

Working Party News

No. 342

For WACT Volunteers

August 2022

Editorial

The weather in July has been a scorcher which made working on the canal somewhat challenging. Nevertheless the teams have been out and about.

The repairs to Baldwin's Knob Lock have been completed, but the lack of rainfall means that it won't be used for a while as boat operations have had to be suspended. Hopefully, August will bring a downpour.

Meanwhile at Birtley Bridge 2, the new gas main is installed but not connected, leading to project delays.

Peter Winter

Mrs Bucket Group

Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

As yours truly was away cruising last month, this report covers the activities of the Group in June and July, so here we go!

Two busy months for Mrs Bucket. The Group visited Gennets & Compasses Bridge (both twice), Southland, Devil's Hole, Loxwood & Brewhurst (all 3 times). A visit was made to Barnhill slipway and Baldwin's Knob lock.

In early June, Malham received its first attention of the year as well as Newbridge and a very hot day was spent clearing Lordings Lock.

Finally, in the last week Tickner's roadside and Tickner's Yard were tidied up.

This is only really a summary of visits but, as members will appreciate, there is a lot of work involved in all the

sites mentioned above which require regular attendance to keep them looking tidy and a credit to the Trust.

Nick Wood

Boat Group PEST

With a good turn-out of five volunteers on our first working Friday in July we took out two boats, *May Up-ton* and *Josias Jessop*. One went north and one south from Loxwood.

To the south we removed and disposed of a tree from above Baldwin's Knob Lock. To the north we went to Southland Lock and cleared vegetation from around the lock entrance. Heading back to Loxwood we stopped to clear growth before Devil's Hole Lock. Despite the lack of rain and water in the canal the trees and brambles continue to grow!

However, it was this lack of water in the canal that led to the cancellation to our second working day on 22nd July. After discussions with WACT management movement of workboats was halted in order to conserve water. Currently work in August is 'on hold' pending improvement in canal levels.

Chris Jones

Midweek Working Party

This month we started with the group and their partners having our summer barbecue. 55 people attended and it was enjoyed by all. People brought delicious salads and desserts and the weather was kind to us.

The next week a variety of tasks were completed. The culvert at Farnhurst was cleared and a tree was taken out

of the canal. The canal from Fast Bridge is now clear down to the land boundary and although not open to the public, it is very rewarding. The canal bed at Rooks Hill has been strimmed and all the new growth on the ash trees in the base of the canal has been removed. Work continued at Hunt Park, pulling Himalayan Balsam and making sure the paths are clear. We have now started a large job of clearing the base of the canal at Mill Farm. It is a long distance and some people will be there for a few weeks.

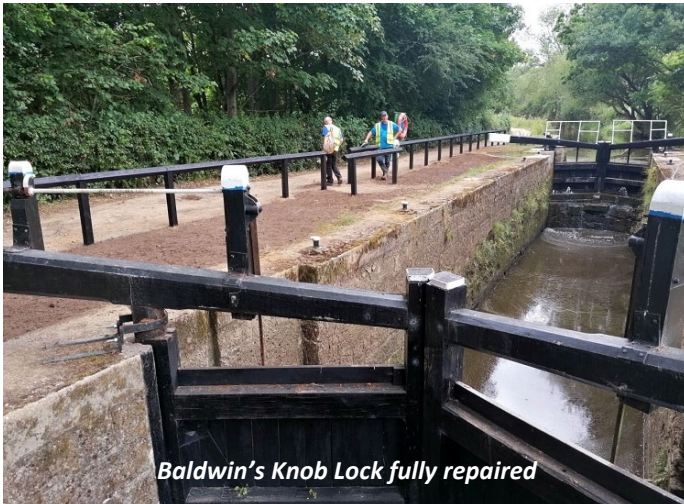
Margaret Darvill



Material published in *Working Party News* represents the views of the contributors and should not, unless specifically indicated, be assumed to be the policy of the Trust.

Northern Working Party

Work continued at Baldwin’s Knob Lock with the removal of all stop planks to refill the lock chamber. Due to the lack of rain and low levels of water in the canal generally, full operation of the lock has not yet recommenced but early indications are that the repair work has been successful and the leakage has been minimised.



