

Editorial

As well as the opening of the canal centre, the Loxwood area has seen the work to seal leaks in the Loxwood Pound finished; a joint effort between contractors and volunteers. Very cold weather delayed the start, and the sewer problems (nothing to do with the work) which closed the towpath led to delays. The Trustees have thanked the volunteers for their valuable input into this project.

Exciting news from the Northern reaches: WRG Forestry recently visited Guns Mouth Island on two weekends to remove dead trees and carry out work recommended by a professional tree specialist.

With the boating season soon to get underway, volunteers have replaced the lower gate paddles at Brewhust Lock, stopping waste of precious water due to the old leaking paddles.

Bill

Thursday & Sunday Group

We have been concentrating on Southland and northwards, and continue to enjoy the fine weather, which is great for construction. I was surprised just how much water ran from DHL pound once they removed the bund above the lock. This water is only from the land drains as far as Hillcroft. There is one land drain just above Southland Lock; we siphon it through the lock and then pump into the DHL pound.

The major achievements this last month have been the completion of the mass concrete wall on the top cill and the backfilling behind the lock wall and the towpath. It is intended to raise the backfill a further 300mm and then dig out for the back pump pipe when the copings have been cast, which could well be in August.



19 Feb: Note the gap behind the wall and the level of the brickwork (All pictures here by Eric Walker)



23 Mar: Note the gap has been filled and more of the brickwork is to the top of the wall

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 (currently Fridays)	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
6,7,8,9 April	Easter cruises	See website or contact WACT office
28 April	WACT Annual Meeting, Pulborough	See <i>Wey-South</i> for details

The bricklaying continues on the lock, with the off-side wall now about half completed. When the brickwork reaches the top of the lock wall, we can start making the in-situ cast concrete copings. The formwork for those were made in the last couple of weeks in March.

The block laying at the bottom of the lock is going well too and the back pump chamber has been constructed.



Progress with the back pump chamber



Progress with the coping shuttering

Join us

The Thursday & Sunday Group generally meets at 09:30 at Southland, if you need directions please ring 07717 855340 for the latest info. Thursday is presently very popular but there is scope for more volunteers on a Sunday with lots of jobs to do.

Eric Walker

Hedgelaying group

Does that say 'Hogslaying Team'? (Shirley, that is Miss Spelt?) But anyway, Hello, Hello. The content of this review does not include (at least in this issue) - politics (nuff' from Cameron), sexism (discuss'ted of T. Wells), racism (the frogs have spawned); it is also gluten free so now listen very carefully for I will say this Only Once and then eat this missive so that it won't fall into the wrong hands!

The erstwhile ancients and not quite so ancient continued at Harsfold through March, albeit with holidays being taken so as not to finish too early. In two days 37m had been layed and that's with only three team members on both days. There is some life in us old dogs yet.

This leaves us with 87m left to lay plus some engineering work around the large bramble patch! Hopefully this is do-able this season despite things going manic due to the Spanish weather (luckily while we were in Spain we had British weather without the rain - so not really British then?).

If you aren't interested in wildlife/anything else, stop reading now (oh you didn't start, never mind). The frogs were still going at it 'hammer & tongs' but only in the shade of a tree, skylarks were up and singing (wonderful), a willow warbler was tuneful in the distance, buzzards lazily gliding, and then we were woken from our idyllic rural slumber by a (very, very) low flying Merlin (RAF). We expect to see lots of Merlins, Hawks, Apaches and Typhoons until the Olympics are over.

So "there you go", luv & kisses and "have a nice day", but before I vomit from heart-warming insincerity, here are the life-affirming dates:

- April** - Mon 02, possible between 10th & 13th?,
Wed 18, Thurs 26.
Possible Sundays if anyone interested 22 & 29
- May** - Fri 04 should be finished but just in case!

That was heart-warming, life-affirming.....was it not, no it xxx wasn't.

P.S. I hear from Bob Potts that Ray Welch has died whilst in hospital. He wasn't a well man since I've known him but still enjoyed working on the hedges and lately the boats only. We will miss a good man. Cheers Ray.

Keith Nichols; 01403 753882 or 07817 798865

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

Members of the group continued to assist with the sealing of the Loxwood pound at DHL during March. In fact between 6 February and 26 March we have provided 103½ volunteer hours for this task. Apart from that, three members of the group dug a channel from culvert 2 in Sidney Wood to drain off the accumulated water from this sealed culvert. We also spent a lovely spring Monday at Three Compasses Bridge removing the damaged steel and concrete fence, with the help of Peter Reid and his digger, and replacing it with the 'standard' wooden three rail fence and a 'farm' gate. Thanks are due to Dave Kersley for purchasing the material and bringing it to site for us. We didn't quite finish the job so we are scheduled to return in early April to complete it. Finally two members of the group spent some time on 26 March tidying up around the new visitor centre at Loxwood in preparation for the opening on 1 April.

We meet again on 2 April and 16 April.

Nick Wood

Mid Week Working Party

Sorry, it's maybe been a little quiet recently with no news getting to you from The Mid Week Working Party. A few things going on including providing levies to the (at the time) seemingly never-ending Loxwood leak repairs, it being the 'winter sun period' when a certain degree of migration takes place to warmer climes, and domestic misfortunes.

So, yes the group has been providing many shoulders to the wheel at Loxwood, and it is probably fair to say was one of the biggest single contributing groups. Anyway that is all over now and doubtless will be reported more fully elsewhere. Let us just hope that the main issues have now been addressed and we can gain the confidence to finally promote 'westward' boat trips from the Onslow. It's bound to draw in the numbers keen to see something new, and with them more cash and goodwill.

We're now getting into our stride and really appreciating having priorities and the beginnings of a forward plan to work to. It is really amazing how much more effectively things can be done if it is clear what is happening more than a matter of days ahead. As well as covering Loxwood, the group has been up at High Bridge/Rosemary Lane clearing back to enable new neighbourly fencing to be provided down towards Westland Copse.



With numbers coming back into the twenties (that is numbers turning out - not average age!) the group is now embarking upon a campaign to clear the previously inaccessible length around Ifold Bridge Lane just to the north of Southland Lock. This is a stretch that is largely infilled, covered with fairly impenetrable brambly vegetation, and appears to have been something of a dumping ground. We now have permission to clear this area in readiness for a full survey, and also to clear the area around a dilapidated bridge carrying the same lane over the River Lox. In short, this is just the sort of task that the group like to get stuck into: some real jungle-bashing with a variety of interesting tasks, here with the added spice of being in the 'front line' as we push the live portion of canal northward.

Oh, and then the weather this last Wednesday was absolutely fabulous! An opportunity also to tackle some missions that might require a certain degree of careful organisation and precision, if not panache. For instance the felling of trees having limbs very close to, if not actually entwined around telephone and power lines. In the event these came down readily - and yes, a wire winch from a certain French manufacturer was part of the ensemble, and no, no living things were injured nor inconvenienced during the process.

Peter Lander (for Ray Pick)



The just-opened Canal Centre (Richard Crook)

Calling all Mr or Mrs Mops

The appearance of our trip boats is extremely important and is our very public face to the community. We are hoping to set up a small working party under the name of the Boat Appearance Group and the aim is to carry out a "spring clean" of the boats approximately once a month through the boating season to keep them up to scratch.

The boat crews carry out a fantastic job keeping the basic cleaning up to scratch but do not always have the time to do as thorough a job as is sometimes needed, especially on busy days with public trips and charters and this idea is not meant to replace their important efforts.

I am asking for volunteers to help out with this, the first day is planned to be Tuesday 1 May 2012 and anybody who could help out for the day, or even half a day would be most welcome. The group is open to anyone whether or not you have been involved with the boats before and hopefully enough people will volunteer to allow all three boats to be given a good spruce up.

Please contact Steve Harmes on 01273 461729 (leave a message if no answer) or e-mail sh@weyandarun.co.uk if you can help out with this important work. Looking forward to your responses. Thank you in advance.

Steve Harmes

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
WACT Office	General enquiries	01403 752403	office@weyandarun.co.uk
John Benfold	Working party coordinator		restoration@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	Visiting Groups	01844 343 369	bill@nwpg.org.uk
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	07777 668 928	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk