

Editorial

There's a lot going on at present, as you will see from the reports below. Of course, we would like to see more, and faster progress. Being unable to start work at Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) is a source of great frustration for project manager Eric Walker. Funding is in place to allow contractors to begin, but again, we have to wait for the wheels of bureaucracy to grind ahead. The other limiting factor is of course money. Although we mentioned that the initial GBL funding appeal was successful, and the main fundraising thrust has now shifted to the next planned major project at Compasses Bridge, once work can start at GBL there will be plenty of other things to be paid for, so please don't overlook the next lock up in our march up from Loxwood to the summit (not forgetting the swing bridge that will be needed).

One more step in that march will be taken later this month with the official opening of Southland lock on 21 June. Things are looking good - workboat *May Upton* made the trip up from Devil's Hole, carrying a work party to paint the Southland bottom gates, so there is every chance that the official party will be able to reach the lock the proper way, by water. If you are going to attend the ceremony, then please note the arrangements on our website (www.weyandarun.co.uk/southland-opening.php).

It's always good to see our volunteers get some official recognition. In many ways it's a pity that there are only two trophies because there are so many more hard workers than we can ever mention. But the two lucky winners for 2014, presented at the recent AGM, were Mike Hobbs (Jack King cup) and Lyn Nash (John East cup). Both awards are very well deserved.

Neither must we forget the marvellous contribution made by visiting groups. The early May Bank Holiday weekend saw Newbury Working Party Group (NWPG) build a culvert trap near Tickner's Heath which will permit better regulation of the water levels in the summit pound. And in late May, our own volunteers were called upon to carry out an emergency repair to one of the Baldwin's Knob Lock bottom gates, which needed to be carried out promptly so that the trip boat operation could continue to run smoothly as it approached the peak period.

Finally, WACT has decided to appoint a fundraiser on a paid, part-time basis. Although specific fundraising experience is not one of the necessary criteria, you do need to be a good communicator and possess sound administration skills. If that could be you, then please get in touch with our Chairman.

Bill

Thursday and Sunday Group - Southland and GBL

The haul road in Southland Field was removed in May despite the poor weather. During a short dry spell the material was put on the towpath towards DHL. The causeway was removed and the back pump at DHL started. The water level came up quickly to and above the winter water level. Above that level the water goes down the 'monk', which is a sluice by the new winding hole.

Edward Stratton-Woodward had been in hospital, but while convalescing at home, had made the paddle gear for the monk that will be set for the summer water levels. The difference between the levels, winter or summer, is to ensure that the land drains put in, probably after the second world war to improve food production, are not drowned and become silted up. The paddle gear metalwork has now gone for galvanising and should be back for fitting on the 5 June.

With the paddle gear in place the water level can be brought up to summer level, so any boats that have so far been up to Southland have been up there when the water level was below winter water level! One other small problem is the water control switch for the pound that needs to be re-set for summer level once the monk paddle gear is in place, hopefully this too can happen on 5 June.

The repairs to the towpath from DHL to Southland have been delayed until there is the prospect of three or four days of dry weather. The towpath material cannot be laid when there are puddles on the track. After that there is a lot of material to be moved from Paddock Wood to the bank at the old winding hole.

Work at GBL is still on hold. There are two more days of GCN survey before submission for a Licence to Natural England so hope eternal that work will start later this year. Everyone says "Ridiculous!" Do the IWA or CRT not understand just how many canal restorations are being frustrated by NE requirements?

Repairs to and modification of the Gennets Pound sluice continue.

The Thursday & Sunday Group meets at 09:30. Please get in touch with Eric Walker to learn where work is taking place - this is frequently on several different sites.

Eric Walker



Above and right: The Monday (Mrs Bucket) group installing stop planks at Baldwin's Knob Lock as part of the recent emergency repairs to a gate (pictures by Martin Burgess)

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

In late April and at our first May meeting we carried on maintaining our regular sites and, in addition, we spent a considerable amount of time tidying up and weeding at Southland lock under the eye of the landowner.

For our second May outing, at his request we assisted Peter Foulger inserting the stop planks at Baldwin's Knob lock to facilitate repairs to the bottom gates. During the same session we cut overhanging branches along the towpath between Brewhurst lock and Brewhurst bridge as well as installing dog 'poo' posters on boards around the car park at the Onslow Arms at locations specified by Lyn Nash.

We meet again on 2 June and 16 June at our normal sites.

Nick Wood

Tickner's Heath Depot

Yet another quiet month, what are you folks doing out there not breaking the trust's kit? Obviously, the training is proving effective. However, one piece of kit which did fail the operator test and decide to give up the ghost was one of the MU's mowers. But luckily, our resident mechanical wizard Francis Wellerd was on hand with his welding kit to stick - or should I say thermal bond - the broken cross member together. After a bit of tinkering it was sent on its way and from all reports it's doing a fine job canal side.

