

Editorial

No room for anything other than for me to repeat our contributors' Christmas and New Year wishes to all supporters and workers .

Bill

Mid-Week Working Party

MWPP had five very good weeks in November working down at Haybarn. We have now completed clearing the towpath side of the canal on the non-public bridleway as far as the causeway. We have had very good weather and has meant the numbers attending have been high. Disposal of the waste material kept us all warm when it has been cold. We look forward to continuing work down in that area until Christmas.

Margaret Darvill

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

As anticipated in the last WPN, on 31 October we removed the Heras fencing from around Baldwins Knob lock and restored the original wooden fencing. After a bit of head scratching we also replaced the sponsored seat on its plinth. All is now back to 'normal'; the new balance beams look really good.

On 7 November we concentrated our efforts at Drungewick and cleared the reeds from around both slipways as well as our usual grass cutting etc all around the site. We also gave attention to Newbridge, Southland lock and the overflow car park at Loxwood. Inspection of the fence on the non-towpath side at Devils Hole lock revealed that three posts are rotten. So replacing them is a job for the future.

At our second November meeting we repaired the gate and fence by the swing bridge at Haybarn, a job we have wanted to do for a long time. Digging out the old posts was hard work but the job is done. It also involved our leader and another member of the group loading up the landrover at Tickner's with the large 7in square gate post and all the fence bits a couple of days beforehand and driving them down to Haybarn on the day. We are missing Dave Kersley.

We meet again on 5 and 19 December. It will soon be time to start in Sidney Wood again!

Finally, Monday Group sends best wishes for Christmas and the new year to all our fellow navvies.

Nick Wood



The rebuilt gate and fence at Haybarn (Martin Burgess)

Thursday and Sunday Group

Our construction work at Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) continues to be constrained by the weather. Recently we were fortunate in that storm Angus went through early on the Sunday morning. We then had a good day's work during the day before the next storm came through.

With the next stage of concreting the bottom training walls complete, the clay backfill to both training walls could be done. The scaffolding at the bottom of the lock was then re-erected. The bricklaying of the lock-facing bridge parapet has been continued up to the string course, and a start made on the downstream parapet.

The approach to the lock bridge will be up ramps with a 1-in-15 slope on each side of the bridge, joining the bridleways to the arch we cast in July. Before the ramps could be put in, the back-pump pipe had to be laid. That was done, and the pipe now goes along the lock as far as the top sill. At the same time we made provision for the electricity cables and a control box.

Under the ramps is compacted crushed concrete, DTp Type 1 in the jargon, with steel reinforcing mesh on it and then the concrete. The ramp concrete is to be extra thick around the edges, sitting on the inner parapet wall at the edges. By the end of November both ramps were nearly ready for concreting.

On the top sill Martyn has soldiered on, with the haul side being ready for the first concrete pour for some time I think. The off-side will be ready in early December.

Thanks to all those who donate car or tractor batteries for recycling. A limited edition 2017 calendar with pictures of the canal mostly from Dave Verrall will be available early December from GBL and the Loxwood Canal Centre. Email me at

eric.walker377@gmail.com if you want to reserve copies for your family and friends, especially those overseas. Happy Christmas from GBL.

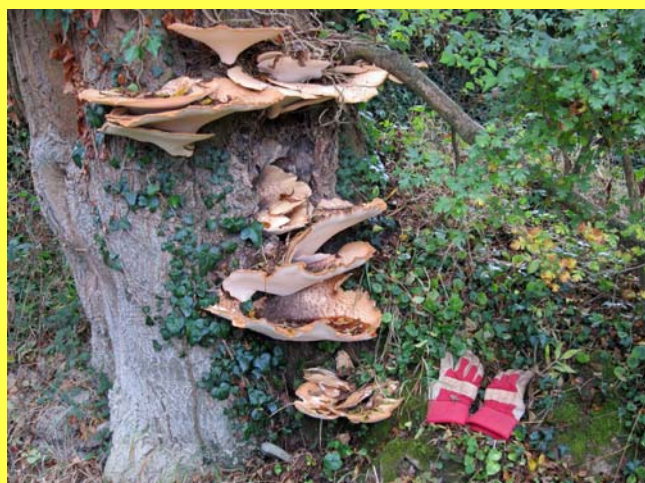
The Thursday and Sunday Group normally meets at 09:30. Please email Eric Walker if you want to get on the email circulation list for details of when and where the TSG is working

Eric Walker

Hedgelaying Group

Merry Greetings to you all from a *top secret* office, nowhere near the Anchor Tap in Horsham. I will continue the saga of the Secret Coppice which is nowhere near Slinfold whilst I sip a Toasted Coconut Imperial Stout 7%.

