

Working Party News

No. 366

For WACT Volunteers

August 2024

Editorial

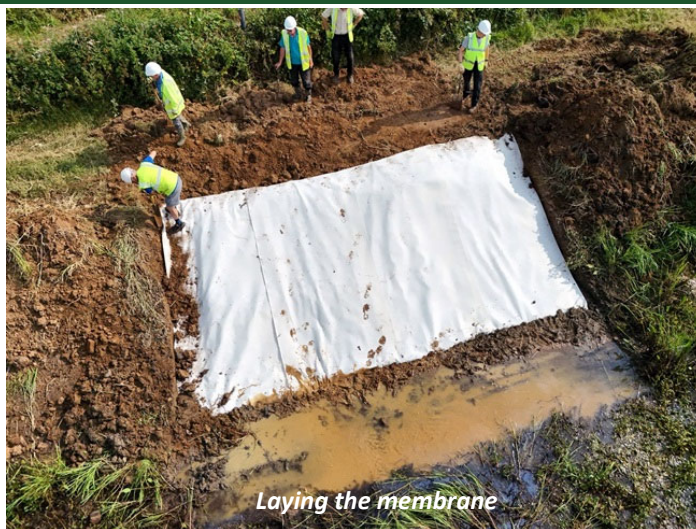
Well, summer has arrived at last with our teams swapping waterproofs and woollies for sunscreen.

We have a new volunteer team, the Saturday Group, led by Jack Walker. If you'd like a bit of exercise on a weekend, get in touch with Jack.

Peter Winter

Eric Walker Group

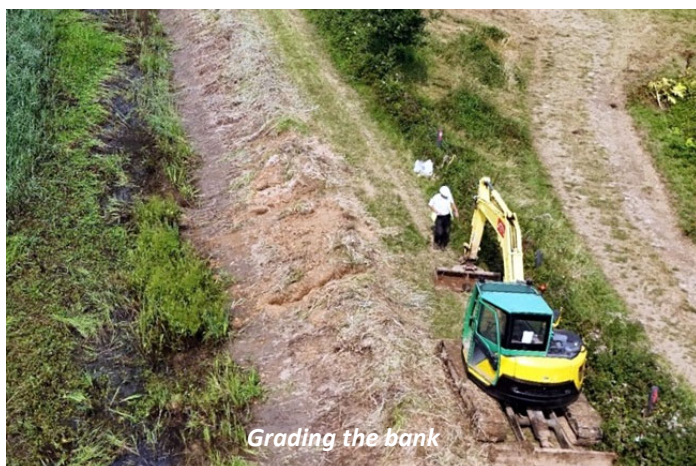
EWG have started the long awaited work on repairing the leaks through the canal bank between Drungewick Bridge and Drungewick Lock into the adjoining Long Meadow field.



Laying the membrane



Covering the membrane



Grading the bank



Sizeable tree trunks removed from the leaking bank

We did extensive work sealing areas of the bank with Bentomat membrane back in September 2021. However, further leaks have developed since then and most appeared to be in the vicinity of a number



Excavating the bank

of tree stumps in the bank. Earlier this year, a group led by Dave Evans, removed the offending stumps and, as you can see from the photographs, some were quite large! There are five areas that need treatment, rang-

ing from seven metres to fifty metres in length, as we intend to fill in all the 'gaps' between the original Bentomat areas with a product called Terraseal.

The aerial photographs (by Robin Gardner) show the process of excavation, membrane seal, final cover and bank grading.

Dennis Gillen

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Tickner's Depot

In last month's missive, I reported that we had a large pile of logs that required splitting, and asked for volunteers. Well, nobody came forward, so I press-ganged a small team from the MWWP to come and help.

In the space of two weeks, one warm but damp underfoot and one of sub-Saharan temperature, we got the majority of them moved, split and stacked. These bays are 28 square metres each and two metres high – that's a lot of logs, and there's still 5 or 6 tons to split.



The log store is getting full

You may have noticed that the roof to the log storage bays has begun to sag a little, something I can relate to, so I have persuaded the Trust to let me put a fixed roof over the bays to give the logs a better chance of staying dry before we 'give them away'.

The new roof will be lowered by about 60cm from its current height and consist of 19 sheets of box profile steel, each one 6 metres (20') in length.

Mark Feeney

Boat Group PEST

PEST patrolled the Loxwood section of the canal on the hottest day of the year so far, so you might notice that more vegetation has been cut in the shady areas of the canal rather than in the sun.

We took *May Upton* from the Canal Centre north as far as Devil's Hole Lock. There is a lot of floating weed in the canal at this time of year and we were able to take out a good quantity but it is an endless task. In addition we cut back some vegetation intruding into the canal and removed a small dead tree that was leaning somewhat precariously towards the canal.

On the outward and return journeys we had assistance with Loxwood Lock from Adam and his team.

John Lee

Northern Working Party

This month, we have had several visits to Drungewick Lock, where we removed the shuttering from the newly poured concrete roof of the brick control cabinet and installed the backboard for the electrical equipment to be fitted. We also finished erecting and painting the post and rail fencing along the towpath side of the lock. The stop planks have all been stacked on the side of the lock opposite the towpath and the site is looking much tidier.



