

Editorial

First of all, a Happy New Year to all our volunteer workers, whatever you do. And to all other supporters. Not much from me; just be aware of our photographic competition, details of which are on the WACT website (www.weyandarun.co.uk).

It's good to see work getting underway at the canal's northern extremity, Gun's Mouth Island. The Northern Working Party and Midweek Working Party have spent several days there, supplemented by a visit in mid-December from a WRG Forestry team, who have threatened to come back this month.

Bill

Thursday & Sunday Group - Southland and Northwards

Up to July 2012, the rainfall was below average - do you remember the hosepipe ban? Since then the quantity of rain has been well above average. During the last month we've worked on the top training walls at Southland lock and the back pump brought from Devil's Hole Lock (DHL) and installed.

One day in December, our contractor Burras visited Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) with a 24t digger equipped with an auger. The machine drilled a couple of 7.5m deep holes and was away before it got dark. In attendance were the piling structural engineer and the senior designer from Hockley & Dawson. This was another significant step in the preparations for the construction of the lock.

With the agreement of Forest Enterprises and a licence to work in the SSSI from Natural England, the centreline of the proposed alternative route for the canal in Sidney Wood was set out with yellow pegs. Some minor brushwood clearance has been done to enable the topographic survey to be undertaken for this route.

After delays in December caused by holidays and sickness, work will continue in January with fitting the bridges on the lock gates at Southland and on the top gates at Loxwood lock. Our first working party of 2013 will be on 10 January. Subject to flood or freezing conditions, the ground paddles will be installed at Southland lock. Work on the training walls at the top of the lock will continue to bring them up to coping level. At the bottom of the lock, subject to our being able to get there, we will carry on with work on the training walls. Pumping out the working area has to be done quickly enough to enable a significant amount of work to be done during the short daylight hours at this time of year. We still have to carry out the surveying (levelling) at GBL, i.e. Lock 8.

At DHL, now a major priority, the pump chamber work will require the pound to be empty. Behind the Onslow Arms there are the safety ladders to be put in and the safety rope, more work which has been delayed by holidays.

Fundraising for GBL has got off to a rather slow start. One useful source of income is book sales, looked after by Julian Morgan. There is a parcel of books to be collected from Bardwell, near Bury St Edmunds (IP31 1AS), for delivery to Loxwood. Can anyone help please? The 'Grow Your Tenner' fund run by localgiving.com, which was quite successful for WACT, has now closed.

Join us: The Thursday & Sunday Group generally meets at 09:30 at Southland; if you need directions please ring 07717 855340 for latest info.

Eric Walker

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	07777 668 928	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

In December, as anticipated in the previous WPN, we began our normal annual winter task of clearing the towpath in Sidney Wood once we had met the request of the Restoration Group to make Brewhurst lock 'safe' for the Santa cruises. This involved laying chicken wire on the footbridge on the tail of the lock and on the landing stage below the lock to give an anti-slip surface. We also cleaned the moss off the coping stones and concrete steps, scrubbed the 'platforms' on the top gates and cut the grass. In Sidney Wood we have cleared the tree debris left by the Forest Enterprise contractors and tidied up about the first 500 yards of towpath from Firtree copse.

We shall need at least another two outings in Sidney Wood to complete the job, so that is what we expect to be doing on 7 and 21 January, weather permitting.

Nick Wood

Hedgelaying Group

Wishing a drier, happy, prosperous New Year to you all. Since the beginning of November we have had five days at Baldwins Knob Lock, albeit one of them being coppicing for materials and one mainly thinning out pre-laying. The total length is 35m and to date we have layed 23m leaving 12m remaining. Hopefully, therefore, by mid-January we should have finished and cleared up with a final bonfire.

I hope that everyone thinks the finished hedge is better than it was.

Future dates for me are:

January Thurs 03, Fri 11, Mon 21, Tues 29

February Wed 06, ?, Fri 22

March Mon 04, Tues 12, Wed 20, Thurs 28

That's it from me, all the best for 2013.