The total number of days worked there will be eight by the time you read this, as we'll have been there on Tuesday 29 November. So we have now cut 500 binders and 450 stakes for the canal side hedge. We have also cut stakes and binders for the owners' hedges which I thought it would only be fair to lay. So far we've laid 13 yards of the southern and 21 yards of the western hedges which has taken part of the team four days. I expect to stop coppicing and laying at this site at



Dryads saddle fungus - see work gloves for scale (Keith Nichols)

Christmas and start laying at the canal in the New Year.

A new member has joined the group called 'John the Ditch' or just 'Ditch' as on his first visit he put his car in the ditch, which is not the normal method of parking at this site. I have not taken the mickey, honest!

The weather has been reasonably kind to us. The brief showers on the 22nd didn't dampen our spirits. On-site waste disposal has blessed us with hot food on a number of occasions, except when I tried to do six chipolatas for two of us only to forget them at a crucial moment. Artists' charcoal, anybody?

We have watched a pygmy shrew scuttle about, heard a pair of ring necked parakeets and also buzzards. Plant life, well fungi, has produced a large beefsteak fungus and the largest collection of dryads saddle that we've ever seen (see photo).

I have joined other groups a few times just to see how they organise/disorganise themselves but more about that in the New Year. Let's all hope that we don't get Trumped and that there is a New Year and an NHS plus an end to Govia not running a Southern Railway (service?).

Festive Wishes to you all and Festive Nuts to the government.

Keith Nichols

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well, November has seen us embark on some real work at last. Dave Evans' crew expressed a desire to try out the Swedish mixer so the team set about making sure all was in order for the beast's first real test. An 'idiots guide' was produced courtesy of Ken Bacon and Dave's brother was given a short training session on how to operate it. So what most thought was destined to be a permanent fixture at the depot has now moved on to pastures new. Good luck, team.

During the month a cry for help was received from Charlie Coxwell as the outboard for the *Wasp* was misbehaving. The team set about with a will to try and find the reason for it overheating. The

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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

thing was stripped down the impeller looked at - all seemed fine. When reassembling, we found two small grills by the prop were clogged. After clearing these we were confident that the fault had been found but our confidence was misplaced as the old girl still showed signs of overheating. So it will have to go to the experts for sorting out, I'm afraid.

We did, however, have more success with a mower brought to the depot by Mike Davison. It was causing a bit of heartache as it was very sluggish and could hardly cope with what it was being asked to do. Our experts stripped down the carb, gave it a few adjustments, and lo and behold it seems to be working as good as new (well almost).

Our resident expert chippy Dave Robson is at the moment refurbishing a bench that was recovered from the canal, or was it Hunt park? He is making steady progress, but it needs a lot doing as most of the legs and seat slats were rotten.

Pleased to say that the Land Rover passed its MOT and is now available for use. It can be booked via Julian Cheek, that is if you can get in in front of me (I'm getting to be a little like you-know-who regarding the beast).

One final thing, I did report in previous WPNs that we had a quantity of logs at the depot which could be collected on a Wednesday. Unfortunately that has to be put on hold for a time, as we are not quite sure how much is needed at Loxwood for the festive season cruises. I will know better in the New Year what the situation is, and will report back.

Well that's about it for this month. All that remains is to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year from all at the depot

John Smith

Summit (Northern) Working Party

Work has steadily progressed at Compasses Bridge. The Evans brothers have been hard at work shuttering up and then casting a concrete retaining wall on the pub side of the bridge. It took no less than 18 hand mixes using the diesel concrete mixer to complete. On which subject I

can report that the well-known and until now rather forlorn looking Swedish Army cement mixer at Tickner's has been brought back to life! After a successful firing up by John and his team, the mixer has been moved to the Compasses yard for further trials - a dry run with ballast is planned. Will the self-loading mechanism work with a full digger load of ballast in it? Will it stick to the sides before dropping into the drum? Will we be able to get the mix out? I will let readers know next time, as it is planned to be put to work on concreting the top of the wing wall extension by KESCRG and LWRG on their December visit. If successful then we will use it on other projects needing larger quantities of concrete, and where ready mix can't be easily or cost-effectively used e.g the slipway.

A good turn out on the third Saturday was marred by disappointing weather during the afternoon which rained off any further brick and block laying. Some progress was made and whilst the heaviest rain only lasted for about 45 minutes it was by then getting too dark to restart - even if the brickies hadn't all gone home! A start was made on removing the tarmac road surface of the old road leading to the former causeway from the airfield. Our current short term plans are to complete all the fencing and upper level works by Christmas, with the canal based operations continuing up to Easter, after which we will move to the slipway.

