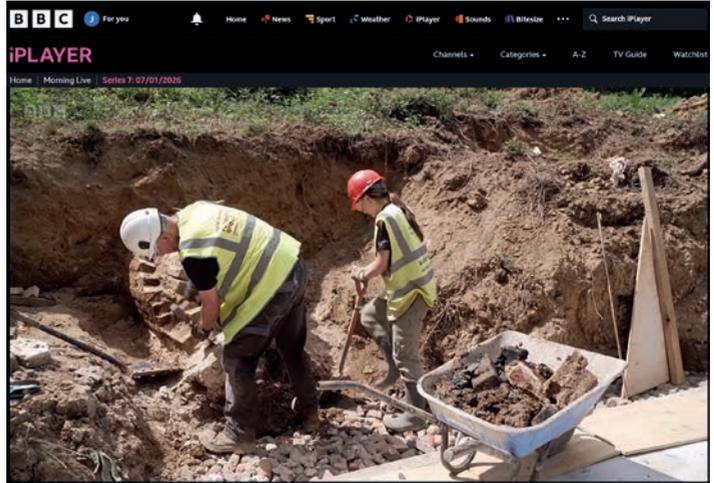
The John East Trophy commemorates our first Chairman. John East was one of the two men, unknown to each other at the time, who both had the idea, in the late 1960s, of setting up a society to restore the Wey & Arun Canal. He was a West Sussex County Councillor and so it was natural for him to take the chair at the first meeting of the Wey & Arun Canal Society in August 1970 (it became the Wey & Arun Canal Trust and a registered charity in 1973). John East died in 1994 at the age of 82 and his widow Irene East gave the cup. The cup can be awarded to any member and the winner is selected by the Chairman. The first winner was Alan Dyer and Mrs East made the presentation on board our then recently acquired tripboat *Zachariah Keppel*.

## Rooks Hill on National TV

On Wednesday 7th January BBC One's TV programme 'Morning Live' featured the Newbury Working Party Group, (affiliated to the Waterway Recovery Group) helping us out last summer in the early stages of our Rooks Hill project. The item concerned 'voluntourism' - free or low-cost volunteering breaks at a work camp. WRG volunteers are seen hard at it, notably at the rebuilding of the culvert outfall, and also out of hours at their living and sleeping accommodation at Kirdford Village Hall.

Bill Nicholson was interviewed (and seen serving breakfasts). Tuesday Group volunteer Graham Hawkes also featured and there were several views of the restored canal.

The item is available on BBC iPlayer, an hour and two minutes from the start.



*Stills from the programme.  
Top :WRG volunteers working on the Rooks Hill culvert.  
Bottom : Bill Nicholson interviewed*



## Christmas Raffle winners

We are very grateful to everyone who bought tickets for our 'Christmas Draw' (drawn on 20th January). Sadly ticket sales were significantly down on previous years, so we would like to hear from members who have bought tickets in the past but didn't participate this year. If our communication of the raffle wasn't good enough we want to learn and improve for the 2026 draw. We repeat our grateful thanks to all who participated and congratulate all the winners.

### **The Christmas Draw Results are as follows:**

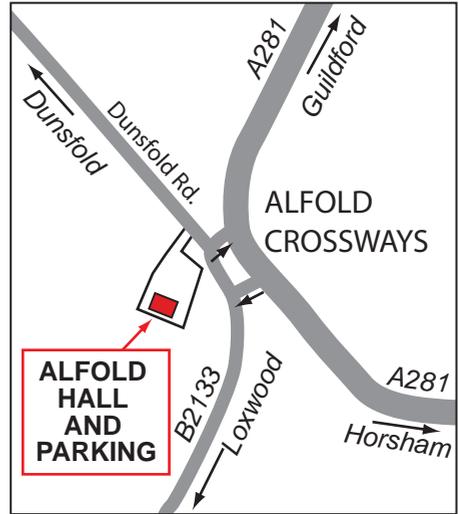
- 1st Prize - £200 – Mr Trevor Suckling
- 2nd Prize - £100 – Mrs Helen Hamilton
- 3rd Prize - £75 – Mr David Chalkley
- 4th Prize - £50 M&S Voucher  
– Mr Chris Tavener
- 5th Prize - £40 – Mr David Bunn
- 6th Prize - £30 – Mr Malcolm Drage
- 7th Prize - £25 M&S Voucher  
– Mr Michael Tucker

## Spring Meeting

Our Spring Meeting will take place on 18th April 2026 at 2.30pm at the Alford Village Hall, Dunsfold Road, Alford GU6 8JB.

All members are welcome for a series of updates and presentations. Publications and other items will be available to buy. There will be a refreshment break and the meeting will finish by 5pm at the latest.

An “Open Morning” is also being organised at Rooks Hill for those who would like to make a day of it. The aim is for members to see the progress made and understand the plans to complete phase 1 and start work on phase 2. By April we hope the bridge structure will be mostly complete and those attending will be able to access parts of the site not normally open to the public. More details will be published on our website closer to the date and registration will be required.



## Operations Manager and Apprentice

Our Operations Manager, Stuart Dawson, has now been in post for just over six months. This time has allowed him to become familiar with the canal and the nature of the work required and also to develop his principal working relationships, predominantly with our Working Party leaders. With that familiarisation complete, Stuart will take on a broader Health & Safety role to promote safe working practices with our volunteers as well as coordinating activities, ensuring equipment is shared and well utilised and skills training is arranged and provided.



*Stuart Dawson and Zoe Mallam at our depot*

By the time we go to print, we will have said goodbye to Zoe Mallam who has been completing her Water Environment Worker apprenticeship with us over the last two years. Zoe completed her final assessments in January and achieved a Distinction on all aspects of her Apprenticeship.

Zoe said “I’m sad to be leaving the Trust. The course has allowed me to gain some great skills and knowledge that could transfer to a variety of industries, however I hope to stay within the realm of inland waterways. In addition to the standard courses and certifications hosted by the college, the Trust was kind enough to allow me to complete an NPTC Chainsaw Cross Cutting ticket as well as CPCS Telehandler operator ticket which has been invaluable for completing tasks in and around the Depot.”

## Flailing and succeeding



*A Monday Group member uses the Tracmaster*

A government grant (from DEFRA) has enabled the Depot to acquire a new toy – the multi-purpose Tracmaster BCS780HY. It can switch, with quick-hitch fittings, from being a chipper for branches up to 3.5” diameter to a flail mower (as pictured, and probably its main application for us) or a stump grinder. Several other agricultural accessories could be purchased. Hydrostatic power from its electric start engine, braked steering and a hydraulic clutch makes for maximum operator comfort and control. It is self-propelled on a task but has to be trailered to and from the worksite. Training will be required for its operators.

One of its first users was the Midweek Working Party. Margaret Darvill reports that, in ‘flail’ mode, ‘work that would have taken a day was done before coffee’.

This is our second recent acquisition of Tracmaster equipment. Previously, we had

been given a well-used Tracmaster power scythe, also for mowing but with a horizontal bladed action. It was donated by the RSPB thanks to our director John Reynolds, and was not in working order – until the Depot attended to its many faults.

