

# Working Party News

No. 328

For WACT Volunteers

May 2021

## Editorial

It is great to see so much activity resuming on restoration and maintenance activities and to see preparations in progress for the resumption of boat trips. The dry weather has also been a bonus.

What is not so obvious is that a tremendous amount of work is going on behind the scenes to conduct surveys, prepare the planning applications and draw up the engineering designs so that the restoration work can continue.

Meanwhile, how did you get on with that crossword? I found it a real challenge. You'll find the solution on page three.

*Peter Winter*

## Boat Group PEST

The PEST team were pleased to be back in action in April restarting the work of keeping the navigation clear for our trip boats. On both working days we enjoyed sunny weather and an excellent turnout by the team supplemented by two new members, both with extensive canal boating experience.

This month our priority has been to clear the navigation between Baldwin's Knob Lock to the south and Devil's Hole Lock to the north, in preparation for the restarting of boat trips in May.



Initially the team cleared debris from the water and cut back vegetation on the offside down to BKL. Subsequently the team went up to DHL again clearing the banks to the extent allowed at this time of year and removing debris and floating vegetation from the water.

We can now report that, through the work of the maintenance team,

PEST and other working parties, the navigation that will be used for our boat trips initially is in excellent condition both visually and practically.

Next month we intend to start clearing south of BKL towards the slipway in preparation for the longer trips expected to be run from June or July.

*Chris Jones*

## Mrs Bucket Group

### Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

With an early Easter and despite one & half inches of snow on 12th April, the group met three times in April and continued with the work started before Easter (see April WPN). Accordingly, the group largely concentrated on tidying up the banks and hedges, grass cutting, seat and milestone cleaning at many locations between Drungewick winding hole, the aqueduct site and all the way to Southland Lock. Gennets Bridge Lock also received a visit for mowing and removing the spiral guards on the hedge plants, followed by assisting Kev in the clearance of vegetation south of the lock.

The information post at Lordings Flood Lock was fixed and a litter pick at Newbridge was undertaken. Following the lengthsman's report, the two blocked culverts in Sidney Wood were cleared. Needless to say throughout the month the group was split up into various 'sub working parties' to comply with the rule of six.

There is more milestone and seat cleaning to do in May and our first visit to Malham Lock this year is on the cards.

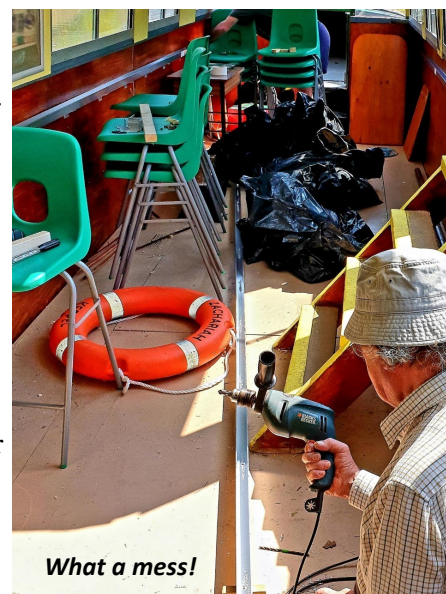
*Nick Wood*

## Boat Maintenance

Now we are back to our regular maintenance again, Peter Hyem and I have been completing work on *Wiggonholt*, painting the for'd and after decks, pumping her out, filling the water tank, and overhauling the wheelchair lift which hasn't been used for over a year.

Meanwhile Ian James, his friend Keith, and Derek Wright have continued fitting the bulkhead rails for the sliding tables on *Zachariah Keppel*. The latter is a long and difficult job which has required ordering up pre-cut Melamine tables, bolting aluminium rails to the hull after removing the plywood hull lining, fitting sliding blocks, and designing and fitting suitable folding legs for the tables.

To add to the general mayhem on ZK, John Reynolds



has been loading up 25kg black bin bags of ballast for the stability survey to be carried out by our team on May 11th, and supervised by an MCA Surveyor. This is the first time that we have been allowed to do this work ourselves and it saves a considerable fee from a commercial professional surveyor.

With all this going on, ZK is in a state of some disorder as can be seen in the photograph. Lifebuoys, the new aluminium railings, chairs, boathooks the punt pole and thirty ballast bags are in a bit of a jumble, with Derek holding an electric drill and looking on thoughtfully.

While all this has been happening, I managed to touch up the engine room paintwork of ZK and repainted the

tiller, keeping well clear of Derek and his work in progress in the saloon.

The other event which is looming up is the commissioning of the WheelyBoat. She is presently lying in the W&A Depot near the Tickner's slipway as shown in the picture. A kind donor has paid for her three-kilowatt electric motor and special battery to suit. A couple of us, with John Reynolds directing, will run trials on the summit level to discover how to commission her, drive her, operate the bow ramp for loading and discharging wheelchairs against Tickner's Slip, and subsequently put her to bed. The exact area of operations, the location of her berth and loading slip on the active part of the canal have yet to be decided.

After that, an operations manual must be written and a team of WheelyBoat skippers trained in her use. An exciting project for this summer's operations.

