

Editorial

It's great to be back in Sussex. One of our first social engagements was to the local Horticultural Society to hear a talk by Tony Pratt about the canal project. What memories that brought back - just as if we had never been away.

The power of *Working Party News* - an anonymous Trust supporter read in a previous issue about the need for more tools, and as a result he made a most generous donation. This much-appreciated gift has been used, following advice from MWWP leader Ray Pick, to buy a trimmer/mower and also a long reach hedge trimmer with a comprehensive range of attachments. A MWWP member chipped in with a carrying bag for the hedge trimmer. Very many thanks to all for this most useful addition to the Trust's equipment.

Bill

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

In early February we completed our work in Sidney Wood, at least for the time being; but as the water was high in the canal, we may have to return later in the year to brush cut the banks again once the water level has dropped. For the third time this winter we had to clear culvert number 1 as it had become partly blocked again over the previous 14 days. Culvert 3 was not so bad; that was cleared too.

As anticipated in the last WPN, our second meeting of the month was spent working on the common land at Tickner's, a litter pick over the whole site, both north and south of the causeway, lots of litter, lots of beer cans! We undertook an extensive tidy up of the vegetation and ensured that the water courses were clear. In view of the gales and rain over the previous week, our leader detached a three-man group to check on Sidney Wood for fallen branches etc. This time they had to clear culvert 3 again.

We noted, with great interest, the article in the last *Wey South* about the Shower Tray. If at all possible, we would like to borrow it later in the year so that we can clear the vegetation growing out of the walls in Malham lock. Who should we contact?

We meet again on 3 and 17 March. Our leader has yet to finalise the locations where we will be operating.

Nick Wood



Our friends from London WRG assist with the stockproof fence alongside the airfield boundary at Dunsfold



Northern Working Party and Visiting Groups

I am pleased to say that the sun shone on Dunsfold and our programme of cosmetic improvements got underway on 22/23 February with a visit from 12 members of LWRG.

The main task was to erect a stock proof fence along the northern boundary of the common land with the airfield and a substantial length was achieved. The team also erected a pedestrian gate across the towpath-to-be: again on the boundary with the airfield. Sections of tree trunk (no shortage of these!) were cut up ready for use as bollards where the path meets the Tickner's Road crossing.

Planned visits from KESCRG and NWPG in March will progress the work in time for the small boat rally on the 23rd.

Bill Nicholson

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well at least this month 'him upstairs' has been a bit kinder with the weather and allowed us to do some external work rather than sheltering all day in our lowly workshop.

Ken Bacon has continued his ministrations to the MWWP's 'Tirfor', mind you he did have to call on the assistance of Richard Powell for the technical bits. After stripping it down, cleaning and servicing, it is operating as new and is now ready for whatever Ray Pick's team need to throw at it.

After some thought and researching Francis Wellerd managed to find some items to attach to the Hydrovane compressor, so that rather than just being an idle piece of Trust machinery it is now useable for any task requiring a certain amount of air pressure.

In between visits to the compressor Francis and Mick Jones have been slaving away making sure that the Maintenance Unit's mowers are in good order ready for the fray when the drier weather returns. Unfortunately they found that one of the mowers had a bent crankshaft, and with Mike Davison's permission it was stripped down and serviceable items kept as spare parts, but at least the other two proved to be serviceable and in good working order.

We had thought that after David Robson's monumental effort to free the brake pedal on the tracked dumper that that was it as far as the brakes were concerned. No such luck - when we reconnected all the brake linkages we found that the main cross shaft was seized. So after liberal doses of oil and WD40 Mick managed to free it off so that the footbrake was useable. We then assembled the beastie so that the machine could at least stop properly. In the meantime Dave Kersley, assisted at odd times by the team, got the tracks back on and the tensioner modified so that it was towpath-worthy. All that remained was to change the clutch plates and away it could go.

Our wheelbarrow expert David Robson has not been idle either. When not helping transport paper to the skips at Loxwood he can be found up to his armpits in the many and varied manual earth removers the Trust holds. No repair is beyond his scope and he is always on hand to ensure visiting work parties have the equipment where and when it is required.

Just recently Ray Pick brought the Trust's latest piece of new-fangled machinery to the depot asking that we assemble it and ensure that things are as they should be. What a beast this is - it is called a DR Beaver, well the tree felling bit is. It also has a heavy duty strimmer attachment and Francis and Mick took great delight, if not a little head scratching (the instructions were a nightmare), in giving it a test on the odd log and vegetation at the depot. So all in all a good addition to the trusts armoury.

