

## Editorial

Good news on the restoration front - planning permission has been granted for the new Compasses Bridge. This is, however, just the first step along a long road; there are various conditions that have to be satisfied and a Highways Agreement with the local Council still has to be put in place. All credit to project manager Tony Ford for helping steer this through the system.

Eric Walker asks me to point out that currently the Trust is doing quite well through battery recycling. If *WPN* readers could get any old lead-acid type batteries to the canal and let Eric know that would be a great help. Generally when a car, lorry, tractor, digger, dumper, invalid wheelchair etc battery is changed, customers will be charged for disposal. So hand on to the old ones - also please have a look in garages or ask friends and relatives to look in theirs. Eric says that the money raised will help fund action on the Natural England situation at Gennets Bridge Lock.

Keith Nichols and Eric Walker have a number of holly trees available, any takers, please ring Eric. On a related subject, the Trust is looking for people to grow plants, particularly hawthorns, that will be ready to plant in hedges in a year or so. If you can help, please contact Eric or Keith.

It's a very full newsletter this time; thanks to all our contributors.

*Bill*

## The Mrs Bucket Group (keeping up appearances on Mondays)

As anticipated in the February's *WPN*, in March we returned to Lee Farm and completed widening the towpath from the causeway to the lock. The latter could do with a lot of TLC, it is very overgrown. We also found time to do some cutting back north of the causeway towards Haybarn.

During our second outing we cut back the vegetation on the towpath and trimmed the hedge from where we left off last time in February from the landowners' boundary all the way to the Lordings Flood Lock Bridge. At the request of the landowner, we also cut the hedge on the river side from Harsfold causeway northwards to the owner's boundary. It doesn't sound much but we were out in force with brush cutters and hedge trimmers, not forgetting the large amount of work involved in clearing up and disposing of all the cuttings.

As I write, it is the intention on 30 March, weather permitting, to work with Roger Richards on the installation of the picnic table and seats at Devils Hole Lock as outlined in last December's *WPN*. As navvies may be aware, Roger has constructed this from recycled bits of metal lock fittings. Part of the work will be digging foundations and infilling these with concrete.

Following that, we will meet again on 13 April and 27 April, possibly to start on our nine regular sites depending on growth conditions.

*Nick Wood*

## Thursday and Sunday Group

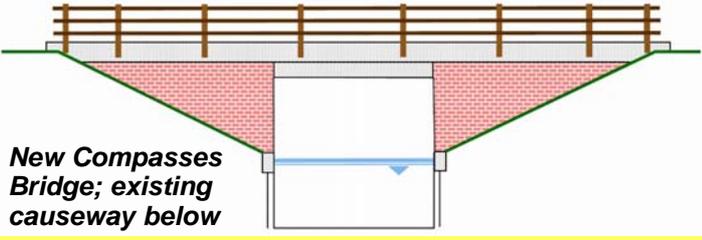
The contractor's work at Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) is still on hold awaiting the European Protected Species licence for the great crested newts. Once we have the licence there will be a period of about four to eight weeks when the newts will be searched for and moved to one of the ponds we have created. The searching and moving will be done by an ecologist or by a trained volunteer. The volunteers will be named on the Licence. The searching will be a daily thing so a rota has been drawn up. If you, or you know someone, willing to be trained and come to GBL before 11am for an hour or so occasionally to help the project forward, please refer them to me.

Meanwhile the preparation of the three ponds has progressed. The first required removal of some large trees before it could be lined, and with this work complete it is now being filled with water from the Gennets spillway. The second, which is in the canal, is in process of being filled. The third, like the first, needed large trees to be cleared and some general landscaping.

To enable the lock and its bridge to be built, the bridleway and farm access to the woods will have to be closed. The landowner has been removing all the trees cut down this winter and we have been helping to get the cordwood away. With all that traffic finished we are asking WSCC to take special action to enable us to officially divert the bridleway for over a year, while we meet the requirements of Natural England for the newts and WACT complete the bridge build as part of the lock.

This month should see the new door, built to the requirements of the office managers by Dan Ostacchini, on the Fritchfold office and installed by him and Len Hasler.

When the track came off the tracked dumper it was near disaster. The second time the track and a tyre came off the dumper at the same time - that



This work will continue for a few weeks to come.

Over the coming weeks we'll be going on to Gosden Common between the aqueduct and Eastwood Road and need to clear the offside bank below the Compasses Mobile Home Park.

*David Daniels (MWWP Leader pro-tem)*

**Tickner's Heath Depot**

March turned out to be quite a busy month at the depot. For once the sun shone upon us and we saw the return to the depot of old friends who had been either on sick leave or relocating to the Costa Geriatrica. It was good to see Francis and Ken again, Francis's jokes have been especially missed? Plus of course Ken's sage advice which is always welcome.

The month saw us take two trips into foreign lands. One was a fruitless trip to Newhaven to pick up the MDV, only to find that it was still awaiting modification. Still, it was a sunny day and it did give other parts of Sussex a view of our sponsor's logo on the Landrover. The other was a more successful venture into darkest West Sussex to pick up two hand winches from the QinetiQ site at Funtington. Peter Border, an old MWWP hand, had noticed them languishing in a shed and had immediately thought of the trust - Thanks Peter.

