

Editorial

It won't have gone unnoticed that work is now under way on the replacement brick parapets at the Loxwood High Street bridge. This has been a joint fundraising exercise by WACT, Loxwood PC and the Loxwood Society, and we still need a bit more cash to cover the full costs. So please support the local events, a cream tea cruise on Wednesday 16 May at 2.30pm, and a quiz cruise and BBQ on Friday 8 June (6pm). Tickets are available from the Canal Centre or Len Milsom (01403 752032).

Lordings waterwheel is now working again, having been stopped during the winter season to reduce the risk of damage due to increased water volume during flood conditions.

Advance notice of National Heritage weekend - on Saturday 8 September, by arrangement with Gordon Murray Design and the National Trust, WACT will be opening the Shalford Gunpowder Store to the public, and organising guided walks in the area.

Some great news - John Wood's long awaited history of the Wey & Arun Canal restoration and WACT has now been published. It was launched at the recent AGM, and copies can be bought (£17.50) from the Canal Centre, or by mail order from the WACT office - P&P charges will apply.

Talking of the Canal Centre, it is good to see this in use and fully operational. We must not forget the generous sponsorship of the building by Mr Peter Flatter. He is actively involved in the Trust, we are very grateful for the sponsorship and for Mr Flatter's very hard work in promoting the aims of the Trust in every way.

Bill

Hedgelaying group

Saluté - or as the Romans say - "Hi There"! So, here we go then? Since the April missive we have worked three (or four) days with the team going from four members to one member respectively. We are now down to 53m left to work on; i.e. approximately three days' work.

I make a note of the weather, walkers, and wildlife on each day worked and since last September we have only lost one day due to bad weather. The number of walkers per day has varied from zero to 14 but normally below 10 and without exception they have been very complimentary. On Sunday 22 April when I was working solo I was ready for very short, sharp showers and when a particularly bad one swept in, the first swallows came down so low over the canal that they were flying around my feet - 'exceptional'.

So, that's it, i.e. 'fini' for now.



Some of the Hedgelaying (or, as Keith prefers it, Hogslaying) group's recent work.

April - we worked on Thurs 26, Sun 29; two of the three days left

May - Fri 04 and just in case it rains??

Keith Nichols; 01403 753882 or 07817 798865

Mid Week Working Party

The gang continues to gather each week in ever-increasing numbers to tackle that length at Ifold Bridge Lane just to the north of Southland Lock. Considerable progress has now been made in clearing impenetrable curtains of brambles, scrub and trees as well as the extraction of considerable quantities of general metallic scrap. The margins of the canal reach are now delineated by white posts and the area in between cleared in readiness for a full survey.

This is all good news and it has been very rewarding to be actively pushing back the boundaries but a short distance ahead of the construction work at Southland Lock itself. However, having just said in the last report that "no living things were injured nor inconvenienced during the process" some inconvenience was indeed caused during this month's tasks. Well, ('you know how it is') someone was sawing through the exposed tree roots around the river near that dilapidated old bridge and sawed straight into a water pipe. Apparently the pipe looked just like a root ('should have gone to spe...avers'). It was an agricultural pipe draped across the river but caused quite a fountain and proved to be the sole supply to several houses. Fortunately, we (or specifically Ray himself) seem to have all sorts of useful contacts, one of whom turned up quickly and fixed it.

This apart, some excellent progress has been made and you can see the change yourself if you venture up this way.

Peter Lander (for Ray Pick)

Pictures (right): The MWWP at work



Winston Harwood Group

We did the finishing touches at Rose Walk and managed a grass cut by the water wheel and what we like to call Winston's bridge. We then moved on to the canal adjacent to Devil's Hole Lock for leak sealing using Bentonite matting. Interesting watching the large machine with skilled professionals but slow - despite mechanical handling cutting down our manual labour numbers.

Down to the new Canal Centre at Loxwood. We were involved in levelling, profiling and planting round the building, plus turfing. Others concreted and paved for two long seats (very nice mahogany and engraved) These we fixed down to prevent thefts. We also moved the existing fencing (better view of the Centre) to the large new gap by the car park gate. Further fencing blocks the gap- hopefully no travellers caravans!

Tony Clear for David Junkison

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

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

It is with great regret that we say 'cheerio' to Bernard Ashley. Apart from being Development Officer for the Trust, he was also an enthusiastic and regular member of our group. We shall miss his support but wish him well with his move away from West Sussex.

On 1 April our leader and his wife, ably assisted by Brian, Nansi and Helga, ran a barbecue at Brewhurst lock and provided 300 sausages/beef burgers as part of the opening day of the new Canal Centre and small boat rally. Demand was well above the original estimate. Must have been the good weather and the excitement of the event!

The 'incidence' of the calendar meant that we had three meetings in April. We completed the fence at Three Compasses Bridge (see March report) and we have started work on our nine main sites. Just as well, with all the rain we have been having, the vegetation has been growing rapidly.

We have also 'reported to HQ' the tree which has fallen across the canal at Newbridge.

Please contact John Empringham for our May meeting dates if you would like to join us.

Nick Wood

Tickner's Heath Depot

Since the last entry to this prestigious publication we have had the assistance of the MWWP to help clear the area by the red shed and move the scrap so as to give an area for car parking, all that remains is to move our pump test tank and clear and firm up the grassed area. Speaking of scrap, Dave K has kindly brought a load of the stuff which was found in the canal. He is now scheduling in a run to Muddles to get rid of it, plus some that has been lying around the depot; this should at least bring in a few bob for the Trust.

The compilation of the inventory continues apace most of the major sheds have been assessed but it will be some months before the inventory is complete. At present Richard our archivist is busy counting bricks and other such building material and is now an expert on all things metric and imperial bricks, knowledge he is willing to share for a mutually agreeable fee (contact the Depot Manager for the rates).

During the recent sealing of the canal, the team was asked to manufacture the pins/staples to hold down the Bentonite sheeting. Luckily we had quite a quantity of reinforcing bar from which to make them, plus Dave K managed to acquire more from one of his sources, so once again our customers' needs were satisfied (we hope).

The tools, less a quantity of edging shears, have been moved from the fuel store to the large shed once occupied by Richard Annis (second on right from the gate). The fuel store was getting rather cramped and it was proving awkward to get at the tools, also we now have a lone building where flammable and hazardous materials can be stored without risk to other equipment.

Unfortunately, the Green Goddess proved to be a trifle temperamental whilst pumping out the lock at Brewhurst, so the team has had a good look at the old girl and did find a rather corroded electrical terminal and a blown fuse; both of which were replaced, but she will need an extended run to see if this cured the problem. It was found that the handbrake lever was damaged and had to be modified also a heavy duty jockey wheel was purchased and fitted which should help future transportation.

We received a request from Val Atkins for equipment for the opening of the Canal Centre. Most of the equipment is the same as that used at the water wheel, but she did however ask for umbrellas which we do not have at Tickner's. But we were at least able to supply most of what was required to help make the opening a success.

During the past months the team has been busy tidying up the various wood stacks throughout the depot with the aim of putting everything in one place, so to that end we cleared out all the timber being

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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

kept in the end shed so that we have more space for what is to come. At least now visitors can readily see what we have at the depot, even if at times we have been mistaken for a reclamation yard, which I suppose we are.

Finally star of the month is Francis Wellerd who managed, at short notice, to manufacture enough marker posts to keep Eric Walker's merry men happy. They might have been, shall we say, a trifle rustic but they should do the job, so well done Francis.

Well that's about it for this edition, all the best to you lot at the sharp end.

John Smith

Loxwood Link

Not a lot to report from me, but we have been actively maintaining the Loxwood Link sections. Firstly we have undertaken replacement of the paddles at Brewhurst, and all the paddles were greased ready for the coming season

The winter saw us busy doing maintenance on the navigable section at Loxwood, having seen towards the end of last season that water was being lost from the Loxwood (Onslow) pound when the top gates at Brewhurst were left open. It was thought that debris was jamming the bottom gates. Taking the water out of the lock revealed that in fact the chamber was fairly clear with only a small mound of debris in the centre of the lock. The mitre was checked and found to be in good condition, then a close look at the paddles revealed the true state of them.

The paddle doors were badly worn with over an inch of timber missing in places, the gates were also deeply scoured. Having given it some thought, I took the decision to replace them with new panels and at the same time repair the gate scours by overlaying a new sheet of plastic, set into the existing recesses. Thus we arrived at a 20mm back board and a 20mm paddle in the original 2in (25.4mm) recess. This seemed to be the solution, and we could reuse the original retaining guide bars.

Having sought a price from Hargreaves Lock Gates and British Waterways (Bradley Workshops) I was not happy with the costs and so sought out a more cost effective solution. This came from a couple of local companies in Southampton. First the plastics were sourced from a company in Hedge End, supplied and cut to size. All that remained was to cut out the centres of the back boards, this was done at home with a drill and a jigsaw. Lessons learnt last time at Baldwin's Knob meant that I made the opening bottom edges tapered and the bottom edges of the paddles as well so that the two would engage and not bind like those at Baldwin's Knob do. This was successful, and the paddles run up and down nicely,

The frames again were made by a local steel fabricator in Southampton and galvanised, the finish was excellent and the frames were 100% true (important to achieve a watertight seal). Finally the nuts and bolts were ordered for holding everything together. Derek Heath, Peter Foulger and I then had to drill all the fixing holes on the bench drill at the farm. This was OK until we came to the central two holes which we couldn't do as the panels were too big to fit under the drill. So these were done by hand, with a big drill bit and a pair of gloves, hand cutting the rebates!

By the time we had done this it was mid-day and we arrived back on site to find the pump had stopped and the water only a foot down in the lock. By this time it was raining steadily and the wind had picked up, so it was wet and unpleasant to say the least. By mid afternoon we still had over 2ft of water in the lock, and decided that, with the failing light, an intermittent pump and a lack of seal on the stop planks, we would abandon the attempt until the next Sunday.

For the second Sunday the weather had improved, and it was a pleasant day. We reset the stop planks with help from our assembled team, and replaced the plastic sheeting and 'necklace' (scaffold tube sections on a length of rope) and got a fairly good seal. By mid-day we had the lock drained down and the three of us got on and did the swap over of the paddles (the rest of the team having been sent up to Rosie to help her clean the boats). This achieved, we refilled the lock and checked the fit. Not perfect by a long way, but good enough to run with. The mitre of the gates has twisted, and so a bit of work is needed to sort that out. That can wait until the end of the season.

Finally we got the team back and put away all the stop planks. Derek, Colin Durbridge and I then took *Wasp* and *JJ* down to Baldwin's, where I put *Wasp* while they continued on down to the slipway with the old steps from *Wiggonholt*, returning just as I'd put everything away and locked up. Back to the Onslow and put *JJ* away - we then went home. Thanks to those that came and helped.

Having a spare day the other day I set about visiting each lock and greased all the paddle gear at each one, including Loxwood Lock, so everyone should find them easy to operate

Kev Baker

Thursday & Sunday Group

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