*David Arnold*

## Hedgelaying

In April, the Team managed to meet three times, albeit with reduced numbers as required for working under the Covid-precautions, finishing off their individual sections of hedge. The very last week consisted of a major clear-up, which entailed collecting all the cut material from this season and dragging it to a fire site beyond the farmer's field; hard work, with a very hot fire on one of the hottest days so far this spring! My thanks to all, and also to Kev Baker for offering to re-hang a section of the stock-fence that we took down to work on the hedge originally, and also for his help with removing three builders bags of old spirals - all greatly appreciated by us.

Next season (October onwards), we intend to finish laying the hedge opposite the Canal Centre. One of the first jobs will be to remove the rabbit spirals - not easy, as they are invariably intertwined by brambles and thorns, and the spirals just break up when touched. In some instances the trees have calloused around broken spirals, meaning that the plastic cannot be removed properly, and weakening the trees. I understand that the hedge was



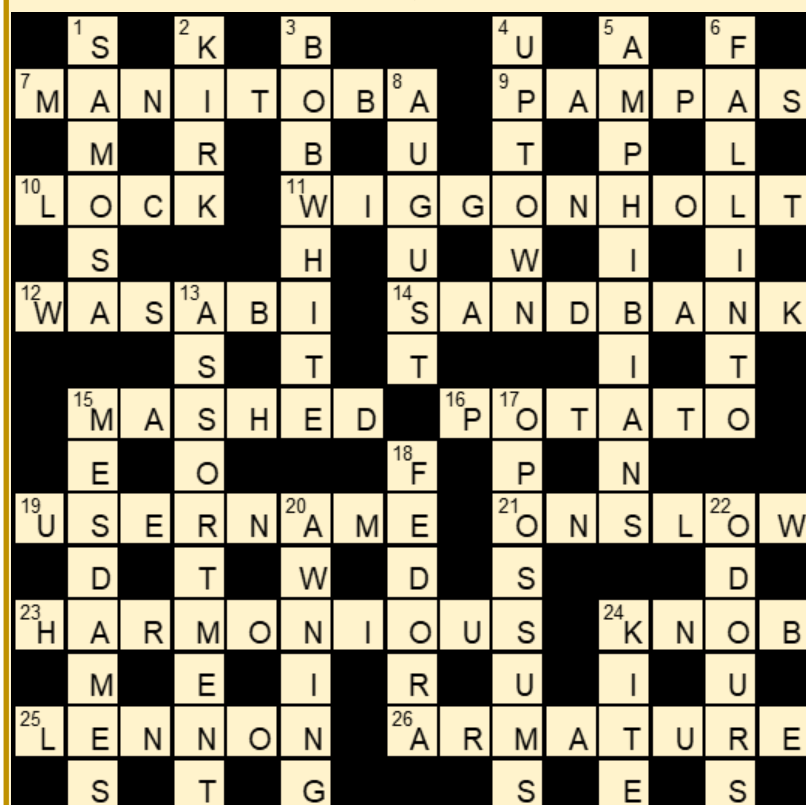
## Working Party Diary

Every Monday	'Mrs Bucket' Keeping up Appearances	Contact John Empringham
Monday to Friday (as required)	Canal Maintenance Unit	Check with Kev Baker
Every Tuesday (late October to March)	Hedgelaying	Contact Nick Baxter
Every Tuesday and Thursday	Boat Maintenance	Contact David Arnold
Every Wednesday	Mid-Week Working Party	Details from Margaret Darvill
Every Monday & Wednesday	Tickner's Depot	Contact Ian Prior
Every Wednesday and Thursday	Eric Walker Restoration Group	Details from Dennis Gillen/John Reynolds
Every Thursday and Third Saturday	Northern Working Party	Contact Bill Nicholson
First & Third Friday of the month	PEST Boat Group	Contact Chris Jones/Peter Hyem
Third Saturday of the month	Summit Level	Contact Dave Evans



## Brain Teaser Crossword

Compiled by Tim Lewis



### Across

- 7 Boatman and I resettled in Canadian province (8)  
 9 Returning dummy chart to Argentinian plains (6)  
 10 Secure part of staircase (4)  
 11 Our electric boat can become glowing hot (10)  
 12 Included next was a bit of an accompaniment to raw fish (6)  
 14 A bar and another in outskirts of Selkirk (8)  
 15/16 Oat pot (6,6)  
 19 Various menus are required to sign on (8)  
 21 Simmering in Loxwood pub (6)  
 23 United pain working with debts (10)  
 24 Baldwin's door handle? (4)  
 25 Beatles's star sign has two names and another! (6)  
 26 Rotating coil's fully developed by the sound of it (8)