At the start of the month Mick Jones and Richard Powell started to repair the 10ft and 8ft trailers, quickly followed by the rest of the team. Electricians on both were quickly sorted and Dave K managed to replace the brake activator of the 8ft. Getting a tyre repaired made it roadworthy. But the 10ft was another matter. It started with the brakes on one of the wheels sticking on. On closer inspection the operating cable was found to be seized, so after replacing that we then found that all the other cables were in about the same condition. At the moment we are waiting for replacements to arrive, which will hopefully give us another useful piece of plant.

was very bad. But by the third time the dumper lost a track we found getting it back on again was pretty well routine. Much of the credit for these repairs goes to Danilo and Len, again!

The Thursday & Sunday Group meets at 09:30. The TSG has a work briefing form emailed out before the working day. Please email Eric Walker if you want to get on that circulation list.

*Eric Walker*

**Mid Week Working Party**

Once again the weather has been kind to us up at the 'northern end' and we have been able to continue the clearance work in Hunt Park. Most of the toppled willow trees have been dealt with and left as log piles or disposed of, giving a clear view of the ponds and habitat. It's been a terrific effort by the whole group and well appreciated by many local residents.

During the month a small team went off with Margaret Darvill and lengthsman Peter Topp to work on clearing near Rushett's Farm, what a difference already but more to be done in April.

We commenced work cutting back on the offside bank near Birch Copse, thanks to Derek Heath and Graeme Lewington for piloting *May Upton*.

**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	Enquiries to David Daniels pending appointment of new leader
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	Work in Lording's area	Contact Tony Clear for details
Various Tuesdays	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Saturday 18 April, 2.30pm	WACT Annual General Meeting	Cranleigh Village Hall
Sunday 19 April 19 April	River Arun boat rally	<a href="http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/events2.php">www.weyandarun.co.uk/events2.php</a>

We have also turned our attention to a matter which I for one have been putting off for some time and that is our mini tractor. For years now it hasn't had a serviceable battery, which hampered starting to say the least. So we dug deep into the depot float and bought a new one. The old girl was then serviced and now runs like new (well almost).

We also had a look at the shower unit as Dave K noticed a few faults when he last towed the beastie. Luckily all that was really needed was some more air in the tyres. All that is now required is for our resident gas expert, Kev Baker, to give the boiler the once over when his busy schedule permits and produce a gas safety certificate.

One other repair we were called upon to perform was to the outboard for the *May Upton* which had failed to come up to spec. Luckily we have quite a few spare at the depot which could be used during its absence in our workshop. Dave K again came up trumps and with the new bits provided we managed to get the motor back into working condition.

We have also had a visit from our friendly local 'bobbies' which had some of the team running for cover (only joking). They came to give us an update on what was happening in the local area. It was rather lucky really as they imparted some sensible suggestions on what features a new entrance gate should have.

So other than a spot of gardening around the depot - well jungle bashing really - and the manufacture of some back boards for canalside signs that's about it. Oh yes, I must mention the efforts of our resident strongman David Robson who manages to shift most heavy items into Danilo's trailer without sweating - gold star there.

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

*John Smith*

## Northern Working Party

The NWP (including many from NWPG) spent eight days working on the summit section in the first week of March. The main task was to re-

profile and de-silt the section of canal from Tickner's Bridge through to the burnsite (as it is colloquially known and is where Dunsfold Park burn all their rubbish). This length comprising about 500m<sup>2</sup> area had been partly de-silted about two years ago by another contractor but needed further work to bring up to a good standard. For the task we had the use of two hired 13-ton excavators (one long reach), two large dumpers (one tracked), the Trust's own newly acquired 6-ton excavator and 3-ton dumper, plus drivers and assistants comprising eight volunteers.

The material was either deposited on the bank or removed to the burnsite (where the first Saturday was spent preparing the ground for receipt of silt). De-silting commenced on the Monday and continued through to Friday lunch with some late evening sessions used to maximise the use of expensive plant. Work became progressively more difficult past the burnsite due to the ingress of water from an airfield drain that comes across the canalside track created for the purpose of de-silting. Also there is a short section that contains some of the largest and hardest lumps of concrete known to man.

We did manage to remove material from either side of the blockage but the water flow from the airfield needs to be piped direct onto the canal and the area allowed to dry out before more work takes place. Comparisons with the conditions at the Battle of the Somme are entirely appropriate although the machines were up to the job.

Following up the canal from Tickner's, the 6-ton excavator was used to tidy the banks and path ready for some top soil and re-seeding. The final and least enjoyable part of what was a very satisfying week was cleaning up the machines prior to return to the hire companies. Andy and Dave Evans copped for most of this along with Rob Nicholson and I do not exaggerate when I say that it took the best part of a day and half to clean all four items. And this was with the help of a petrol-powered pressure washer.