Well I think that is about it for this month, all the best.

John Smith

Hedgelaying Team

Saluté, and now the politics? Greetings to all from the UK and overseas excluding Scotland. The Grumpy Old Hedgelayer says that Scotland should be towed north and moored just off Iceland (not the one on the High Street missus). Why do I say this, you may ask? Am I anti-Scots? NO! Am I anti Icelandic? NO! It's just because they haven't got any hedges, just Scottish Poundlands!

Well, enough of Mr Salmond's stupidity and on to the old nitty gritty. We have finished at Southland Lock until just before the opening in June (well not really as I have three more trees to plant there).

We have since moved on to a hedge belonging to a member of the Trust in Loxwood, just across the river, opposite the Brewhurst Pound. Why? Because it's not and won't be flooded is the answer. So far (21 Feb) we, in varying numbers (between one and five) have spent four days there, trimming, digging up

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
WACT Office	General enquiries	01403 752403	office@weyandarun.co.uk
David Daniels	Visiting working parties	01483 505566 Mon-Thurs 8.30-12.30pm	support@weyandarun.co.uk
Michael Bates	Health & Safety Officer	07786 323515	michael_bates@weyandarun.co.uk
Eric Walker	Loxwood Projects	07717 855340	tsg@weyandarun.co.uk
Ray Pick	MidWeek Working Party	01483 272443	anne.pick@btinternet.com
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk
Kev Baker	Loxwood Link	02380 861074	loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	depot@weyandarun.co.uk
Tony Clear	Winston's Group	01903 774 301	winstonsgroup@weyandarun.co.uk
Keith Nichols	Hedge laying	01403 753882	hedging@weyandarun.co.uk
Bill Nicholson	Northern working parties	01844 343 369	bill@nwpg.org.uk
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk

and re-planting and laying. A morning was also spent selective coppicing at the Onslow/WACT car park. I expect to be at this site for another three days plus one day at Devils Hole coppicing. Then onto pastures, if not flooded, new.

Dates remain approximately the same although may change after I've been in hospital:

Mar - Thurs 13/Fri 14?, Mon 17, Tues 25

Apr - Thurs 03/Wed 02, Thurs 10, Fri 18

May - Tues 06, Wed 14, Thurs 22, Fri 30

May I say again a big thanks to all who supported the team in whatever way.

Cheers all from my office in the 'Star' in Godalming. (I do move my office around).

Keith Nichols

Thursday and Sunday Group - Southland and GBL

Join us. The Thursday & Sunday Group generally meets at 09:30. For some time now there has been a job list circulated to the TSG Group, this is to enable the volunteers to know where they will be working as the group has been split into up to six sub groups to do what is the latest task. For information about where we are and what we are doing or to get the latest job list, please ring 07717 855340.

Eric Walker



The hedge below Baldwins Knob lock: Right, after the storm, taken on 26 Dec 2013 by Dave Verrall; Left and above, taken on 26 Feb 2014 by Nick Houston.

Mid Week Working Party

Due to the stormy weather, the MWWP was unable to meet for the first two weeks of February. But the sun shone on us for the third week when we worked on the section of canal near Drungewick slipway. We were able to clear and burn the remainder of the storm debris that was left over from our previous visit during January. Using a punt and the work boat *May Upton*, we cut back the overhanging vegetation from the offside bank. This should enable easier passage of our trip boats.

We also had good weather for the last Wednesday of the month. Using the punt and *May Upton* we removed fallen trees and branches from the canal in the section from Drungewick slipway to Baldwin's Knob lock. We also cut back overhanging vegetation from below the lock. Our land-based team tackled the large task of removing storm debris that had flattened the hedge below the lock. After removing the debris, we pushed and pulled the hedge and fence back into an almost upright position. The hedge is just starting to show some spring growth. Further remedial work will be required on the hedge and fence

Working Party Diary

Every Sunday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Contact Eric Walker for details
Usually first & third Mondays of the month	'Mrs Bucket' - Keeping Up Appearances	Details from John Empringham
Every Wednesday	Mid-Week Working Party	Check with Ray Pick for confirmation of venue
Every Wednesday (plus Thursday and Sunday as required)	Loxwood Link Maintenance	Check with Kev Baker
Every Wednesday	Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot	Contact John Smith/Ken Bacon
Tuesdays or Fridays	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
23 March	Small Boat Rally, Dunsfold	Contact: rallies@weyandarun.co.uk
26 April	Annual Meeting, Billingshurst	Details in next <i>Wey-South</i>