Keith Nichols Tel: 01403 753882; Mob: 07817 798865

Tickner's Heath Depot

For the month of December the team only managed two visits to the depot, and of those visits we only managed to survive until the early afternoon due mainly to the weather, as no doubt other working parties can appreciate, as it was either rather chilly or very damp.

Most of the time, when we did attend, was spent dealing with the mass of old shuttering coming back from the canal, some as you can imagine was less than useless and was consigned to the bonfire (when it's dry enough to light one that is), but the vast majority of it has been stored and is ready for use on future projects.

One of the walls in the large single (Richard's) shed has been giving us cause for concern, so we took time to move all the shuttering and timber propped up against it to one of the Nissen huts. In the spring we will then make a further assessment before deciding on what repairs need to be carried out.

The small mini-tractor is proving a pain to start. For some reason it only fires on one cylinder when starting and takes forever for the other cylinder to burst into life, so our resident diesel experts are planning to have a look at the cylinder compressions to see if this will give us a clue as to the reason for its tardiness; yet another job for the coming year.

Working Party Diary

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 Thursday & Sunday as required	Loxwood Link Maintenance	Check with Kev Baker
Every Wednesday	Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot	Contact John Smith/Ken Bacon
Every Thursday	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
Thursday and Sunday	Eric Walker's Group (construction)	Contact Eric Walker for details
14 January	WACT Workers' Lunch	Contact Geoff Perks 01403 262855
10 March	Mothering Sunday cruises	Details from WACT office

We would have liked to have got down to the slipway to finish off the repairs we started on the dredger but the weather conditions were against us. We hope, however, to get there on our first day back in January (9th).

Well I think that's about it for this year, all the very best for 2013 to you hard working lot out there from the Tickner's Team.

John Smith

Northern Working Party - NWP but not NWPG

The Northern Working Party spent two Saturdays in December working to construct two landing stages. These are necessary to facilitate the removal of logs from the trees due to be felled on Gun's Mouth Island. On 1 December, a select team of five braved the cold weather to construct the scaffolding superstructure of the first landing stage at the bottom of the Chairman's garden. A week later, another team of five returned to fabricate the removable plywood staging for this landing stage, and decided to construct the frame of a second landing stage on the island. We now plan to finish this off in January ready for the log moving to start in earnest. Many thanks to Dave Kersley and the Tickner's Team for finding and delivering the materials.

Bill Nicholson

Important Safety Information

Our chairman has requested that the following two points are included. Please note - these are important and could be life-saving.

1. When working near water or on muddy banks, please ensure (especially this time of year) that there are three people present at all times as it is almost impossible to pull out someone from the water with soaked clothing and it needs two people to do so.
2. The Trust has now purchased a supply of inflatable lifejacket 'stoles' that inflate on impact. These must be worn by all volunteers working near water. They are currently stored in the Shalford depot.

Navvies' Festive Lunch

MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2013

The traditional Workers' Lunch will be held on Monday 14 January 2013, at the Foxbridge Golf Club which can be reached by car from Loxwood High Street. Directions: from the Onslow Arms drive about 1/2 mile south (towards Billingshurst), turn right (signed to Foxbridge Golf Club) for almost 1 1/4 miles passing two turnings and the Oaktree Stores on your right before finding and taking the first turning on the left (also signed to the Golf Club) for some 600 yards before turning left into the Club's large car park.

The event is timed at 12.30 for 1.00 pm and you are very welcome to bring your partner to meet your fellow navvies. A booking form with menu choices was included with the last *Working Party News* (still available on the WACT website). There may still be some places available; contact Geoff Perks, 61 Ashleigh Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2LE, tel 01403 262855.

The way we were... (1976)

An image from the WACT archives of Devil's Hole Lock, in 1976. The picture, by David Roberts, gives some idea of the enormity of the restoration project; this being one of the more complete original lock chambers on the canal. Since then it has seen at least two restorations, the most recent being complete (and successful).