Photo by Keith Lyall

New fencing at Drungewick Lock

Working Party Diary

Every Monday	Monday Group	Contact Tom Close
Every Tuesday (late October to March)	Hedgelaying	Contact Nick Baxter
Every Tuesday and Thursday	Boat Maintenance	Contact John Reynolds
Every Wednesday	Midweek Working Party	Details from Margaret Darvill
Every Thursday	Tickner's Depot	Contact Mark Feeney
Every Wednesday and Thursday	Eric Walker Group	Contact Dennis Gillen
Every Monday and Tuesday	Northern Working Party	Contact Gordon Powell
Every Thursday	Thursday Group	Contact Ian Lower or Brian King
Every Thursday	Dredger Group	Contact Charlie Coxwell
First & Third Friday of the month	PEST Boat Group	Contact Peter Hyem
Second Saturday of the month	Saturday Group	Contact Jack Walker

We have been to Bonfire Hanger where we assisted with the surfacing of the towpath and installed wooden bollards at the Rosemary Lane end of the section. Whilst there, we returned to the footbridge steps that we installed last year and put in some hard standing steps on the field approach to the bridge.

Some damage had been caused to the fairly recently installed bank profiling near Devil's Hole Lock. We removed the damaged section, replaced the posts and coir roll and backfilled to complete the repair.



Photo by David Stevenson

Renovated landing stage at Drungewick Lock

A couple of further days were spent at Drungewick Lock where we removed the rotting planks from the landing stage and replaced them with new timbers.

We have also been on the towpath between Birch Copse and Baldwin's Knob Lock locating buried manhole covers and clearing the ducting in readiness for new electric cabling to be pulled through.

Dave Miller

Dredger Group

Work is continuing on *Pauline's* refurbishment. We started the month by blacking *Pauline's* hull. All completed with the gallant help from Keith Lyall, Rog Ness and Chris Everett. What a team!

The aft bilge area has been cleaned of rust flakes; filling four buckets!



Brian Morgan pressure washing Pauline

A hull thickness survey was carried out by Harry Smith. It was initially thought that the hull was in reasonable condition, bearing in mind it is 50 odd years old and has never been fitted with protective

anodes. However, the survey has highlighted several areas that need attention; some in the near future, some more immediate. The most urgent of these is replating of her weed hatch. In the longer term it has been recommended that when she is next hauled out, of the water in two years' time, the hull is grit-blasted. This will give us a clearer understanding on the areas needed to be strengthened.

Ian James arrived with his welding kit, making good areas of the deck that had corroded away, repairing mooring bollards, fixing on new anodes and patching up holes found in the weed hatch area. Excellent work. Many thanks Ian.

Pauline is now starting to look a bit more presentable and almost ready for a winter's dredging work.



Blacking completed

Next month, we are hoping to replace pivot pins on the excavator's arm and the Panolin hydraulic oil. Panolin is hydroscopic and as such has a recommended life of two years. The current fill has been in both the tug & dredger for at least 5! Once that has been done, she will be ready to launch, provided there is sufficient water over the slipway.

Charlie Coxwell

Thursday Group

For our first outing in July we split into three teams. One team went to Loxwood and fitted new flooring in the cabin area of the workboat *May Up-ton*. The second team joined the Dredger Group at Drungewick Slipway and assisted with blacking the bottom of the dredger *Pauline*. The third team also went to Drungewick and continued with refurbishing the rotten landing stage on the towpath side of the



Photo by Ian Lower

Another refurbished landing stage

canal opposite the slipway. New wooden bearer beams were cut and secured, in readiness for the top planks to be fixed on our next visit. Later in the month we returned to Drungewick and completed the landing stage, which is now much sturdier and available for use again.

We had several visits to Southland Lock. We completed the painting that had been commenced by a visiting school party and recovered the temporary bridge and safety barriers that we had erected several weeks earlier. We attempted to replace a rotten gatepost at the top of the steps at the lock but despite concerted efforts were unable to extricate the old post with our hand tools. It was well concreted in! We will return with a powered breaker to complete the job.



With the prospect of groundworks resuming at Tickner's Crossing in the near future, we went to the site at the end of the month and made a start on cutting down the weeds and generally tidying the area

Brian King & Ian Lower

Midweek Working Party

This month the majority of the volunteers have been cutting up timber in the depot so that we can give our logs away for a donation. These logs all came from the Bonfire Hanger site.

The other big job was clearing the canal at Bonfire Hanger to complement the new path that the Newbury Working Party and WRG have built. The area we have done is looking beautiful now.



Other work that is ongoing is the painting of Haybarn Bridge. It is now looking very smart with the canal green paint. The bridge has been opened and the timber sides now need wood preservative and the bottom struts need painting black. We have also been cutting trees in a neighbouring garden at Tickner's Crossing; good for neighbourhood relations.

A big event was our annual barbecue with volunteers, past and present, and their partners. It was very much enjoyed by all.

Margaret Darvill

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