Baldwin’s Knob Lock fully repaired

There was a general clearance and tidying of the site with three one tonne bags of topsoil spread on the lock verge to level the site in preparation for grass seeding – whenever the rain comes! A new timber fence has been erected along the towpath edge and painted.

Work also continued at Tickner’s Heath with the removal of the tree protection fencing along the completed footpath/bridleway over the new footbridge. The path is now open and available for use by the public from the Sidney Wood Car Park entrance, off Dunsfold Road, to the other side of the footbridge. Concrete encrusted tools were cleaned and organised in readiness for a forthcoming visiting working party, followed by a well appreciated BBQ courtesy of Bill and Adam.

There was a brief respite for the Working Party when a planned work day was postponed during the searing heat wave but work soon resumed with a new milestone being installed at the northern most point of the canal at Gun’s Mouth, Shalford, showing 0 miles to the Wey!

Dave Miller



Milepost 0 at Gun’s Mouth

Boat Maintenance

After a morning's work on the boats, we approach the inevitable. Boat traffic on the canal will cease at the end of July due to lack of water. It will not resume until we get some very significant rainfall; we need a veritable monsoon!



Chris and Brian at work on JJ’s roof

Working Party Diary

Every Monday	‘Mrs Bucket’ Keeping up Appearances	Contact Tom Close
Every Tuesday (late October to March)	Hedgelaying	Contact Nick Baxter
Every Tuesday and Thursday	Boat Maintenance	Contact David Arnold
Every Wednesday	Midweek Working Party	Details from Margaret Darvill
Every Monday	Tickner’s Depot	Contact Ian Prior
Every Wednesday and Thursday	Eric Walker Group	Details from Dennis Gillen/John Reynolds
Every Monday, Tuesday, 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

This gives us time to clean and paint the boats, starting with *Josias Jessop*. Chris and Brian are shown in the picture cleaning off the cabin roof preparatory to painting. The leaves and twigs had formed a molasses-like mixture under the for'd floorboards which needed cleaning out and the pump was cleaned and serviced. We have to clean and paint JJ's yellow rails and also her red seats.

A new hatch handle has been fitted to *Zachariah Keppel* as the wood ridge was coming loose. The hatch tracks have also been greased to aid their smooth running. Small jobs like this improve the working of the boats for the volunteers who operate them.

We have an excellent time now to get the boats up to a high standard. We are still unable to get to the slip to deal with the leak problem near JJ's weed hatch. Ian is intending to bring down his welding kit and weld the wasted away water catchment channel under the forward engine hatch of JJ. At the moment if it rains this will pour water directly over the engine. Some hopes!

David Arnold

Eric Walker Group

The group has continued to work on the Birtley Bridge 2 site. As mentioned in my previous report, one of the most critical operations on the project is to re-route a medium pressure gas main that runs under the existing causeway, where the new bridge will be located.

Southern Gas Networks have started on this with EWG carrying out the main excavation work. Unfortunately when we started to excavate the deep trench across the canal bed we encountered running ground water coming from the base of the west bank. Despite the recent long dry spell, this was flowing at 30 lts/min!

Because of the make-up of the earth in this part of the site it created 'running sand' and we had to hire and install metal trench boxes to retain the unstable earth while we excavated. This was successful and SGN were able to lay the new gas main across the width of the canal. However, the follow on works from SGN have been very slow and the connections have yet to be completed.

Meanwhile the EWG team have progressed the bridle-



The new gas main is in but not yet connected

way diversion, with the earth fill, Type 1 aggregate surface and the placing and filling of Gabion cages to sustain its form and stability. Because of the slow progress by SGN we have had to postpone the start of the piling for the new bridge foundations, which means the project will now not be in a position to hand over to the summer camp team originally planned for 20th August.

During the last week of July, we removed the Aquadam and rolled it up for future use. In August we will continue where we can, to excavate for the bridge foundations.

Dennis Gillen



The brideway diversion supported by gabion cages

The Contact List

Name	Group/Project	Tel	email
Maurice Cranefield	Visiting Working Parties	01483 505566	maurice_cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk
Dennis Gillen	Eric Walker Group	07866 583753	dennis_gillen@weyandarun.co.uk
Margaret Darvill	Midweek Working Party	01483 894606	margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk
Tom Close	Monday Group	07811 534292	thomasdclose@googlemail.com
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	bill_nicholson@weyandarun.co.uk
Dave Evans	Operations Manager		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