

Editorial

Best wishes to all for 2015. The Wey & Arun Canal must be one of the only projects that sees work taking place over Christmas - unless you know better of course. As well as Keith's hedge layers on 23 December, on the 25th a small group led by Mike Hobbs was spotted busy planting a hedge at the Hunt Park site. Amazing...

Bill

The Mrs Bucket Group

As anticipated in last month's WPN, in December we made a start in tidying up the towpath in Sidney Wood. With about half the distance completed and dependant on the weather, we shall continue the job on 5 January and 19 January with the aim of completing it before moving on to Harsfold in February.

During 2014 the group met on 28 occasions, undertaking 1,315 volunteer hours, valued at £14,864 (courtesy of Graham's spreadsheet!).

Nick Wood (keeping up appearances on Mondays)



Mrs Bucket starting work in Sidney Wood (Nansi Taylor)

Hedgelaying Team

Close to the (H)edge; Down by the River (canal). Yes! A Happy New Year to all our readers and the lyrics to the song above were by what group?

We thought we would grab people's attention by hedgelaying in a prominent position. Brewhurst Lock gets the most visitor numbers so unless you are blind, haven't read previous reports or not been to the lock for a couple of years, you should have noticed our efforts.

We even had a presence there on Tuesday 23 December, albeit the group amounted to 1¼ people (I was the ¼) and our last day for 2014 was Tues 30 December (see picture on next page). On that day we finished (our latest hedge from an imaginary hedge line) at the footpath to the Mill. This was a great team effort by a band of four.

This latest excursion by the group has seen some new members, i.e. one of my ex-bosses boss (*I'll teach him how to do it properly even if it kills me*), a mad scientist from Alfold (he must be mad to work with us!), and a professional hedgelayer from the Southern Hedgelaying Society (founder member) of some 50 years standing (see asterisked brackets). Our older standing members (more often than not sitting) wish to remain anonymous so we can't be blamed for anything (including me). Don't tell him your name Pike!

Well, enough of meeting the team, but what does 2015 hold for us you may ask? Answers on a postcard to me please as I haven't a clue. Wrong. To finish off at Brewhurst Lock, approximately another 25 yards = 2 days, some more coppicing, some tinkering at Roger Dimmock Lane and then possibly back to the Brewhurst area or... ?

I shall finish this missive with a few memories of the first part of this seasons laying.

30 September - low flying buzzard.

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Vacant	Health & Safety Officer		Volunteer required please
Eric Walker	Loxwood Projects	07717 855340	tsg@weyandarun.co.uk
Vacant	MidWeek Working Party		Contact David Daniels (above)
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 Group (Lordings)	01903 774 301	winstongroup@weyandarun.co.uk
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21 October - gale force winds whilst coppicing in a very sheltered position.

Balmy and sunny days in October and November.

A vole being annoyed by our coppicing work.

Kingfisher fly pasts at Brewhurst Lock.

9 December - very, very low flypast by an RAF C130 Hercules (even the RAF is interested in our hedgelaying judging by the amount of flypasts by Blackhawks, Chinooks and VIP C130!).

All the positive comments that we have had from passers-by.

16 December - baked potatoes and roast chestnuts - cheers Dave and Stuart.

Finally, as the last person to leave the site on 30 December at 16.40, I saw a barn owl flying past inspecting the hedge.

Wishing you all a good 2015.

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



all in the last weeks.

As previously mentioned the Hydrovane compressor died a death and we stripped it down to salvage its innards for scrap. However, the carriage it sat on looked as though it might come in handy and the team managed to adapt it to take one of the excellent 4in pumps, which makes this far more mobile.

We again turned woodworkers as the Northern Office required another signboard for the canal. We are thinking of patenting the design as it seems likely that more will be required in the future.

On information received regarding the demise of the road roller, we decided to strip down an old spare engine of similar design to that powering the roller to see what the task involved. It took all the ingenuity and skill of the whole team - even with the help of the manual - but the task seemed to be a bit prohibitive as it would mean taking the whole engine apart to retrieve the part required to fix the roller. So we have had to put our thinking caps on to see if we can find an easier way of fixing the roller's broken cut off switch.

On our last day before close down we took advantage of the quiet time to tidy out one of the sheds and move some of the donated equipment to another part of the depot where the items could rust in peace. The trouble with making space is, as you know, in no time at all something will take its place and the whole cycle starts again. Hey ho, such is life at the depot.

Just a point to note for the future: in January we will be changing the padlocks on most of the sheds at the depot. In future if items are required please let myself or Dave K know your requirements and the items will be put in the appropriate place for your collection. Well I guess that about it for this month. All the best for the 2015.

John Smith

Keith Nichols

Thursday and Sunday Group

The Thursday & Sunday Group meets at 09:30. Because the work is taking the group to a number of different sites, our current practice is to email a work briefing form before the working day. Please email Eric Walker for information

Eric Walker

Tickner's Heath Depot

With the onset of the festive season we have been rather quiet at the depot as you can well imagine. However you will be pleased to know that we did manage to get some work done.

Dave K has been busy helping out the MWWP in their efforts canalside, so much so that we have hardly seen his happy smiling face at the depot at

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	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	Work in Lording's area	Contact Tony Clear for details
Various Tuesdays	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
21 January (1230 for 1pm)	Workers' Lunch	Contact Geoff Perks (as above)

Mid Week Working Party

The MWWP worked two Wednesdays during December. We completed the work from Brewhurst Bridge to Birch Copse, clearing the towpath bank of vegetation that was overhanging the canal and encroaching on the towpath.

This now makes it an easier passage for our trip boats and provides passengers with views of the River Lox, adjacent woodland and the fields on the opposite bank of the river.

Following the recent visit of the Waterway Recovery Group forestry team at Hunt Park, we

moved and cleared all of the timber and small branches.

The MWWP wishes everyone a Happy New Year.

Dave Verrall, on behalf of Ray Pick

WACT Workers' Lunch

Don't forget the annual lunch at Foxbridge Golf Club for workers and partners, on 21 January at Foxbridge Golf Club. Tickets are £14.85 for two courses, £18.15 for three. Details and booking form were in WPN 253, or contact Geoff Perks, 61 Ashleigh Road, Horsham, RH12 2LE.

The Winston Harwood Group at Lordings

Tony Clear reports that the Lordings/Winston Harwood Group is 'resting' at present because it is too wet to get to the site. So it's a good opportunity to publish this potted history of the Lordings waterwheel by Richard Watson which your editor regrets he omitted from an earlier issue.

After the grand re-opening in 2011 of the newly refurbished version of Winston Harwood's wheel there was, inevitably, little publicity when one of the bearings failed only some 12 months later. There has been much discussion as to what went wrong and various theories have been suggested, including the possibility of something not adjusted quite right in the rush to get ready for the opening ceremony, or vandalism causing undue shock to the bearings. We may never be sure, but in the process of repairing the wheel, we've spent much time and thought in making what we feel are certain improvements to make it that much more robust.

The first job was to extract the damaged bearing. A simple task, considering they all slipped on easily enough? Not so: as an ex-engineer, I learned early in my working life that the 'simple jobs' take at least twice as long as expected, and this proved to be a classic example. Despite various devices devised to get the bearings off and some judicious use of a sledgehammer, it shifted not one jot. After several attempts, we had to resort to supporting the wheel by its spokes on lengths of scaffold tube so we could remove the stub axles complete with bearings. The new wheel's designer, Tony Turnbull, proved invaluable for his knowledge and experience and was not shy about getting down on his hands and knees (one of which had also been refurbished) to get down to the task...

The stub axles were then taken away to a workshop where the bearings eventually succumbed to a hydraulic puller.

This may all sound relatively simple, but in practice, what with a mile each way of off-road driving,

several gates to struggle with, plenty of fetching and carrying on-site, so the weeks went by until rain and mud in late autumn 2013 stopped play.

Late May of 2014 saw sufficiently firm conditions for our humble two-wheel drive vehicles to get down to Lordings again to resume work.

The new bearings were slipped on to the stub axles and the wheel was lowered into position. We then had to adjust the wheel position for optimum operation, though in practice this meant making sure that there were no alarming scraping sounds as the wheel turned through a complete revolution.

Finally, with new wiper seals fitted to the spillways, there was much rejoicing as, with the aid of a plastic dustbin and stopwatch, we measured about 390 litres a minute of river water pumped up into the aqueduct with the wheel rotating at 3rpm.

Not that this was the role of the waterwheel, but I am told this would just about fill Southland lock in nine hours. Well, it's said canal cruising is supposed to be leisurely.

As with so many sites, at Lordings we've suffered from vandalism, and are currently taking steps to thwart such endeavours, so work is needed to lock the wheel and the sluice that controls the water power source. Also, aware of how potentially dangerous this construction is, extra safety measures are being incorporated. Both these aspects test our imagination in considering all the various things that young lads might get up to.

This takes us back to our own youth and brings out all the old stories of silly antics before anxious parents and computer games started to keep young people indoors.

With David Junkison's dedicated leadership, the Winston Harwood group has been great to work with and credit goes to all the team for getting this wheel up and running again. It's well worth including names; Tony Clear, David Southgate, Graham Woodhouse, David J. of course, and our consulting engineer Tony Turnbull.

Richard Watson