Dates for December in addition to the KESCRG visit on 3rd are 17th (third Saturday) and an extra work-off-Christmas day on Tuesday 27th.

New members are always welcome to join our team. Details from me, or site manager Dave Evans.

Bill Nicholson

Dredger Working Group

Early in the year Julian Cheek asked me if I would run the Trust's dredger group, responsible for not only maintaining *Wasp* and *Penelope* (workboat & dredger) but also ensuring that a navigable depth for our trip boats is maintained. The fact that I knew nothing of either dredging or the use of hydraulic diggers was to ensure a very steep learning curve. Peter Foulger's

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

patient teaching has enabled me to get to grips with the intricacies of a 50-year-old dredger. I soon found out that *Penelope* is without doubt the most difficult workboat I have ever skippered! She is a true old lady that has to be persuaded, rather than told, what to do. I hope with time to become proficient in her use, they say practice make perfect.

Within a few weeks I was informed "you do know that the dredger regularly sinks?" No I did not! After that nugget of information, Malcolm Sheppard and I started investigating the main cause of the sinkings. Our first job was to clear some 15 garden sacks of oily oak leaves and general crud from the bilges, so giving the bilge pumps a chance to do their stuff. We have also arranged a mooring for *Penelope* which is as far away from trees as possible, difficult to achieve on our lovely canal. Clearing that amount of leaves regularly is not a realistic long term option. Although this has helped ensure the pumps keep working it was not the main cause of her sinking. Eventually we concluded that water could enter through the top of the rudder post, this being only one inch higher than the canal water level so a slight lowering of the stern resulted in water pouring in - game over. Further investigation revealed that there was no packing material present in the gland. After lots of grunting and teeth sucking we managed to renew the packing and now we await to see if this has the desired effect. Is there yet another reason for her sinking?

Despite all the above we still managed to do some dredging. Several days were spent not only learning to drive the dredger but also clearing a considerable amount of silt from the winding hole to the south of Baldwin's Knob Lock. However, the

boat group has informed us that we missed a bit! So we hope to be back there again in October. We have also started to dredge some of the reed roots north of Drungewick slipway - a long job and still much to do. Apparently, Peter tells me that this section of the canal is naturally very shallow and as always great care needs to be taken to ensure the canal bed is not damaged.

Currently the dredger team consists of Peter ashore, who empties our skips, Malcolm, who drives the workboat *Wasp*, which has our three skips onboard and me, attempting to fill skips by operating *Penelope*. We could really do with a fourth member to help Malcolm place and hold the skips in maintaining the correct position to be filled by the dredger. We tend to work twice a month, dredging one day and general boat maintenance on the second. The old girl needs lots of TLC to keep her in a usable condition, especially after all the sinkings she has had to endure. Dredging days can only be scheduled when trip boats are not running, so during their operational season this effectively means dredging on free weekdays. Winter dredging allows us more scope for selecting dates that suit the team.

Please call me if you are available to help, on 07786 614708.

Charlie Coxwell

Paper Recycling

Unfortunately, waste paper recycling ceased from early October at Squires Garden Centre, Washington. We are grateful to Squires for hosting the skip until then. There will continue to be a skip for waste paper in the WACT car park behind the Onslow Arms, Loxwood.

John Talbot

MWWP Luncheon - 1 February 2017

The annual Lunch will be held at Foxbridge Golf Club, Foxbridge Lane, Plaistow Road, Kirdford , RH14 0LB. All past and present members of the Mid Week Working Party and their partners are cordially invited to attend. As numbers are limited, bookings will only be accepted with a menu choice and cheque together, and must be received by Wednesday 11 January 2017 at the latest, by post only.

Di Miles

Please make cheques payable to Mrs D.J.Miles and send, with menu choice, to:
8 Newlands, Buckingham Close, Guildford GU1 1TR, Home phone : 01483 575804.
Cost for any two courses £19.15; three courses £22.50.

Form for each attendee , please.

Attendee Name:

Menu Choice (please indicate your choice below):

Starter:

Spiced Parsnip Soup, Rustic Croutons, *or* Ardennes Pate, Toast, Apple Chutney, *or*
Butterfly Prawns, Mixed Leaves, Sweet Chilli Dip

Main:

Chicken, Leek and Mustard Pie, *or* Beef Bourguignon
(both served with Creamed Potatoes & a selection of fresh Vegetables); *or*
Roasted Cod Fillet, Provencal Sauce, served on a Warm New Potato & Green Salad

Desserts:

Sticky Toffee Pudding, Caramel Sauce, Vanilla Ice Cream; *or* Pear and Apple Crumble, Custard.

Cheese & Biscuits

Coffee & Mints