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
Julian Cheek	Maintenance coordination	01483 505566	<a href="mailto:julian_cheek@weyandarun.co.uk">julian_cheek@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
David Daniels / Northern Office	Visiting working parties, MWWP etc	01483 505566 Mon-Thurs 8.30-12.30pm	<a href="mailto:support@weyandarun.co.uk">support@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Vacant	Health & Safety Officer		Volunteer required please
Eric Walker	Loxwood Projects	07717 855340	<a href="mailto:tsg@weyandarun.co.uk">tsg@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Vacant	MidWeek Working Party		Contact David Daniels (above)
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	<a href="mailto:mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk">mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Kev Baker	Loxwood Link	02380 861074	<a href="mailto:loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk">loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	<a href="mailto:depot@weyandarun.co.uk">depot@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Tony Clear	Winston Group (Lordings)	01903 774 301	<a href="mailto:winstonsgroup@weyandarun.co.uk">winstonsgroup@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Keith Nichols	Hedge laying	01403 753882	<a href="mailto:hedging@weyandarun.co.uk">hedging@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Bill Nicholson	Northern working parties	01844 343 369	<a href="mailto:bill@nwpg.org.uk">bill@nwpg.org.uk</a>
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	<a href="mailto:bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk">bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk</a>

De-silting was not the only task completed during the week. We used the reduced airfield traffic of the first weekend to widen the carriageway over Compasses Bridge to accommodate the temporary concrete barriers that the contractor will install at the start of reconstruction work. We started the roof of a shed for the compound whilst at Tickner's. At the request of one of the residents, we installed a drain to take water from the drives of the houses there to the canal to prevent large puddles forming. We also repaired the fence around the weir on the south side of the crossing.

We agreed that this was a productive week and points to possible similar events in the future - possibly more de-silting and/or bricklaying on the bridge once the structure is in place. Non locals such as myself found overnight accommodation by hiring a holiday cottage near Petworth for eight nights, which was both more cost effective and more comfortable than either driving from home each day or hiring a village hall.

Regular Saturday working parties are now being organised at Dunsfold on the third Saturday of each month. We plan to use these days for the tasks that are less suited to visiting groups and we would welcome help from anyone who can spare one day a month on this interesting project. We have wonderful facilities at the new compound at Compasses including running hot water and electricity on plug!

We meet next at 9.30am Saturday 18 April. Following dates are 16 May and 20 June. Contact Bill Nicholson for more details.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Boat Appearance Group

The new boating season is upon us and after a very successful cleaning event a couple of weeks ago the boats were made clean and ready for the first trips. Thank you to everybody who helped out on the day.

I am planning the next cleaning session for Thursday 23 April from about 10am. Any time you can spare during the day would be most appreciated, tea/coffee supplied.

If anyone is able to help out with this important task please contact me at [sh@weyandarun.co.uk](mailto:sh@weyandarun.co.uk) or tel: 01273461729. Thank you in advance for any time you can spare, even an hour or two would help.

*Steve Harmes*

## Hedgelaying Team

Hola! - as they say in Espana. It only seems like four weeks ago when I wrote the last missive but actually, it was a month ago. You stupid boy Pike! Don't tell him your name Pike!

Anyway, I've been away in Spain bird and flower watching for the middle part of March, which was nice. In my absence I've been told that work has progressed slowly. Well, what's new? This group has two speeds only: 'SLOW' and 'STOP' and quite often, when I have stopped, I'm still the fastest kid

on the block. Enough of this banter and onto the nitty gritty.

Brewhurst Lock area is now definitely finished with some added pretty, herbaceous planting. This left us, for the one day left in March, i.e. 31st, to finish (for the last time) clearing up in the coppice.

And then, to pastures new??

Well, I don't know about you but even though this is a short report, I got bored writing it and fell asleep half way through.

Yours snoringly, Pike, I mean Keith.

Future gatherings of the clan will remain on Tuesdays for the time being.

*Keith Nichols*

## Bonfire Safety

Bonfires can be a safe method of disposing of cut down vegetation etc. on site if you follow these safety precautions:

- Never use petrol or other accelerants to light a fire.
- Choose your bonfire site carefully:
  - On level ground
  - Where it will not block access for volunteers or passers-by;
  - Where smoke will not be a nuisance or hazard on the site or to local residences or nearby roads
  - Away from dry grass or vegetation that might catch fire
- Never light a fire under or close to trees or power cables.
- Never light a fire in a strong wind as it may blow out of control.
- Never overstack a bonfire such that it is likely to fall over.
- Always watch that sparks and flying embers do not set light to anything.
- Never leave a fire unattended: always wait until it has burned down before leaving site.
- Remember to stop feeding a bonfire early enough to allow it time to burn down before the end of the working day.

*(Extract from "WRG Volunteers' Health & Safety Guide" 2013, made on 26 March 2015)*

### Also:

- Before leaving the site, drench the bonfire site thoroughly, even if the fire appears to be completely out (ash can remain hot for a long time);
- A fire site should be fenced off with poles and tape before being left.

## Newspaper recycling

Aylesford Newsprint, the company that has regularly collected newspapers from our recycling skips, has gone into administration. The paper skips are full so please do not bring any more paper until further notice.

We are urgently looking into other arrangements but clearly need to make sure that paper recycling will still be profitable before entering into any new contracts.