### Down

- 1 Turnover Maureen entered twice while back (6)  
 2 James T's Scottish church (4)  
 3 Duck drawn or quail? (8)  
 4 Billy Joel's girl is wealthy (6)  
 5 Toads perhaps bin him ASAP? (10)  
 6 To start adding place to make sense (4,4)  
 8 Summer month's celebrated (6)  
 13 Reportedly a re-ordering resulted in variety (10)  
 15 French ladies' canteen accommodates pantomime character (8)  
 17 Large calculations support 'Operation Marsupials' (8)  
 18 Iron lady's hat (6)  
 20 Canopy is almost cavernous (6)  
 22 Ours do unusual smells (6)  
 24 Little tikes have one flying north (4)

planted 12 years ago, and UV light has degraded the plastic over this time, making it very brittle. Unfortunately, the plastic does not disappear, but falls to the ground in pieces, and unless removed, will lie there for years to come - not an attractive sight, and undoubtedly ecologically damaging. Spirals are great for helping hedgerow trees to establish, but they do need to be removed after just a few years (perhaps a maximum of 5 or 6) while they can still be kept in one piece fairly easily. Please can their removal be built into the future maintenance programme, on all occasions where spirals or Tuley tubes are used for tree and hedge planting? It will make the new planting schemes look more attractive, and avoid the opportunity for WACT to be criticised for littering the countryside.

Nick Baxter

## Mid-Week Working Party

MWWP has had a very busy April. We started the month with five groups working the length of the canal and finished the month concentrated into the north. The groups have worked extremely hard.

For the first two weeks, one group tidied up the bank from Lordings Lock to the Flood Gate. It now should stay good for the summer. The next group tidied up around Haybarn Swing Bridge. The third group tidied up the length from Gennets Bridge Lock to Hillcroft, and did some clearing work to make ready for a new fence at Elmbridge on land we acquired recently and then started some clearing work north of Fastbridge.

The next group continued to clear vast amounts of timber from the canal at Rye Farm which they have done for the last five weeks. The last group cleared timber around Gosden Aqueduct and then moved on to clear all the timber that was blown down in the winter gales. It is now looking much clearer from the bund to Birtley Bridge 1 and they will continue to clear from the bund to Birtley Bridge 2. As we are still in semi-lockdown and nobody has been going on holiday, numbers are remaining high which is good for the canal.

Margaret Darvill



Looking good: The newly laid hedge at Loxwood



## Canal Maintenance Unit

The Canal Maintenance Unit has been busy in several locations this month, firstly finishing off the clearance work on the Gennets Farm section (with assistance from both MWWP and the Monday Group) by tidying up all the scrub and removing all the fallen trees from the canal bed. At Gennets Bridge lock we have taken off all the stakes and binders to allow the hedges there to flourish. Trees (courtesy of the Woodland Trust) have been planted at Gennets Farm, Devil's Hole and at Drungewick.

In preparation for the re-opening of the Onslow Arms and the resumption of boat operations, we have repainted the car park markings outside the Canal Centre, and repaired the steps down to the boat moorings (handrail is on order and will be fitted soon).

We have been to Lordings and repaired the fence and gateway onto the towpath south of the main lock, fitted the first 5 stop planks at Pallingham Quay Bridge and put in a 9m section of fencing there. Due to a failure of a gate paddle at Brewhurst Lock, the team have installed the stop planks ready to drain the lock to effect the necessary repair in time for boat operations starting again.

*Kev Baker*

## Eric Walker Group

At the start of the month the final tasks at Pallingham Quay Bridge were completed and the landowner expressed his gratitude for the excellent work.



*Len Hasler, Martin Baker and Kev Baker at work on the new weir*



*Pallingham Quay Bridge — job done!*

Attention has now shifted to building a new overflow weir about 300m to the south of Harsfold Bridge. With the assistance of Kev Baker, this involves the construction of a substantial concrete base, upon which a further concrete structure will be created for the weir, sluice and outfall through two large diameter plastic pipes.

While undertaking this work, the opportunity is being taken to raise and regrade the towpath as parts of it were washed away when the Arun flooded during January 2020. While we're at it, we'll also scrape some of the silt out of the canal.

*Dennis Gillen*

## The Contact List

Name	Group/Project	Tel	email
Maurice Cranefield	Visiting Working Parties	01483 505566	Maurice_Cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk
John Talbot	Health & Safety Director	01483 429918	jcst@weyandarun.co.uk
Dennis Gillen	Eric Walker Group	07866 583753	dennis_gillen@weyandarun.co.uk
Margaret Darvill	Mid Week Working Party	01483 894606	margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk
Kev Baker	Canal Maintenance Unit	07920 755957	kevin_baker@weyandarun.co.uk
Ian Prior	Tickner's Depot Manager	07864 708932	ian_prior@weyandarun.co.uk
Nick Baxter	Hedgelaying		hedgelaying@weyandarun.co.uk
Bill Nicholson	Northern Working Parties	0118 9714785	bill57nicholson@gmail.com
Dave Evans	Site Restoration Supervisor		dave_evans@weyandarun.co.uk
Chris Jones	Boat group PEST	01483 421136	chrisryderjones@outlook.com
David Arnold	Boat Maintenance	01403 790168	dja103@hotmail.com
Julian Cheek	Maintenance Administration	01483 505566	julian_cheek@weyandarun.co.uk
Peter Winter	Working Party News Editor	07722 184117	peter_winter@weyandarun.co.uk