

For WACT Volunteers

August 2025

No. 378

# Working Party News

## Editorial

The warm, dry summer days continue providing good conditions for our working parties, who as usual have been making great progress in maintaining and restoring the canal. Significant progress is being made at Rooks Hill with help from visiting work groups.

*Peter Winter*

## Northern Working Party

We started the month at Rooks Hill where we poured the concrete for the foundations of the new bridge. Fortunately, the considerable amount of mixed concrete was bulk delivered and pumped directly into the formwork. Amazing to think that the first turf had been cut from the site only 14 days earlier!

The following weeks were spent at Tickner's Depot where we worked on the base for the trailer pad. We levelled and whacked the crushed concrete foundation and, to facilitate the concrete pour, installed shuttering for five bays.



Photo by Keith Lyall

Concrete pour at Rooks Hill Bridge



Photo by Gordon Powell

Preparing the trailer pad at Tickner's Depot

the trench, housing the re-routed water main, and reinstate the footpath approaches to the footbridge.

Following the repairs to the bridge parapet walls at Devil's Hole Lock by EWG, we returned to refit the five bar gate across the public footpath, that had been removed for the duration of the work.



Bricksaw Training

Over several weeks the mixed concrete was delivered and the bays systematically filled and tamped. By the end of the month, concrete had been laid in all five bays, leaving us with just finishing off around the edges to complete the job.

During any down time with the trailer pad, we ventured across the road to Tickner's Crossing where we have begun to backfill



Photo by Dave Stevenson

The reinstalled gate by Devil's Hole Lock

With the winter flooding having caused damage to a section of fencing at Birch Copse compound, we cleared the area and erected a new stock proof fence.

We were fortunate to be able to take advantage of the KESCRG visiting working party at Rooks Hill, when Ed was kind enough to instruct and authorise six of our team on the use of the bricksaw (petrol driven disc cutter) and Ian came over to Tickner's Depot to provide trailer towing instruction to some of the team. It was all very much appreciated.

*Dave Miller*

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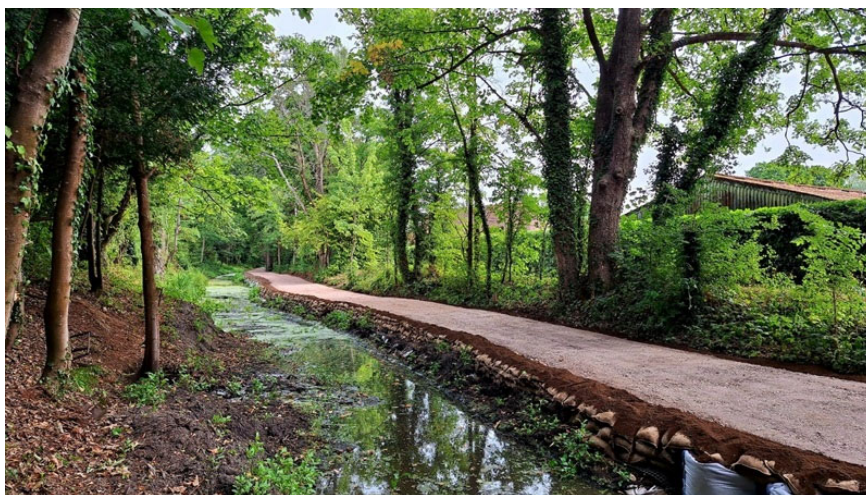


## Eric Walker Group

During this month, the Group completed Phase 1 of the Rye Farm bridleway diversion and very good it looks too.

Work on Phase 2 is planned to start in September, by which time it is expected that MWWP will have removed the obstructing trees from the route that continues northwards towards the road.

Meanwhile, some of the Group have been assisting with the work at Rooks Hill.



*Dennis Gillen*

## Boat Group PEST

Seven of us were available on our first outing in July and we divided into three groups. One group took the work boat *May Upton* up to Devil's Hole Lock clearing vegetation from the non-towpath side and also removing part of a tree from the water. Meanwhile, two of the team spent time on *Wiggonholt* dealing with a battery issue and the other two continued painting the trip boat *Josias Jessop* which is now looking much better.

On the 18th of July four of us spent the day in the hot sun preparing the trip boat *Wiggonholt* for painting. The previous Wednesday the MWWP group had started on this very big job but we were able to finish it. The next stage when the weather is suitable is to start the painting itself.

As I write this we are having heavy prolonged rain so let's hope that for the next PEST outing in August we will be able to take out MU and cut some growth on the non-towpath side.

*John Lee*

## Monday Group

Another busy and warm month. We undertook some tidying up at Compasses and Gennets Bridge Lock and at the latter we did a bit of cutting of the vegetation on the towpath north of the lock.

Apparently, our Chairman has been receiving some feedback about overgrown towpaths, so we set to and, after clearing Drungewick slipway, we turned our attention to the towpath from there to Barnsill Bridge. After two days work the job was done. With the monster mower we started to work towards Drungewick Lock but only got halfway along the towpath as the mower kept breaking down. We really need it for the

## 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 (Monday) Northern Working Party (Tuesday)	Contact David Stevenson Contact Stephen David
Every Thursday	Thursday Group	Contact 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 Margaret Darvill

second half because of the thickness of the grass etc. so we have referred it the mechanical wizards at the depot for repairs. We did manage to trim around Drungewick Lock so there will be less to do next time.

*Nick Wood*

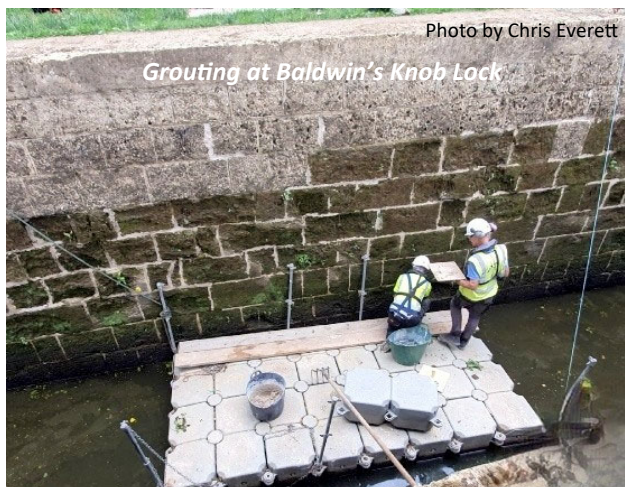
## Thursday Group

All of our outings in July were spent at Baldwin's Knob Lock. Much of the grouting in the chamber walls had eroded and, to assist in preventing water seepage, was in need of replacement. We have continued to rake out most of the old grouting and replace it with a specialist mortar mix.

The landing stage just downstream from the lock had become very unstable. We removed the decking and old timbers and completely dismantled the structure. New Plastecowood post pilings were driven into the canal bed and Plastecowood wood bearer beams installed. New decking boards have been fitted and the landing stage is now functional again.

During the month we were also able to assist with the delivery of firewood logs.

*Brian King*



## The Contact List

Name	Group/Project	Tel	email
Bill Nicholson	Visiting Working Parties	07791 097773	bill57nicholson@gmail.com
Dennis Gillen	Eric Walker Group	07866 583753	dennis.gillen@weyarun.org.uk
Margaret Darvill	Midweek Working Party	01483 894606	margaret.darvill@weyarun.org.uk
Tom Close	Monday Group	07811 534292	thomasdclose@googlemail.com
Mark Feeney	Tickner's Depot Manager	07747 445680	mark.feeney@weyarun.org.uk
Nick Baxter	Hedgelaying		hedgelaying@weyarun.org.uk
David Stevenson	Northern Working Party (Mon)	07506 717717	david.stevenson@weyarun.org.uk
Stephen David	Northern Working Party (Tues)	07757 702970	stephen.david@weyarun.org.uk
Peter Hyem	Boat Group PEST	01403 752393	peter@barscorner1.plus.com
John Reynolds	Boat Maintenance	07540 840549	john.reynolds@weyarun.org.uk
Brian King	Thursday Group	07771 666751	briankingems@gmail.com
Charlie Coxwell	Dredger Group	07786 614708	charlie.coxwell@weyarun.org.uk
Margaret Darvill	Saturday Group	01483 894606	margaret.darvill@weyarun.org.uk
Phil Short	Mobile Display Vehicle	07761 372551	pjshort@hotmail.com
Peter Winter	Working Party News Editor	07722 184117	peter.winter@weyarun.org.uk