

Editorial

As this issue is being prepared the Trust is celebrating the bicentenary of the canal's opening. It's a sobering thought that out of the 200 years of the canal's existence, restoration activity has been going on for over a fifth of that time- with plenty remaining - whereas the original construction took just three years. Maybe the short building time is one reason why there is so much restoration work needed now? We know that today's locks and bridges are being built, and maintained, to last far longer - as evidenced by the reports here.

Bill

Mid-Week Working Party

This month has seen the MWWP in several different locations. The first couple of weeks we cleared the canal bed and banks starting at Cook's bridge working towards Pallingham Bridge and made very good progress. We have still much to do there, but unfortunately we could not finish the planned work at this visit, so we hope to go back there for the first two weeks of October.

We then went back to Harsfold Bridge and completed clearing an area between the river and the canal. It now looks as if the field is well looked after. We made sure the foot path was clear so people could use it without getting scratched. Some of the group then proceeded to do some work at Compasses Bridge in preparation for the opening, moved pipes and trimmed, to make it too look well cared for. At the same time the rest of the group members were at Tickner's Heath, clearing the Common Land and saplings from the bank. It is now possible for canoeists to see the slipway and over the bank.

Our last week in September was spent at Haybarn, clearing the non-public footpath at the swing bridge. It is over four years since one bank was cleared, and well over ten for the other side, so there is a great deal of work for us. It was a beautiful peaceful day we spent there, and we had a good turnout. Meanwhile, one of our members spent a day each week keeping the garden tidy at the Canal Centre. We have indeed had a very busy month.

Training: In this day and age training is very important. Our group has a budget for training, so if anyone feels they need their skills updated, please let me know and then we will carry out the necessary assessments.

Margaret Darvill



Back from holidays and in harness - TSG at GBL (Eric Walker)

Thursday and Sunday Group

As usual, the construction element of the TSG were hoping for an Indian summer to enable work to continue, and we got it. The cynics were saying "The weather is about to break so it must be time to re-start the bricklaying".

Well yes, when the site is ready. Indeed the priority was set, to getting the welfare cabin commissioned and a porch built.

The welfare cabin plinths were prepared and cabin delivered a week later, and placed directly on to them. The cabin was then connected to mains water and electricity and lights were put in the other cabins. Presently the porch requires a roof to protect the picnic tables. The roadway has been beefed up and the boardwalk was replaced by concrete. We have never had such luxury.

The maintenance work being undertaken by the TSG on the Loxwood Link for Kev Baker has now either completed, or the demand for our services has tapered off. With the delivery of some additional Kwickstage scaffolding and barriers to Gennets Bridge Lock, our multi-talented Chris Elphick and Geoff Thomas started doing the necessary improvements, which all take some time and a lot of energy

Bridge centering comprises the wooden frames used to form an arch and supports, first the steel reinforcing and then the concrete when it is poured. The first test is during the concrete placement and then the extra pressure exerted by the vibrator. Well that was in early July and went without a squeak. The concrete was then left for 28 days to cure. The programme milestone this last month was the lowering of the centering, and

hurrah, the bridge did not collapse. The centering is now being left where it is until it is convenient to remove it from the lock, probably with the scaffolding.

So why move the centering now? Well, on top of the centering were sixty 4in x 2in x 15ft (100mm x 50mm x 4.6m) wood bearers that will now to be used for the shuttering on the top sill. A second reason for lowering the centering was to enable some of the Acrow struts to be removed to support the training walls when these are back-filled with concrete.

Everyone attending the GBL site is inducted with the site rules and the volunteers receive a 10-minute briefing at the beginning of the day. At the end of September safety inspections of the mechanical and lifting equipment were undertaken. Together with the plant inspections done earlier, there will be a number of changes.

The Thursday and Sunday Group normally meets at 09:30. Please email Eric Walker if you want to get on the email circulation list for details of when and where the TSG is working

Eric Walker

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

We were very sorry to hear that Dave Kersley has had to go into hospital. The Group wishes him a speedy recovery. He is a great help to us in obtaining material and equipment and ferrying it to and from our sites. He will be missed not only by us but by other groups.

We spent a busy September looking after our regular sites including replacing a post, donated by one of the group, and arrow disks on the Wey South Path where it leaves the Downs Link at Run Common. The old post had rotted away and the arrow markers had disappeared. We also reassembled the fence at Devil's Hole Lock after replacing a number of rotten posts.

We meet again on the 3, 17 and 31 October.

Nick Wood

Summit (Northern) Working Party

The pace of work at Compasses has remained intense throughout September with, as I write, one more day to prepare for the opening ceremony on 2 October. At the beginning of the month a joint force of 20 volunteers from visiting groups KESCRG and LWRG completed the task of filling and compacting the cells of the training wall structure with type 1 limestone. Bricklaying on the pub side of the bridge got underway as well as yet more blockwork.

On the south side the reinforced concrete training wall was successfully poured, only for the design team to decide that it should be extended by a further 12m to the north (towards Guildford). This, in addition to the brick facing on the bridge, became the focus of our efforts for the rest of the month, as without the concrete wall extension being poured and subsequently back filled, it won't be possible to flood the canal for the ceremony.

A decision was also taken to construct in steel the shuttering necessary to cast the curved section of the training wall with the idea that this



Work at Compasses - still plenty to do before the reopening ceremony (Bill Nicholson)

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
Julian Cheek	Maintenance coordination	01483 505566	julian_cheek@weyandarun.co.uk
Maurice Cranefield	Visiting working parties	01483 505566	Maurice_Cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk
John Talbot	Health & Safety Officer	01483 429918	jcst@weyandarun.co.uk
Eric Walker	Gennets Bridge Lock	07717 855340	tsg@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	Loxwood Link	01489 690241	loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	depot@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
Dave Evans	Summit working party		compasses@weyandarun.co.uk
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk



Work preparing for the new Compasses Bridge official reopening during the canal bicentenary celebrations at the beginning of October (Bill Nicholson)

can be used again for future projects. Andy Evans has taken on the task of constructing these Titanic looking structures which were successfully used in the concrete pour on 28 September.

On the 16th of the month NWPG put on a four-day working party well supported by local Northern team volunteers, with between 12 and 20 on site each day. Work focused on the brickwork, drainage connections, importing clay back from the burn-site and steel fixing connected with the aforementioned wall extension. The south side brickwork was substantially completed, as was about three quarters of the brick coping for the training wall on that side.

Much other work was done including backfilling the caravan park retaining wall constructed during the summer camp. Since then, the north side facing brickwork has been progressed to a point that it should be finished on 1 October (nothing like 'just in time' working to concentrate the efforts), the south coping completed, more bollards installed and landscaping carried out. To help us with this and the wall extension, a team of around 20 engineers from WSP & Parsons

Brinckerhoff, led by Rob Nicholson (who works for WSP) came down for a team building day on 23 September, when they put theory into practice and got well stuck into a range of tasks. Their input has greatly assisted our progress.

So, by the time you read this, the ceremony will have taken place when I hope that the majority of the work on the bridge itself and the road above will be finished. There will still be a lot to do over the autumn and into the winter, including completing the copings on the training wall on the north side, installing stop planks, removal of dams, fencing and landscaping - plenty to keep us busy.

After that we have the slipway to work on; work to complete fencing at Tickner's Heath and more log moving and clearance at Hunt Park. Regular working parties will revert to the third Saturday of each month supported by visiting group weekends - the next being another joint KESCRG/LWRG visit on 3 December. Please join us if you can - details from me, Bill Nicholson or site manager Dave Evans.

Bill Nicholson

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	Details from Margaret Darvill
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
Various Tuesdays	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans