

Editorial

Welcome to the May edition of Working Party News. Spring has finally sprung and in this edition we can read about what the main volunteer groups have been getting up to. The NWPG are being kept busy at Compasses Bridge, post carriageway changeover to the new bridge. The MWWP have been doing great things at various sites with record numbers. The Monday 'Mrs Bucket Group' have set about keeping all our high profile sites in tip-top condition as well as carrying out timely maintenance at some more remote spots. Eric Walker's TSG is progressing well with the rebuild of Gennets Bridge Lock, helped by the recent dry spell of weather. The hedgelaying report this month has a distinctly foreign feel to it, although the wildlife mentioned is reassuringly British and finally, the team at Tickner's Depot seem to be up to their usual tricks, restoring ancient lawn mowers, fixing outboard motors and investigating a flame thrower?? Read on and find out more.

Geoff (for Bill)

Summit (Northern) Working Party

Visiting Group KESCRG made their first visit to the Wey & Arun Canal for some time in early April and did a fantastic job landscaping the road verges and planting up before the planting season proper closed. Down in the canal they continued work on the training walls, completing the awkward east wall where a kink has had to be taken out – work of the contractors not volunteers! We hope to see KESCRG back later in the year.



NWPG laying bricks & blocks on the eastern training wall

The contractor Thorne left the site on the 7 April having removed their mountain of spoil that had been piled up to the south of the bridge. Most of this was disposed of, followed the next day by a succession of 6 ton dumper deliveries of clay from the causeway – part of the work carried out by NWPG on their 3 day weekend. This was not before the road surface had been taken up and stored for separate disposal and the sub surface hard core had been shipped down to a new mountain at the



Causeway excavation phase 1 complete

Tickners depot ready for creating the expanded storage area. The two 6 ton dumpers were essential to our progress in removing the causeway and by late Saturday night we had dug down as far as the concrete culvert into which a hole was duly inserted to drain the rainwater likely to collect there. On the Sunday morning Martin our friendly archaeologist was down and after a few further scoops of clay from the 6 ton machine declared that there were no remnants of the original bridge. In some ways this was disappointing but in others it will make the job of building the parallel training walls through the site of the old bridge much easier.

Elsewhere the remaining blocks were laid on the western training wall on the south side of the bridge as well as two courses of engineering bricks and the bricklaying team continued their work on the brick facing to the bridge. On the road 13 timber bollards were installed – not as easy a job as it sounds – with plenty more to do later.

The following weekend (16th) the third Saturday team raised the scaffold under the bridge which

should enable the brickies to reach the underside of the bridge. Looking ahead, we have two more bricklaying Saturdays before the two weeks of summer camps start in early July. In June the WRG Training weekend is being held at Compasses and will be a good opportunity for volunteers who want to obtain plant and other tickets. More details next time.



NWPG reoving the old plastic bollards

We are a fully inclusive group and everyone is welcome to join us, skilled or otherwise. Contact Dave Evans or myself if you would like to help.

Bill Nicholson

Mrs Bucket Group – Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

The growing season is now upon us, so at our two meetings in April we started ‘keeping up appearances’ at all our nine regular sites: (Run Common, Fastbridge, Tickners, Southland & Devil’s Hole Locks, Loxwood including the overflow car park, the Drungewick Aqueduct site including the slipway, Newbridge and Haybarn). This excludes, at least for the time being, Three Compasses for obvious reasons! With the onset of the nesting season we decided to curtail clearance work north of Haybarn and content ourselves with keeping the swing bridge area looking tidy. There are some fencing repairs outstanding there too which we will tackle when it has been sorted out with the landowner. During April we also undertook some more digging at Culvert 2 in Sidney Wood; we reckon we have done as much as possible to improve the water flow. A waymark post has been installed at Newbridge.

We meet again on the 9th and 23rd of May with some additional work in prospect.

Nick Wood

Mid Week Working Party

This month we completed the work at Bonfire Hanger. It looks lovely now with all the bluebells and primroses flowering. Unfortunately it now means all the nettles will grow again as the weather improves and there are no brambles to impede their progress. We had one day where the team was split. We planted little trees at Tickners. The ground was very hard and full of clay. Not an easy task. The other part of the team worked on *May Upton* clearing overhanging branches between Loxwood and Southland Lock. This was another frustrating operation in that the split pin on the engine kept breaking. However the cut is now clearer even if the job is not finished. Last week we were back at Fast Bridge. Some of the team built a very good bridge with scaffolding planks over the canal so we can now get to both sides easily whilst the rest of the team spent the day pulling trees out of the water and then burning them or stacking them up into eco piles. Two of our team spend their time mowing the lawn and keeping the flower beds clear at Loxwood. Thank you team for all your hard work. We have been having record numbers turning up each Wednesday.

Margaret Darvill

Thursday and Sunday Group

Two major milestones were reached at Gennets Bridge Lock. The first was when the concrete was pumped onto the top sill of the lock and the second when the steel arches for the lock bridge were put in position. The next jobs on the top sill will be to clear all the items used to get to this point and then put up the shuttering for the walls and the ground sluices. At the bridge the next step is to mount the centering (the shuttering to support the concrete when it is poured to form the arch), which is now being made, so by the beginning of May they should be in and the form of the arch will be visible from the towpath.





At the end of March the planned urgent repairs were done to the bridleway.

The bricklaying continues with enthusiasm by Eddie Fairman and Geoff Thomas. For Jason Falkner and others in the group, it is nearly a full time job for the group to keep the bricklayers serviced with mortar, bricks and adjusting the scaffolding.

With the bridge parapet foundations finished some 80 tonnes of DTp Type 1 has been placed and compacted where the ramps are to go. The CASE digger stood on this to lift in the steel arches and will be used for the centering.

This last month another batch of car batteries were sent for recycling. Thanks to the donors, keep them coming. Unfortunately we do not recycle domestic or PC batteries.

Eric Walker

Hedgelaying Team

Zdravstvujtye one and all.

We are fairly Russian along in the laying ie between 25 and 30 yards per day. Excellent going. This is great as when I first paced out the length of the hedge, I made it 500 yards. I paced it again and it seems to have grown in length ie 600 yards? I think my brain cells are dying off too quickly which means I have only one cell left and I wonder where I put it.

Are my paces Steppes?

4 days of work has produced another 110 yards of hedge which included nipping into the coppice for more stakes and a few binders. We also had a very big burn up plus some field side trimming.

Our last day, 26 April gave us two snow showers. Ah, variety, as it was nice and warm in the sun but b..... cold when not.

My nature ramble includes: Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Chiff Chaffs, Long Tailed Tits, 1 Brimstone (my first this year), 3 Peacocks, 2

Orange Tips and a wide variety of bees. The hedge is greening up well and so far nothing is trying to nest in it.

I expect to do one more day of laying and a day of clearing up, so by mid May we will have stopped for our summer holidays. Who said we are a bit like teachers then?)



Close to Haybarn Bridge. Can you spot the difference?



Please do your summer homework folks, and with that, Adieu for now, I'm off to play roulette with a Russian – will he get the joke?

Dozvedanya

Keith Nichols

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well, life goes on at the depot as it has done for most of this year, with very little happening in the way of requests for our services. We have turned our thoughts to the continuing spring clean of the depot. The grass has been cut and we are attempting to tidy up the sheds where we can.

We have however managed to look at some of the Trust's equipment old and new, well relatively new that is, lawn mowers have been serviced, hole borers inspected and we even managed a trip to the canal to look at a misbehaving outboard and

changed the local shear pin for the correct one. Our last adventure of the month was to check out a donated weed killer, which was really a mini flame thrower. As some of the team took a backward pace when asked to have a looksee, Mick Jones came to the front saying that 'his dear old dad had one on the farm' and immediately set about giving it the once over and surprise surprise it worked a treat, the only thing being is that it took an awful long time for the flame to go out once switched off.

Dave Kersley has been at his industrious best, pulling tree branches out of the canal and delivering equipment to all and sundry.

Finally our thanks goes to Dave Evans and his crew for increasing the depot hard standing by using the infill from the compasses causeway. Once completed we will be able to spread out a bit.

Well that's it for now. 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	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
Tuesdays or Fridays	Work in Lording's area	Contact Tony Clear for details
Various Tuesdays	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans

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