

Editorial

It's great to see that the Gennets Bridge Lock appeal has comfortably passed the £50,000 mark. And also that Spring seems to have arrived at last.

Looking beyond the bounds of the Wey & Arun Canal, we recently heard, via the IWA, that the former Dudley No2 Canal, also known as the Lappal Canal, is under threat through a supermarket development. Plans originally agreed by Birmingham City Council for a new Sainsbury's store at Selly Oak made provision for preservation and restoration of this canal line, but the developers have now submitted revised plans going back on this agreement. The IWA urges as many people as possible to object to the new plans. You never know, we could be next.

Bill

Thursday & Sunday Group - Southland and Northwards

At Southland our barometer of how quickly the ground has dried up is the adjacent field where ploughing started on 28 March, the crop is now up almost two inches. The construction of the bottom training wall on the off side is finished and landscaped. The construction of the training wall by the towpath is well advanced. Once it is complete, we can build steps up to the towpath.

At the end of April we saw the last of the original Southland Lock while excavating to lay the concrete base for the stop planks. The invert was a double brick layer making it about 12 inches thick. At the end of the lock we discovered the wood stop ends, as seen on the drawing. The planks were about 3in thick and about 2ft wide into the ground. It was surprising to see how sound the wood still was.

The connection of the back pump to the pipe-work (to take the water to the top of the lock) should be completed in May, and then the shelter for the pump can be completed.

At Loxwood Lock the repairs to the small back-pump have met with a number of snags but we are hopeful that it will be fully operational in May. This work has delayed making replacement coping stones for the horse bridge. May should see completion of the fitment of the top gate walkways at Loxwood Lock. Behind the Onslow Arms, fitting of the fenders for the safety ladders continues to be on hold.

In Sidney Wood, Julian Cheek and his team have finished the work for the time being on the proposed canal diversion around the Old Lock House; activity here will resume in the autumn.

For Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) some more trees have been removed to enable access to the construction equipment site and the diversion of the bridleway around the lock construction site. Some Geotex has been moved to the site to start the haul road construction. This is another job which should get underway in May.

Have you got a life expired battery in the garage? If you can get them to me I can get good money for them.

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

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well at least it's getting warmer and we can now throw ourselves into a bit of tidying up after the winter. We have still, however, managed to do some repairs, one of the pressing needs was to fix one of the shed doors which had become rather careworn. The first problem was to decide if it could indeed be repaired, but our carpentry wizards Ken Bacon and Mick Jones had soon worked it out and with the aid of Mick's trusty router they managed to save the Trust the price of a new door.

When the Aquadock returned to the depot, it was found that the plastic boxes carrying the fixings were not man enough for the rough handling they get out on the canal. Richard Powell, along with most of the team, set about finding suitable wooden boxes to store the items. Luckily some were found lurking in one of the sheds; the only things missing were lids. But with the usual skill and dexterity which is a mark of the team, this hurdle was easily overcome and lids were produced and fitted.

After a request from the boys of the Maintenance Unit our team has taken on the responsibility of repairing and servicing the powered mowers. It would seem that we can save the Trust at least £100 per mower in servicing costs alone. When inspected by our mechanical expert Frances Wellerd, ably assisted by Mick Jones, it was found that of the four wheel on one mower, only one wheel was fit for purpose. Luckily a delve into the copper scrap bin produced some half-inch heating pipe from which we were able

to make suitable bushes for the three worn wheels. While stored in the green shed at Peter's Farm some of our furry friends had taken a liking for the primer pump bulb and so needed replacing, unfortunately this has had to be ordered from our friends at Alfold Mowers who commented that the little darlings seemed to be into rubber, strange? Frances is now scratching his head trying to work out a way to fit a cover to protect the bulb.

We let our new boy David Robson loose on repairing the Red Shed, and at the same time do a bit of scrub clearance around it. Unfortunately removal of a rotten tree stump left the depot rather exposed, so the team set about increasing the security around the depot. At the same time they improved security of the roof. The problem there was that one of the beams had snapped, but with the usual skill and determination this was easily repaired.

Chris Guthrie had reported that a rather tiresome squeak or creak was emanating from a wheel of one of the small trailers. The team set about investigating, and found that the bearings and seals to both wheels were shot. Unfortunately we had no suitable replacements on site, so our trusty logistics expert David Kersley has taken on the task of obtaining them. While the trailer was stripped down we decided to look at the electrics as well. After coupling up to the Landrover the lights were returned to working order, we also found that the brake lights on the Rover were inoperative - all that was needed in this case was a new fuse, probably resulting from a fault on one of the many trailers David uses.

So other than unloading vast quantities of plywood and wood and disposing of logs destined for the bonfire, that's about it for this month. All the best.

John Smith

Hedgelaying Group

Good Day All Again. My report for April went missing so here is May. April proved to be rather quiet with me being on holiday and having car problems so only two days have been worked. A short length of 15m at Drungewick Slipways has been finished and we have layed the first 15m at the bottom of the bank working towards the Heavy Plant Crossing.

Tuesday 23 April proved to be a day of summer at a 21.5°C peak temperature in the shade, was that it as far as summer goes? Anyway, we will probably have one more day laying at Drungewick this season which will leave Thurs 9 May for Southland Lock hedge tarding up, plus possibly an extra day there, and one day at Drungewick to tidy up.

May Dates:- Wed 01, Thurs 09, Fri 17 & ?
Cheers all

Keith



Hedgelaying with Keith at Drungewick (Nigel Edwards)

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

With an improvement in the weather, we spent most of our first April outing tidying up at Loxwood, mowing and strimming the grass, finishing cutting the hedge on the offside of the lock, clearing the cuttings and assisting Dave Kersley with removing some of the coping stones to Tickner's for crushing.

We have been asked to take over the maintenance of the common land at Tickner's Heath, i.e the land which lies between the canal and the road on the Loxwood side of the causeway and a piece of land on the non-towpath side north of the causeway. Both are in dire need of TLC. So we made a start on the Loxwood side too, mostly clearing litter.

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 (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	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
Thursday and Sunday	Eric Walker's Group (construction)	Contact Eric Walker for details

We spent our second meeting visiting all our nine regular sites for 'keeping up appearances' purposes and as part of that, we replaced the rotten fence post at Loxwood New lock . Thanks to the extensive clearance work undertaken by MWWP last year Chris was able to mow the towpath all the way from the 90 degree turn in the canal north of Haybarn to the Lee Farm bridge/causeway. So that is looking good.

We meet again on 13 May and 20 May. We intend to use one of those outings to 'blitz' the common land at Tickner's.

Nick Wood

New Maintenance Group (our Chairman writes...)

With our ever increasing activities and lengths of restored canal, our maintenance work on some of the far-flung reaches needs more attention. The Monday Group already has a full programme of work and this has recently been extended to include a wider section at Tickner's Heath. It has been suggested to me that what we could with is a small maintenance team (say 3-5 people) that could step in and work on some of the small sections that need upkeep and can't be reached by existing groups. Perhaps they could also tackle such tasks as removing fallen branches over a towpath, or cutting back brambles. The group would only meet when there is a specific need. If you think you could help, please get in touch.

Sally Schupke, 01483 503029 sas@weyandarun.co.uk

Winston Harwood Group

Undergrowth clearance in Sidney Wood after 10-12 years bramble growth, uneven, and some steeply sloping ground was a fairly extreme challenge. We left it in a suitable state that should make the next cut much easier.

On to Drungewick stop-plank shelter, and disassembling it ready to move it to Southland lock. It clearly showed the advantage of Charles' brilliant prefabrication. It is now partly sectional and even the felt can be re-used. Even easier next time.

Looking forward to getting back to Lordings and replacing the broken bearing on the waterwheel, plus routine maintenance. It was impossible to get to the site earlier due to the excess winter water.

Tony Clear (for David Junkison)

Boat (appearance) Group

The boat group has had a successful start to the season with nearly two months of trips already under our belts or planned, and a very successful quiz and chip night. I am asking again for volunteers to help keep the boats looking clean and inviting for our passengers, ready for the ravages of the Pirates and Princesses trips (30 May), as well as the many charters we have booked. The next cleaning session is planned to be on Tuesday 21 May from 10am. Any help you can give will be most appreciated, and even an hour or two is worth while.

Anybody able to help with this important task please contact me at sh@weyandarun.co.uk or 07905 670095 or 01273 461729 (please leave a message if no answer). Thanking you in advance for your help.

Steve Harmes

Found

I've still got a silver thermos flask with a blue band – is there an owner out there? And an owner for a blue woolly hat?

Sally Schupke

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