## *Relax with family and friends on a private cruise through beautiful West Sussex*

We run exclusive crewed boat trips along the Wey & Arun Canal for family celebrations, groups and parties.

**Members can claim a 10% discount**

**Choose your boat :**

For larger groups, there’s Wiggonholt (with an access lift). For eleven or fewer there’s Zachariah Keppel, while Josias Jessop carries up to nine. ‘Bring your own’, or we can organise catering.

*Further details and enquiry form on our website*

**[www.weyarun.org.uk](http://www.weyarun.org.uk)**

**MEMBERS  
SAVE 10%**

*Wey-South 212*

## The page turns on the Granary office

At the end of September 2025 we officially vacated The Granary at Fritchfold Farm in Loxwood, which became a key location for us from 1993. For many years this was “the office” and the hub of the Wey & Arun Canal world. Its use as an office ended in 2020 as a result of Covid-19. Since then it has been used mainly for storage but the contents have gradually been moved to our Dunsfold Depot.

We are immensely grateful to Peter Foulger, the owner of Fritchfold Farm and our Chairman from 1997 to 2009, for making The Granary available to us free of charge. For those who never had the pleasure of visiting, The Granary is on the first floor of a barn-like building on the southern fringe of Loxwood village. A spacious room with a high-pitched timber roof easily accommodated a couple of office workers, a big meeting table and plenty of shelves and filing cabinets. The entrance is by an outside wooden staircase that could become challenging in bad weather or when carrying something heavy. Many times we lugged the heavy boxes of *Wey-South* magazines up those stairs, then the copies would be spread out on the table for the “stuffing” team to do their work.



In 1993, Council of Management (Board) meetings started to be held at the office. In 1994 we appointed a full-time administrator, Chaloner Chute. He was an energetic individual who talked suppliers such as Canon into donating most of the equipment we needed. Shortly afterwards a financial squeeze and the start of the Loxwood tripboat operation led to major controversy over whether a full-time administrator was affordable. In 1997 Chaloner Chute left and John Lisk joined as Office Manager on a part-time basis.

From 1999 the Office Manager job was shared between two part-time staff. This was the arrangement until 2020, by which time the volume of boat trips meant that three part-time Office Managers and a book-keeper were needed. In 2012 a new administrator began work at Shalford, so the Loxwood office became focused on boat trips. Sadly, as Covid-19 closed down the boat operation, the Loxwood Office Managers became redundant. Jackie Blizard had been an Office Manager since 2000.

Nowadays, like many organisations, we find we can run things without the need for staff to travel to an office and our hard-working admin staff and volunteers are all home-based. Times move on but we remember our first office, The Granary, with great affection. We have very few pictures of The Granary but this shot of *Wey-South* “stuffing” in 2013, with David King (standing, centre) in charge, gives a good flavour of what it was like.

## Santa Trips



Our 2025 Santa Trips were a great success. We ran a total of 14 trips carrying 265 adults and 178 children with ticket sales providing over £6,000 of income for us.

These festive boat trips made for a great start to Christmas for all who took part and the feedback we received from our customers has been brilliant, summed up by this message : “Thank you so much for the lovely Santa trip today; - our granddaughters haven’t stopped talking about it”.

Special trips like these take a lot of organisation and planning. We are grateful to the many volunteers who helped with the



organising, decorating, creation of outdoor displays, catering, present buying and wrapping, staffing the canal centre so as to welcome our customers and to all the skippers and crew.

A special thank you as well to our brilliant Santas and Elves, some of whom are pictured here!

## Surrey Hills Wood Fair 2025



Once again, we exhibited at the annual Surrey Hills Wood Fair at the Cranleigh Showground over the weekend of 13th -14th September 2025. Our Mobile Display Vehicle (MDV) was on hand to promote our work and seek new volunteer recruits. Our star attraction was, as usual, the hands-on digger experience, which gives members of the public the opportunity to operate mini excavators in a basic set of manoeuvres.

The test is to raise the bucket which has a load of logs and rotate the arm over a tractor tyre into which the logs are dropped. The arm is then extended and lowered and the digger is rotated to knock over a set of traffic cones before returning the bucket to the start position. Each digger is manned by a volunteer supervisor who provides basic instruction on its operation and who is, importantly, able to operate a kill handle in the event of over-enthusiastic operators. Over the course of the weekend we had in excess of 270 participants. The digger experience has been run at this Fair for several years and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Over the weekend the MDV team saw a constant stream of visitors enquiring about the activities of the canal. Donations were collected over the weekend, supplemented by bags of wood available for a donation, all contributing to our funds.

Organising the experience is a big undertaking. Many volunteer members were involved in the setup and running of the event. In addition to the necessary paperwork and general organisation associated with such an event, there is a lot of preparation in collating and packing the necessary assets ahead of the event. Our team set up the show on the Friday afternoon and then ran it over the weekend of the Wood Fair. Volunteer roles include digger supervisors, log/cone replacers, queue management, public engagement, catering and manning the MDV stand. Our thanks go to all volunteers who assisted in the successful running of this event, and to BPH Plant Hire for the hire and transport of the diggers to and from the showground.

*Above : One younger visitor imagines skipping a narrowboat. Below : A new volunteer perhaps?*



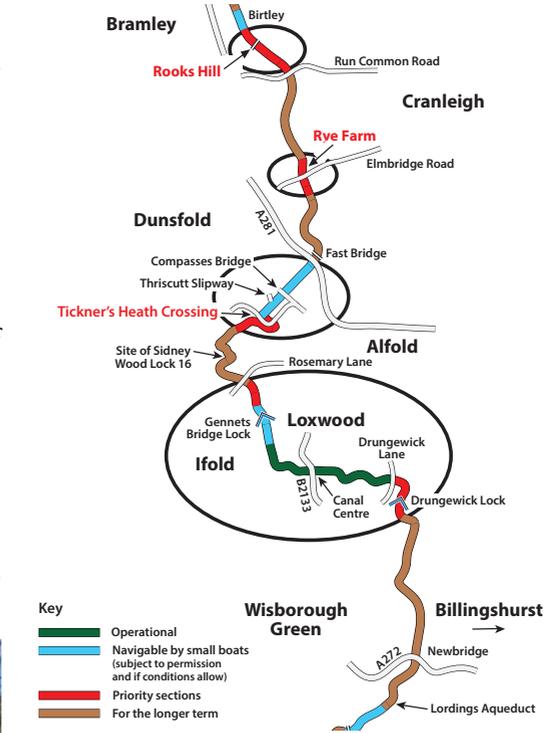
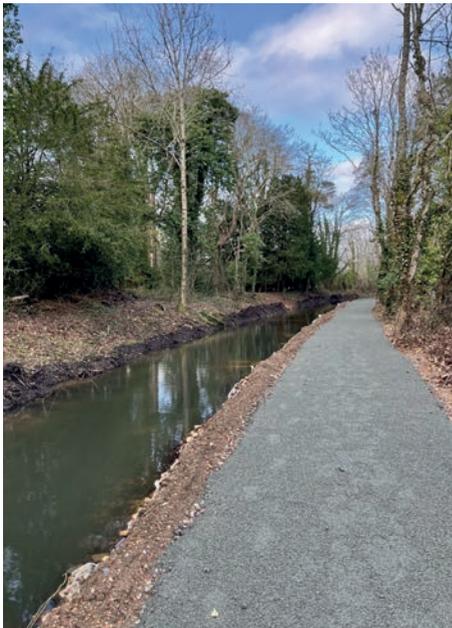
## Priority projects update

Our four priority areas we report on Rooks Hill, Rye Farm at Cranleigh and Tickner's Heath Crossing at Dunsfold, each of which have their own detailed articles in this issue.

### Rye Farm

The second part of the project – creating a new bridleway and towpath within the canal's footprint – is now completed. This further southern section takes the bridleway diversion closer to the Elmbridge Road, making Rye Farm (which retains the use of the old path) able to become more private and secure.

A deep sub-surface structure running across the new bridleway's route, possibly a pipe of unknown purpose, was detected by a pre-construction CAT scan. As a precaution, a short length therefore had to forego the normal staking-in of the aggregate bags that comprise the bulk of the new work – they were secured there by a different non-penetrative technique. In January, the final surface finish was laid (granite chippings) in compliance with Surrey County Council's Rights-of-Way standards.



*The new Rye Farm towpath & bridleway : On the ground and from the air*

## Tickner's Heath Crossing

Building the new bridge to take Dunsfold Road over the new course of the canal first requires the existing road there to be diverted to create a traffic-free worksite. The new bridge will be professionally built, but our volunteers are first laying the diversion. Work is under way on the new temporary road and its associated drainage.

## Rooks Hill



As the pictures show, there has been rapid progress in building the new bridge, excavating the new canal cut south to near the site of Fanesbridge Lock and relocating the outfall of the culvert under the canal. As we were going to print the formwork for the bridge deck (see p17) was being installed and it is planned to pour the concrete deck in February. Structural engineer Nigel Yarwood explains:

‘Our canal’s original bridges and aqueducts, some of which survive, were either all brick or (especially at the south end of the canal), a combination of brick and stone. Few, if any, bridges are constructed entirely of brickwork these days. Replacement road bridges are clearly concrete structures. They need a level deck and are unavoidably modern in appearance, although the severity of the Loxwood Bridge by the Onslow Arms is mitigated with brick parapets and the Compasses Bridge has brick-faced abutments.

‘We could never build an all-brick bridge at Rooks Hill, given both the high labour content and the limited resources available to construct the relatively complex brickwork and associated centring required to form the arch. (Even when the arch was historically formed from brickwork, concrete backing was often added to increase the load carrying capacity. An example of this can be seen where the Rooks Hill farm track passes over the old railway formation that is now the Downs Link just to the west of the new canal alignment where the complex 19th-century skew brick arch is overlaid with concrete hidden below the gravel track.)

## Rooks Hill - continued



*Bridge abutments with finished brickwork*

‘The new bridge over the reinstated canal at Rooks Hill, while not carrying a public highway, is a continuation of the farm track and bridleway, and is required to support a 40-tonne vehicle. We are not seeking to duplicate an original bridge here, as we are replacing a more humble swing bridge (see *Wey-South 211*). The external appearance of the bridge is aimed to echo rather than replicate the appearance of the original bridges on the canal as designed and built by Josias Jessop,



*Brickwork for the culvert outfall*

with a featured brick-faced structure including a shallow arch between vertical abutments. In this respect it matches the bridge at Gennets Bridge Lock that we built in 2013 and it reuses that bridge’s original constructional arch formwork system. To give the traditional appearance, brickwork features such as the arch rings, string course, piers and pilasters are incorporated.

‘Behind the brickwork cladding, which is non-structural, lies a concrete structure which has mass (unreinforced) concrete foundations and abutments and a reinforced concrete deck above. This form was devised to make the construction as straightforward and economical as possible for us. We hoped that the foundations and abutments would be constructed during a summer camp, and they were. The simplicity of the mass concrete form meant that it could be constructed rapidly without dealing with the intricacies of fixing reinforcement which would have required specific skills.

## Rooks Hill - continued



*Scaffolding ready to support the bridge deck formwork*

‘One disadvantage of cladding a structure with brickwork is the need for accurate adherence to multiples of brick dimensions in all directions. The formwork design and detailing were challenging, although most of the preparation could be done before the summer camp. In the event the summer camp was an extraordinary success, with the foundations and abutments being completed in a two-week period. Since the summer, working parties have been placing the brickwork cladding around the abutments, building the wing walls and preparing to construct the reinforced concrete bridge deck which can be achieved at a more leisurely pace using our wide-ranging volunteer skills.

‘The brickwork cladding of the arch span is more complex to the extent that the bricks forming the curved arch will be supported on a curved steel angle cast into the deck and the parapet above is integrated into the reinforced concrete deck in the form of a brick sandwich with concrete and reinforcement between the inner and outer skin anchored into the deck.

‘The four wing walls extending from each corner of the bridge are also quite significant structures, each acting as a retaining structure for the track ramp with parapet walls matching into the bridge parapet. These also have mass concrete foundations and with a wide brick sandwich hiding lightly reinforced concrete - with one wing wall hiding a bat roost cavity.



*Gabion basket filling on new canal wall*

‘The new track was required to meet current bridleway limitations of a maximum 1-in-12 slope even though the original slope was, in parts, steeper. This has required some careful realignment of the track in order to gain approval for the bridleway diversion.

‘On the south side of the bridge, the new course of the canal veers towards its original alignment where it runs over Ridings Brook which is retained within its original brick culvert. The east bank of the canal needs to be vertical to achieve this realignment and the design has made use of pre-cast blocks which, like children’s ‘Lego’ bricks, have recesses below and projections above so that an interlocking structure can be quickly formed. Each block is lifted into place using a lifting pin cast into it. The blocks are laid on a concrete base, with concrete poured between them to create a solid structure. The exposed face above the waterline is faced with gabion cages filled with stone to provide a softer exposed edge to the canal.



*New canal side and culvert extension*

‘As the new canal over the culvert is still slightly to the east of its original alignment, the culvert outfall has been extended by 3.5 metres and a substantial new headwall constructed which is brick clad to blend into the surroundings. Much of this was constructed during the summer camp (to avoid anyone being forced to take a rest between concrete pours!’

Those visiting the site on the morning of the Spring Meeting (see page 8) can look forward to seeing the bridge and ramps complete up to deck level with parapets under construction - if the weather permits work to continue until then.



*Exciting times. With bridge deck formwork in place the bridge begins to look like a bridge*

## Supplier support makes a big difference

Our current restoration projects at Rooks Hill and Rye Farm are benefiting from welcome support from local and national businesses. It comes in the form of reduced costs, donations and flexibility with deliveries.



Local builders' merchant GTH Construction Supplies (**GUILDFORD TIPPER HIRE**) has been supplying aggregates to both Rye Farm and Rooks Hill at some very competitive prices. Its drivers have gone above and beyond in getting materials to exactly where we need them on site, to minimize work for our volunteers. Recently, on a particularly cold and snowy day, GTH driver Dan saw how cold our volunteers were and reported back to the GTH manager Richard Claydon, who then sent a whole bag of thermal waterproof gloves on the next delivery that day. A lovely and very welcome gesture.





Concrete deliveries at discounted prices are being provided by **AXTELL**, whose skilled operators have worked with our volunteers to achieve complex concrete pours with the mix-on-site vehicles. For instance, two trucks mixed and poured simultaneously at each end of the Rooks Hill Bridge structure to balance the pressure of the pour.

International brickmaker **WIENERBERGER** has two local brickworks, at Ewhurst and Warnham. Both sites have worked with us to donate bricks for Rooks Hill and puddling clay (as previously reported) for repairs to banks. Phil Smallridge from Wienerberger (right) is seen with volunteer Richard Meinertzhagen on site at Rooks Hill.



Billingshurst-based developer **THAKEHAM** arranged for quotations for us from its supplier base and this has resulted in some great prices for the reinforcing steel used on the Rooks Hill Bridge and the blocks forming the canal banks.

All of this support is very much appreciated, not only helping us reduce costs but also to speed up our restoration efforts. Thank you all.

# Keeping the canal in water

*Wey-South* spoke to our director John Reynolds

## Why do we suffer from water shortages in the five-lock navigable section from Southland Lock to the winding hole just below Drungewick Lock?

Apart from some discharges, land drains and run-off, there is no natural water supply to this navigable section. We depend mainly on pumping water up from local rivers and then using the locks' back pumps to regulate each pound's water level. Those pumps also compensate for lock operations.

Regardless of whether we can pump or how many boat movements take place, we cannot avoid water loss from evaporation, from trees and other vegetation taking up water and from periodic leaks.

## How do we get water into the canal?

We have two permanent river pumps, one lifting water into the canal from the Arun below Drungewick Lock and another further north on its tributary the Lox between Brewhurst and Baldwin's Knob Locks. These are electronically controlled. Our pumping licence from the Environment Agency (EA) specifies the metered volume that we can extract.

Our licence entitlement is then interruptible by the EA when rainfall is low or non-existent, usually in the summer when we need the water the most.

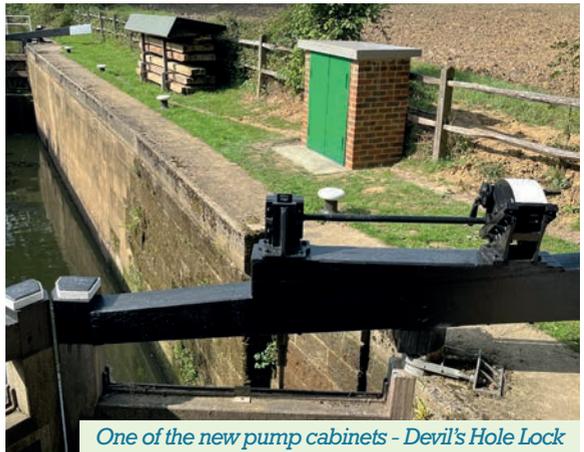
Naturally, we have to try to maintain a sufficient water level for boat trips. We are also conscious of the needs of wildlife - particularly fish, as the oxygen levels in the water diminish with a rise in temperature, so more water may be needed.

## How do we maintain the water levels in each pound between the locks?

Each lock is fitted with an electric back pump which can be activated when sensors above and below each lock register that the level has dropped. Water can be pumped from below the lock concerned back up to the pound above it. Following the criminal damage a few years ago, the controls for each pump were upgraded and housed in more secure brick cabinets. The level sensors were renewed.

## Is the back pumping automatic?

Yes and no. When the canal is full, the pumps are set to back pump automatically at a lock after a boat has passed through. (A lockful of water has to be recovered, regardless of whether the boat is ascending or descending, and a typical out-and-back boat trip means two passages of any lock). When pumping from the rivers is restricted, we carefully activate the lock pumps manually, depending on which sections we decide to preserve for trips. Normally this means reducing water levels at each end of the navigation so as to be able to run shorter trips from Loxwood. This is a time-consuming process, as a



*One of the new pump cabinets - Devil's Hole Lock*

judgement must be made on where and how much water is needed in each location. The pumps cannot be switched on and off remotely.

### **Are there financial implications?**

We have to pay the Environment Agency for the water we abstract from the rivers. Then there's the cost of the electricity to operate the pumps. Like all our equipment, the pumps have to be maintained. We incurred a substantial repair and replacement cost following the 2023 criminal damage incident.

### **How can we minimise pumping while maximising boat trips?**

Dredging is important. This creates sufficient depth for the boats to operate. If silt is allowed to accumulate, the canal can store less water despite any rainfall and therefore loses sufficient depth for boat operation more quickly in any subsequent drought. Obviously, we can only dredge to the depth of the clay lining of the canal bed. No lock gate is a perfect seal, so we must carefully maintain the gates and paddles.

### **Why then is the canal always in water around Birtley and at the Dunsfold summit level?**



*Dredging the canal at Baldwin's Knob Lock*

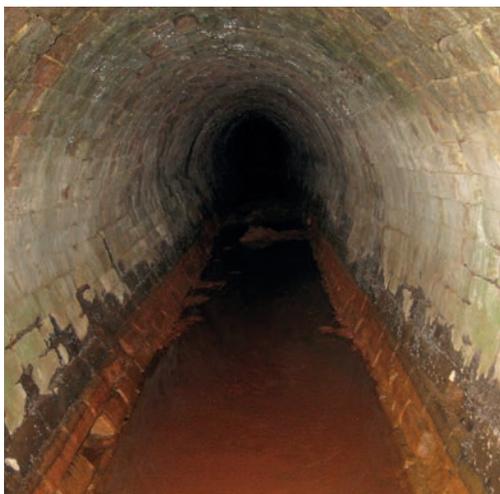
The Birtley section (including our new extension to Rooks Hill) benefits from natural springs. The Dunsfold summit, being in a shallow cutting, has run-off from Dunsfold Park and also a feeder stream near Farnhurst Bridge. Neither of these locations currently has loss from lock operations to contend with. They both begin and end with water-tight physical barriers as opposed to permeable lock gates.

### **Do streams and ditches discharge into the canal?**

Yes, in several places, but they were not the canal's main source of water. We created a discharge ourselves from the fishing lakes to the east of Bonfire Hanger. As the canal is not yet navigable there, it does not currently benefit the navigable section to the south.

The Arun Navigation section which predates the main canal received some discharges and, of course, the Lordings waterwheel used the flow of the Arun to drive a bucketed wheel to lift water from the river up into the canal.

## Keeping the canal in water continued



*Inside Gennets Wood culvert*

### **In the canal's early days what was its main water supply?**

The summit level was fed from a distant reservoir known as the Vachery Pond. The creation of the long summit pound was a late change to the plans for the canal when Alfold had to be bypassed because of local objections. Our engineer Josias Jessop made a virtue of a necessity by having the summit pound dug out for a water depth two feet more than necessary for navigation, in effect creating an additional linear reservoir.

It seems that these measures were never fully satisfactory, since wind-driven devices were trialled (unsuccessfully) in the canal's busier early years to pump water to the pound above, at Fanesbridge and Rowly locks.

### **Were other methods of supplying water to the canal considered?**

Yes. The canal's Act permitted the building of stationary steam engines for pumping. This never happened. The Act also entitled the canal's builders to intercept watercourses within 2,000 yards from any point of the canal. It does not appear that this power was used to create any long supply channels.

### **As well as building a new bridge at Rooks Hill, we are also renovating a culvert that runs under the canal. Why is that water culverted away rather than used to supply water to the canal?**

There are several such culverts passing under the canal. Presumably the water level in the ditches and streams that were culverted was never above the height of the canal at a point sufficiently close to the canal to make it possible or worthwhile to feed the canal.



*Lordings Waterwheel with aqueduct in the background*

### Could we build a reservoir today? If so, where?

We have looked at this, but there is no current plan. It would not have to be at the summit level, as the need for the next few years will be confined to the Loxwood area. Indeed, it need not be above the level of the canal, as we can pump, but a reservoir by the Lox would not be permitted if it interfered with the functioning of the river's flood plain. But never say 'never'!

### Could water be piped to Loxwood from our 'virtual reservoir' – the Dunsfold summit pound?

Yes, in theory, but it would be a very long and expensive pipe, over or below ground that is not within our control. Additionally, the supply during any given season would be finite, and its abstraction could adversely affect any separate future summit level trip operations.

We therefore have to operate with the water resource available to us. Climate change is working against us, with prolonged dry spells diminishing the water we have and restricting our restocking. This has increasingly confined our tripboat operations to early and late season.

### Can we have too much water as well as not enough?

Yes. The canal has several overflow weirs to control the level when there is an abundance of rainfall. Our Rooks Hill project includes building such an overflow for the future canal. Without these weirs, at worst the canal bank could be washed away and at best the lock gates could be overtopped, an event that does in fact occur from time to time if the weirs cannot cope.

The Lox, in heavy rain, will rise and flood into the canal. With the river and canal at the same height when this happens, the overflows are redundant and tonnes of silt can be deposited into the canal, requiring dredging to regain navigable depth.



*Near Drungewick, the canal (left) overflows via a weir into the flooded Lox. Only a few hundred yards away, in the Loxwood direction, the flow was the other way. 16th Jan 2026*

## Some of our Yesterdays

*The Wey-South team continue our occasional series, looking back at our reporting in older editions, and in other publications. First, a question from our last edition is answered.*

### The Three Men

On this page of our October 2025 *Wey-South* we included a picture of three volunteers working at Tannery Lane Bridge near Bramley, Surrey 44 years ago. Thanks to David Ball, Alan Johnson and Malcolm Saker we can now identify them.

On the left and partially obscured is Bill Thomson. Bill's canal biography is long and distinguished. He joined in 1978 and edited *Wey-South* from 1980 to 1987, then again from 1991 to 1999, when he took on *Working Party News*. Later it was "back to the future" for Bill when he returned for a third stint as *Wey-South* Editor in 2010-11 after the sudden death of Tim Jolly. At about the same time, Bill returned to *Working Party News* which he compiled until 2019.



*Who are these three men? Solved!*

In the middle of the group is Keith Ellis who joined in 1975 and became our Restoration Manager in 1977. He attended nearly every working party in the late 1970s. Later he was our Fundraising Manager and took charge of paper recycling which was an important source of income in those days. Keith worked on the conversion of the narrowboat *Zachariah Keppel* to a tripboat in 1993-4 and for many years was "Last Man" for the Poddle sponsored walk. Sadly Keith died in 2003 at the early age of 61.

The volunteer doing actual work in the picture, patching the brickwork, is Jim Rendell. His name is very much associated with the restoration of Rowner Lock, which culminated in the



first passage of a boat through a restored lock on our canal in 1982. In the lower picture Jim is operating the paddle in the foreground. Richard Lamey is in the boat *Aeneas* which was built by Jim Rendell, and Joy Wood is holding the rope. Jim was the first winner of the Jack King Cup (the "Eager Beaver" award) for exceptional effort by a volunteer. His career on the canal was short as he moved to Yorkshire in the early 1980s.

## W&A Enterprises Ltd - 1995 to 2025

*As mentioned in the AGM report (see page 4), our Board has decided that our subsidiary, W&A Enterprises Ltd, that has operated our boat trips and sold our merchandise is no longer necessary. From 2026 onwards all trading income will go directly into the Trust, leaving the company dormant. What then is the 30-year history of the company and why did we have it?*

A fascinating book “*The Wey-South Project* (the history of the Wey & Arun Canal restoration from 1966 to 2009)”, by our former Hon. Secretary John Wood MBE, reveals that in April 1995 :

‘....the Trust’s trading company, W&A Enterprises Ltd, (also known as WAEL) was registered formally and would commence operations as soon as possible. ....The new company took over the Trust’s sales stock and would be also responsible for the commercial side of the trip-boat operation.’

Seven years later it’s clear things were going well as John continued :

‘We had been looking into the possibility of the Trust becoming registered for VAT. .... both the Trust and the trading arm .... It was possible to backdate claims for the refunding of VAT paid, to the 1st January 2002. This gave the Trust a very useful injection of cash, just when it was so badly needed, for the completion of Drungewick Aqueduct.”

Writing about the year 2006 we get an idea of the importance and success of WAEL from the final sentence of this extract :

‘....WAEL were now considering how best to go about having a trip boat that could accommodate 53 passengers, a typical coach-load. With *Zachariah Keppel* being limited to just 30 passengers, it was becoming more and more obvious that a larger boat was really necessary. At this stage WAEL was considering lengthening ZK by some 10ft at a cost of around £10k. A new engine was needed as well, to replace the original 1970 3-cylinder Lister and likely to cost £5k. WAEL could fund all this work from its own resources at this time.’

The debate about this issue eventually lead to Peter Flatter, chairman of the Wiggonholt Association and based in the village of that name, raising and, together with an anonymous donor, donating the funds to buy a longer boat the following year, which of course was named in honour of that Association. We bought a new engine for *Zachariah Keppel*, using funds from boat trips.

Regulations move on though and, in a nutshell, current rules allow a charity at our income level to engage in trading activities without having a separate trading company. Furthermore “primary purpose” trading does not count against the trading limit - and we now believe that the majority of boat trips are primary purpose for us as they promote the use of the canal for recreation, etc. in line with our objectives. We will no longer have to prepare two sets of annual accounts, nor have two governing Boards so the closure of the trading company should only help to streamline the organisation.



## Elmbridge to Fastbridge canal walkthrough

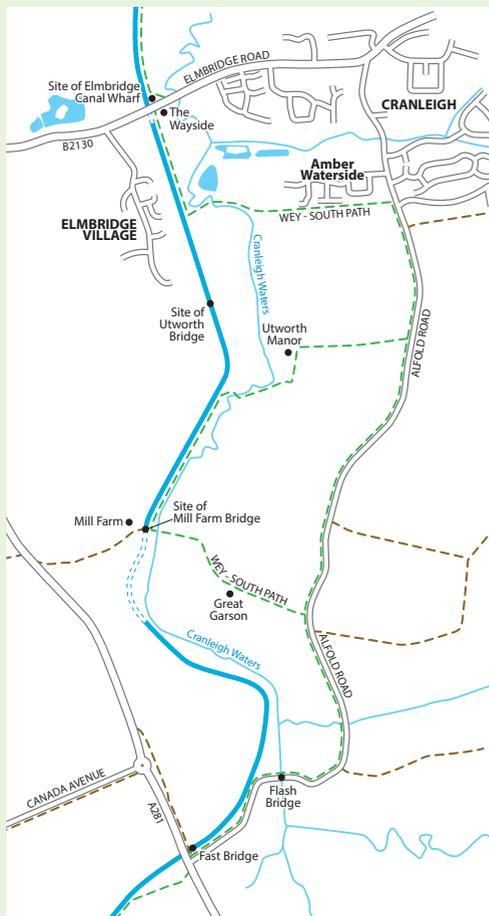


*“The Wayside” ahead on right*

Running roughly between the A281 Guildford-Horsham Road and Alfold Road, this section of the canal’s 5-mile Summit Level is generally intact but less than half of the towpath is accessible on public rights of way. If you follow the Wey-South Path you will find yourself zigzagging between Alfold Road and the canal towpath.

To reach the starting point at Elmbridge you can take bus 24 from Guildford or Cranleigh to Elmbridge Village, a relatively new retirement village right next to the canal route. If you bring a car you should be able to park it somewhere between Elmbridge and the start of Alfold Road, but you will want to park well clear of the single-track section of Elmbridge Road (B2130) where the original canal bridge was.

In about 1860, the canal superintendent moved to the house which is now “The Wayside” on the south side of the road next to the canal bridge. The Wey-South Path route starts by going through a short section of the private garden at “The Wayside” (walkers are permitted to use this entrance). Because of the road traffic you need to be extremely cautious as you pick your moment to leave the pavement on the north side of





*An unusual beginning for a walk !*



*Above - Footbridge over Cranleigh Waters near Amber Meadows  
Below - Utworth Manor*

the road, cross the road and open the wooden gate on the other side (see picture above). On your right you will see that the canal route has been infilled for a short distance, but not in a way that will pose a major engineering challenge for future restoration. The real challenge is to restore navigable depth under Elmbridge Road, where a new bridge is needed.

As you continue straight ahead, carefully closing all gates behind you, you will soon find yourself on the towpath of the canal for about 200 yards, then you reach a fence and you need to turn left to go across the Cranleigh Waters on a footbridge then along the edge of the Amber Meadows housing development to emerge on Alfold Road. Now you have to turn right and follow Alfold Road for over ½ mile until you reach the entrance to Utworth Manor on the right (take care – there is no pavement). Go along the Utworth Manor drive, which is a public bridleway. In front of the large house, turn left through the gate and follow the right-hand hedge until you reach a gap in the hedge and a footbridge over the Cranleigh Waters. Cross the bridge and the canal is ahead of you – follow the towpath to the left as far as Mill Farm.



At Mill Farm there was an original canal bridge which is now a causeway. To follow the Wey-South Path you need to turn left (if you turn right you can follow a footpath through Mill Farm to the A281 and beyond towards Dunsfold). On the Wey-South Path you almost immediately cross the Cranleigh Waters on a brick bridge that looks very much like a canal bridge (see opposite page). Keep straight ahead along the right-hand edge of two fields and you reach Great Garson

driveway that eventually leads back to Alfold Road.



*Above and below - the canal between Mill Farm and Utworth Manor, both looking north*

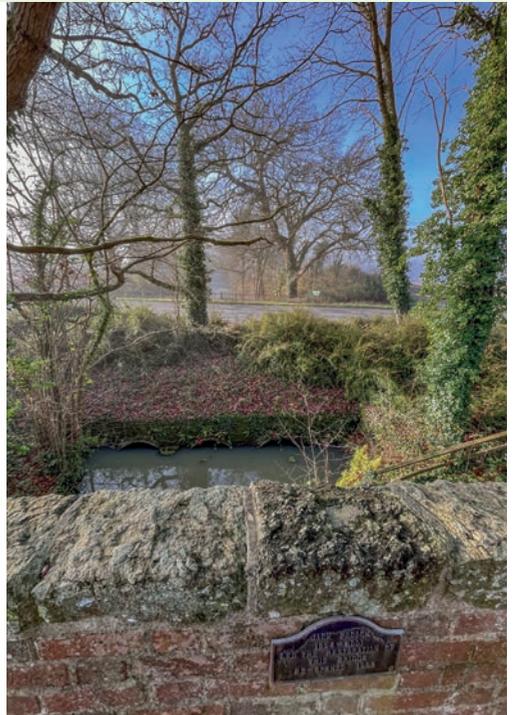


On Alfold Road turn right and follow the road to the A281 at Fast Bridge. After you cross the Cranleigh Waters (again!) at Flash Bridge, Alfold Road runs immediately alongside the canal for some distance. At Fast Bridge you will be able to admire the original canal bridge which is alongside the A281 canal causeway. Volunteers led by Jack Pocock restored the canal bridge in the early 1990s and you will notice that there is a towpath under the bridge, as there also is at the next bridge, Farnhurst. It is usually possible to park near the junction of Alfold Road and the A281 or if you check the timetable carefully bus 42 passes Fast Bridge on its winding journey between Cranleigh and Guildford.

If you wish to continue following the canal route you can very carefully cross the A281 and stay on the Wey-South Path to The Three Compasses pub and beyond. We covered this section in our March 2024 issue (*Wey-South* 206).



*Above - Mill Farm Cranleigh Waters bridge Below - Left - Great Garson House  
Right - Fast Bridge with the A281 causeway behind and the original canal bridge in the foreground*



## Meet the volunteer Caroline Roberts

Caroline is our grants specialist, obtaining funding for our projects.  
*Wey-South spoke to her.*



### How and when did you get involved with the canal?

As with many people, my interest in canals started several years ago with canal boating holidays. I came across our website by chance in 2023. I saw how much restoration had been done but also how much more there was still to do. My background is planning, finance and construction and with my business interests becoming less time-consuming, I wondered if I could help with restoring the canal as a heritage asset to be enjoyed by all.

### What happened?

I said I would have a go at fundraising by making applications to funding bodies for grants for specific projects along the canal. This seemed to be a good fit for my skills. I have built on the work of many predecessors, developing relations with grant providers.

### Do you work in isolation?

No, I am one of several involved with fundraising. I also liaise with the team involved in the planning and construction of projects, to understand what will be coming forward for fundraising and when.

### How do you operate?

Once a project has been identified and well before it starts, I investigate potential funding sources. The larger projects that we are hopeful of undertaking often require planning consent, and only once this has been granted (often after many months or years), can we make applications to funding bodies. Funders require significant information regarding the project proposed, namely a detailed description of the project, the project programme, competitive quotations for the various elements and often justification on why they should award monies to us rather than anyone else.

## **Do funders look favourably on our applications?**

The fact that our volunteers provide most of the labour on a fundable project is a significant benefit when funders are considering providing assistance. In almost all cases, however, we still need to provide an element of the financial input, typically 10% - 25% of the project cost, as a mark of our commitment. Our canal's recreational and environmental benefits fit well with local plans.

## **Where do you go for grants?**

My focus to date has been with parish councils and other government organisations - but most significantly with Waverley Borough Council.

## **Why is Waverley Borough Council so important for funding?**

The canal passes through four Districts (Waverley, Guildford, Horsham and Chichester). A major source of funding administered by district councils is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is paid by developers of new properties. This has to be used for infrastructure projects in each council area. Most of our current projects are in the Waverley Borough Council area and we are a registered infrastructure provider with Waverley.

## **What projects have been funded recently?**

In 2024 we received £40,779 CIL funding from Waverley BC for the upgrade to the towpath at Bonfire Hanger. Alford Parish Council also contributed a further £5,000 to this project. Loxwood Parish Council gave us £10,000 to help with rectifying the cost of the criminal damage in the Loxwood area.

In 2025 we received three grants for the purchasing of equipment - one from Loxwood Parish Council for £19,300 and two from DEFRA's 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' scheme totalling nearly £12,000. Our 'protected landscape' is the Surrey Hills 'National Landscape' (a new term for an 'area of outstanding natural beauty'). Some of the northern part of the canal's route is already within the area covered, and more is scheduled to be added shortly. DEFRA funding is offered for nature recovery, mitigating climate change, public participation and enjoyment and landscape improvements.

## **What are we seeking to fund in 2026?**

I have recently submitted an application to Waverley BC for CIL funding towards Phase 2 at Rooks Hill – the new length of canal back to Birtley. Our delivery of the CIL-funded Bonfire Hanger Towpath project – on time and on budget – should I hope show us in a favourable light!

We have made a further 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' bid, this time towards a new section of towpath at Birtley, where the decision is expected in early 2026.

## **What else is on the horizon?**

Our four Districts are soon to become three, as Waverley and Guildford borough councils are to be merged, with others, into the new West Surrey Council, a 'unitary' body that combines functions previously split between County and District councils. CIL funding for schemes north of Loxwood will soon be decided by the new authority. We do not expect major changes in the short term, but we may be in competition with many more applicants, albeit for a share of a much larger 'pot'. Apart from CIL there are many other funders to approach over the next year or so, once other projects have been identified.

## Restoration and Maintenance News

Ten teams of volunteers are out most weeks, restoring the canal and maintaining what we've restored. They're backed by the Tickner's Depot volunteers. Come and join us!

The full story of these efforts is recorded monthly in *Working Party News* – see under 'News' on our website – or send an email to [support@weyarun.org.uk](mailto:support@weyarun.org.uk) to receive an electronic version. *Working Party News* lists the contacts for each team.

### New hedges for the towpath...

Towpath hedges attract birds, small mammals, reptiles and insects; kept low, they offer views over the adjoining farmland. They also protect the towpath where they remove the shade of higher straggly growth which, without regular sunshine, prevents the surface from drying out, resulting in a morass of ruts and puddles from its constant use. Any stone 'top-coat' disappears into the underlying Wealden clay. Then, when summer warmth finally arrives, the surface petrifies into uncomfortable corrugations – until it dissolves again in the winter.



So walkers (as well as birds and butterflies) will be pleased to read that the Hedgelaying Team has now completed a two-winter project to lay a long length of hedging near Drungewick Aqueduct.

### .. and new stock for a new hedging project

Hedging needs stakes and binders, typically from the coppicing of hazel wood. We are fortunate that we have access to several privately-owned woodlands near the canal for this. The owners kindly allow us to come every decade or so to cut, trim and remove the hazel, preserving an ancient landscape use despite coppicing being otherwise no longer a viable commercial crop. The horizontal binders are most easily worked when freshly cut, so planned hedging at the Rooks Hill site resulted in recent work in a hazel wood at Devil's Hole, resulting in 320 stakes and a similar number of binders, enough for about 140m of new hedge.

The team coppices the hazel down to ground level. The cut stool that remains is covered with a wigwam of hazel to protect future regrowth from the unwanted attention of deer. Bonfires of trimmings are kept to a minimum. This 'good practice' by our Hedgelaying Team helps ensure a successful new crop in years to come, leaving the landowner with a tidy site in the meantime.

### Saturday jobs

The new Saturday Group under Stephen David attacked three projects at the Depot in November and December. New screening mesh on the site's back mesh fence now shields the depot's contents from prying eyes on the road. With the hydraulic log splitter, a pile of tree-trunk rounds was literally reduced to firewood. Next, an assortment of piping, pumps and small machinery was cleared out of a hut in which scaffolding shelving was then erected, for the items to be rehoused in better order.

There was more log-splitting a month later, although that was 'Plan B', some intended work at Tickner's Crossing having been frustrated by weather and logistics. Building on November's success, miscellaneous hand tools were emptied from a forlorn container at the Depot, sorted into 'keep' and 'dump', with the 'keepers' returned to the container's new shelving. There is now no shortage of hammers or brick trowels.

The Saturday Group is targeted at volunteers who cannot attend weekday working groups, but all are welcome. Stephen plans for it to meet on every second Saturday of the month. For more information, contact him at [stephen.david@weyarun.org.uk](mailto:stephen.david@weyarun.org.uk)

## Ingeniously makeshift photography



The Northern Working Party used a remote camera on a long lead to examine the condition of two normally inaccessible structures. Gosden Aqueduct, a rare original surviving structure, took the canal over Cranleigh Waters between Shalford and Bramley. Its shallow arches are too low for a necessary direct inspection of their condition, so the camera was floated under them on a radio-controlled amphibious model vehicle. Some excavation was needed to give access to the river for the dory. Previously, much vegetation had been cleared from and near the aqueduct by the Midweek Working Party in anticipation of inspecting it.

The same technique was applied at the culvert under the canal's route at Rooks Hill. It would be fruitless to have restored its outfall, as we have done, without also checking its innards. The camera, this time on a remote-controlled 'car', penetrated 25 metres to find the culvert's internal structure to be good, with a clear and free-flowing invert, more than 200 years after its construction.

## Dammed if you do...

Brian King's Thursday Group has continued the reinstatement of the temporary dams in the canal bed at Bonfire Hanger. These three barriers between Gennets Bridge Lock and Rosemary Lane will retain enough water from rainfall and inflow to give the cosmetic appearance of how a restored canal in a flight of locks might one day appear.

Each existing dam structure has new metal channels to hold the stop planks. These are supplemented with a waterproof membrane, two metres wide, which has been dug in to a depth of a metre. Machinery could not be used, so six cubic metres of soil had to be excavated by hand.



## Register

We have been saddened to hear of the deaths of ...

### Vanessa Lamey



Our deep sympathy goes to Richard Lamey on the sad loss of Vanessa. Vanessa's health had not been good recently but she still attended most of our meetings in her wheelchair. Vanessa and Richard met in the early 1980s and Richard quickly introduced Vanessa to the canal (Richard was a professional structural engineer). The *Wey-South* announcement of their son's birth read "We hope this event will cement their relationship into a concrete form, and their family will continue to aggregate through the sands of time." Vanessa was a superb organiser who took charge of catering for countless canal events. She also masterminded a series of Christmas Dinners at the Norfolk Arms in Arundel and ran our travelling sales stand, along with other fundraising schemes. Vanessa was one of the pioneers whose enthusiasm got us to where we are today.

### Anthony Woolhouse

In 2001 we had a huge stroke of luck when Anthony Woolhouse agreed to join our Board. Not yet aged 50, he had an impressive record of achievement that included several other significant directorships. At the time Anthony worked for the University of Surrey, encouraging the creation of private-sector enterprises linked to the university. Consultants recommended transforming our Local Authorities Liaison Group (LALG) into a Canal Completion Strategy Steering Group (CCSSG). Anthony became the group's first Chairman and commissioned the Atkins Canal Completion Report that was to guide our thinking for many years to come.



Anthony was a superb diplomat with a quietly authoritative manner and a gift for persuasion. He achieved the almost unbelievable feat of talking all our six local authorities, plus the Environment Agency, into contributing financially to the report. Beside his strategic work, Anthony was an enthusiastic boater who applied his energy to boosting our special boat events, such as Santa Cruises. Sadly for us, in 2007 Anthony took a new job managing the estate of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and had to leave our Board. Shortly afterwards his family home moved to Lymington, Hampshire. He continued his energetic involvement in charitable and environmental causes.

Anthony died in late 2025 and we remember him with great respect and affection.

### Rod Smith



Boat Group members have been sad to hear of the death of Rod Smith. Better known as "Captain Rodders", Rod was a dedicated and highly respected member of our boat skipper team. He often captained *Wiggonholt* at our most high-profile events and entered fully into the festive spirit with appropriate dress. He handled the boat meticulously, with great expertise and at an unhurried pace.

## Len Milsom

We have learned of the death of Len Milsom. The opening of the Loxwood High Street Crossing in 2009 was a triumphant milestone for us, but at the time not everyone was totally happy. Many Loxwood residents were not keen on the metal parapets on the sides of the bridge. Without going into detail, it was a complicated problem. The road to an acceptable solution was smoother thanks to the fact that Len was a central member of the Loxwood Society, the local conservation group, and also an active Boat Group volunteer, so he could see both sides of the question very clearly. We remember Len's contribution with gratitude.

### Membership report

30 new members have joined us in the last 5 months, taking our total membership to 2,736. We would like to extend a very warm welcome to the following new members.

<i>Richard Marston</i>	<i>Jonathan Best</i>	<i>Derek &amp; Mary Tempest</i>	<i>Rodney &amp; Kathleen Harvey</i>
<i>Sarah &amp; Doug Chambers</i>	<i>Ellesha Harris</i>	<i>Davinder Raju</i>	<i>Subpreet Dhillon-Raju</i>
<i>Paul &amp; Gill Thompson</i>	<i>Macer Durrant</i>	<i>Dave Johnstone</i>	<i>Laura Cameron</i>
<i>Deborah &amp; Mark Rees</i>	<i>Gillian &amp; Philip Spencer</i>	<i>Richard &amp; Chloe Benson</i>	<i>Richard Gray</i>
<i>Justin Avern</i>	<i>Richard &amp; Jean Etheridge</i>	<i>Tim &amp; Katie Weeks</i>	<i>Hamish &amp; Gwen Cameron-Blackie</i>

We have learned with regret of the death of:

<i>Michael Dickson</i>	<i>BK Timms</i>	<i>Len Milsom</i>	<i>GRA Armistead</i>
<i>Peter Nelson</i>	<i>Raymond Queded</i>	<i>Anthony Harrow</i>	<i>Anthony Woolhouse</i>
<i>Robert Sherwin-Smith</i>	<i>Jeremy Watts</i>	<i>Paul Newell</i>	<i>Rod Smith</i>
<i>Josephine Rowling</i>	<i>Bill Bevington</i>	<i>Mary Davis</i>	<i>Pim Sierks</i>
<i>Tony Barron</i>	<i>Andrew Parrott</i>	<i>Timothy Warner</i>	<i>Vanessa Lamey</i>

The more members we have, the stronger our voice in discussions with local authorities and other stakeholders. Please tell your family and friends about the canal and recommend joining the Wey & Arun Canal Trust.

John Tovell  
membership@weyarun.org.uk

*Wey-South* is the magazine of the Wey & Arun Canal Trust which 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.

From 2025, *Wey-South* is published in the second week of February, June and October. Please submit copy by the end of December, April and August.

All communications and copy either by post to *Wey-South* at the Office, or by email to [weysouth@weyarun.org.uk](mailto:weysouth@weyarun.org.uk).

Address change, non-delivery, etc: please notify the Membership Secretary at the Office or email to [membership@weyarun.org.uk](mailto:membership@weyarun.org.uk).

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**The Office address (also for Boat Trips, Administration, Accounts and Publicity) is  
The Wey & Arun Canal Trust, Canal Centre, Onslow Wharf, High Street, Loxwood, Billingshurst, RH14 0RD  
Email: [support@weyarun.org.uk](mailto:support@weyarun.org.uk) Tel: 01483 505566**

## **URGENT – £57,000 needed to complete Rooks Hill Phase 1 – please help!**

The Rooks Hill fund now stands at £196,000 including a £30,000 donation from Asda and a donation of 12,000 bricks from Wienerberger valued at £11,000. Cost savings of £33,000 have been identified to reduce the expected costs of Phase 1 to £253,000. This leaves us needing to raise a further £57,000. Our members and supporters have a wonderful record of giving when these big projects come around and many of you have already made generous donations. We are building at pace - we need funds at pace. Will you help us raise the difference? Remember, we are a charity so each £1 of your gift-aided contribution will be worth £1.25 to us. Higher-rate tax-payers receive further tax relief.

### **Group donations welcome**

Donations are also welcome from clubs and other bodies, public and private, that recognise the leisure and conservation benefits we are creating in the area.

**To make your valuable contribution to our Rooks Hill appeal please go to:**

**[weyarun.org.uk/backdrop/rooks-hill-appeal](http://weyarun.org.uk/backdrop/rooks-hill-appeal)**



**Read about our project's progress on page 14 of this magazine**