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

We received a request for signs for the Southland Lock opening from Jim Phillips. So Mick Jones and Richard Powell put their heads together and produced an 'A' board out of quickly-modified Poddle signs; no damage was done and the signs are still useable for 8 June, if a trifle lighter. Once converted, the signs will be out on the roadside directing all and sundry for the grand opening on 21 June.

We do seem to be doing quite a bit on the signage side. Lyn Nash asked for some boards to be used on the towpath to help remind our dog loving friends to take their little packages home and not leave them in situ. The task was quickly done by Richard Powell and David Robson, and rather neat they looked too. I know self-praise is no praise.

But the prize of the month goes to our very own painter and decorator extraordinaire Ken Bacon who has produced a masterpiece of shadow board for our various sets of spanners (see picture, right). All we have got to do now is to remember to put them back in the right place. Ken will no doubt be keeping a beady eye on proceedings.

As we had a bit of a slack moment during the month we took advantage of sunshine to do a bit of gardening in the depot. David Robson has proved a dab hand with a strimmer; that is when not unravelling the cutting cord. He is available (when not teaching overseas students the Queen's English as what she is spoke) at a reasonable cost.

Dave Kersley meanwhile has been scratching his head on how to fix the problem of the brakes on the flat bed machinery trailer. The brakes were seized on and when stripped down it was found that new return springs and cables were needed. As is usual with most our items, it was found that this type of trailer ceased production some 30+ years ago. So Dave is at present scouring every box of springs he can find for replacements and wondering how to get a replacement cable. Keep smiling, Dave.

Well that's about it for this month. All the best



John Smith

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
8 June	Annual 'Poddle' sponsored walk	Help needed, contact poddle@weyandarun.co.uk
21 June	Southland Lock reopening and small boat rally	See www.weyandarun.co.uk/events2.php for timetable and information

Hedgelaying Team

Greetings all, OK it's a Fair Copp(ice). Or it would have been if plans had gone to plan but that's the trouble with planning as one cannot foresee the unforeseen. Although the hedgelaying for this season is now finished, i.e. we completed this year's laying at Brewhurst Lock on Tuesday 13 May, the tidying up at four of this season's work sites has not been completed.

Depending on group turnout and the Great British Weather, we still have between four and six days of work left for this season. The above will take us through some/all of June and then we shall have the usual three months off. I feel a bit like a teacher for some reason!

Au revoir.

Keith Nichols



Painting Southland Lock gates from 'May Upton' (Julian Morgan)

Winston Harwood Group

The weather and ground conditions have allowed us to return to Lordings and the water wheel (one mile across green fields, plus ordinary cars) Real progress with the water wheel and cutting back vegetation plus mowing the grass.

It was a change for us to help with emergency repairs to Baldwin's Knob Lock so that *ZK* and *Wiggonholt* could do the boat runs and bring in the income the canal needs. All done without an outside contractor. Well done Peter Foulger and Penelope (the boat!)

Too good to last - we missed the last Tuesday in May due to excessive rainfall preventing the cars' access across the fields. If you know of a poor millionaire, we could do with a Jeep. I know of one vehicle with massive ground clearance and large wide wheels.

Tony Clear for David Junkison

Mid Week Working Party

Work has been done at Gosden Aqueduct, near Bramley, clearing the site following works by visiting parties and tidying up all left-over timbers using a chipping machine. Large timbers were reduced and cleared on a trailer.

Himalyan Balsam has been cleared by hand and machine at Hunt Park adjacent to Gosden House School boundary. Further work will be required when the remaining Balsam flowers.

From the middle of the month, work has been on-going at Rosemary Lane Alfold to clear the canal and cut back growth from the sides. Further work is being completed to clear dead trees from the water there and MWWP may need to return again to complete this when water level lowers.

Dave Verrall, on behalf of Ray Pick

Boat (Appearance) Group

I am planning to hold the last boat cleaning session for this season on Thursday 12 June 2014 from around 10am. Our boats have been very busy over the last few weeks and I am hoping to take this opportunity to keep the boats looking smart and cleaner than our quick sweep up between trips normally allows. Even an hour or two of your time would be appreciated, tea and coffee supplied.

Anybody able to help with this important task please email me at sh@weyandarun.co.uk or telephone 07905 670095 or 01273 461729 (please leave a message if no answer). Thanking you in advance for your help.

Steve Harmes

Giant Hogweed (and its skin-toxic sap)

We have now completed all that is practical to spray using diluted Roundup, which is eco-friendly and safe. Well skilled are Martin Burgess, Bob Smith and Peter Wallis (and me!) This larger team finished the programme earlier in the year and will, I am sure, do the same next year.

Tony Clear