

### Editorial

Some plans for future work were formally announced at the Trust's annual meeting at the end of October. Clearance will be carried out at Birtley, with the aim of creating a canalside walk, this being the subject of our application for finance from the Aviva Community Fund, as mentioned in last month's *WPN*.

A planning application has been submitted for rebuilding Harsfold Bridge, which carries a farm track over the Arun Navigation section of the canal near Wisborough Green. Our volunteer engineer Nigel Yarwood has designed a structure able to support heavy agricultural vehicles, but simple in construction so it can be built using largely volunteer labour.

The recent Localgiving 'Grow Your Tenner' funding campaign brought in donations of just over £1750, which, with some future regular monthly donations, should attract more than £1000 of match funding. This is a very worthwhile way of bringing in much needed cash for our future projects.

Once again, it's December, so Happy Christmas from *WPN*, and all the best for 2018.

*Bill*

### Thursday and Sunday Group

By the end of November who knows what may be happening at Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL)? The weather has been so mild the grass seed we

put in is showing through and the weeds are doing their thing too. Now towpath chatter says there will be a dry winter.

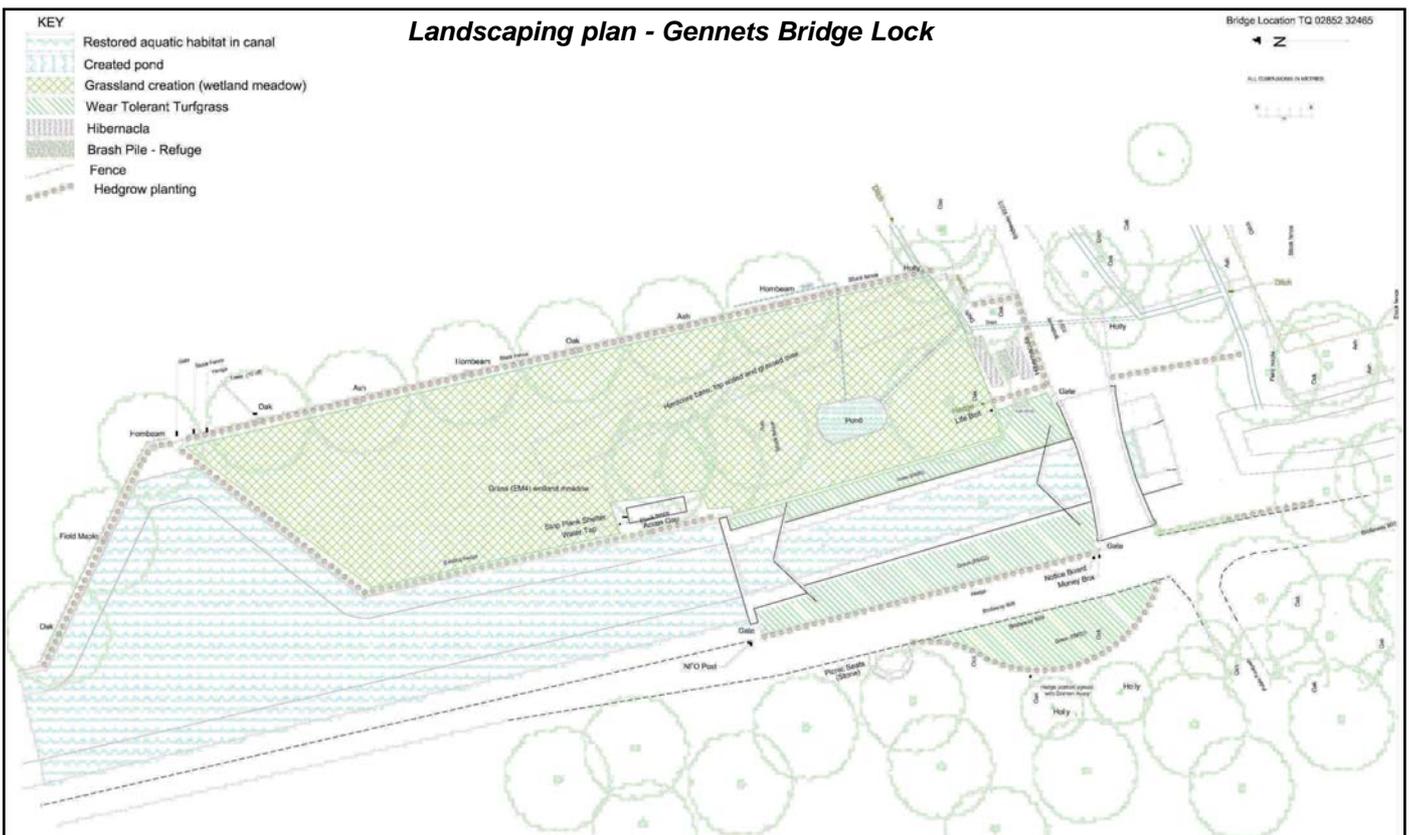
Water from the winding hole is filling the lock, going though the top stop planks and being held back by the bottom stop planks. The water level in the lock is controlled with sawdust on the wet side of the stop planks and a pump; the objective being to fill up the lock to full depth whilst finishing the bottom training walls on the dry(?) side of the bottom stop planks. At Gennets sluice there is only the smallest of trickles from the lakes, which is doing nothing to fill the canal.

A couple of design changes to the lock bottom training walls will enable them to be finished before the piles holding up the causeway are removed. This will mean that a landing stage will be required downstream of the lock when that part of the canal is restored.

November saw the delivery to GBL of over 700 hedging plants. This gave the TSG, nominally a construction team, a chance to show their planting talents, but more of that in the spring next year, when there is a show or no show. See below for the GBL landscaping plan.

The site equipment is being taken to the Tickner's Depot using the WACT Land Rover and trailers - a slow process. Two of the cabins went to Tickner's on schedule with the rest due to follow soon after.

*Eric Walker*



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## Northern (Summit) Working Party

Whereas October was busy in the North, November has been quiet. At Guns Mouth Island, three hours were spent trimming back the tree stumps to make them presentable for the planning application due to be submitted shortly for the new cut to the A281. Whilst there, we pumped out the two pontoons which were surprisingly still afloat, given the amount of water in them.

Heading south, at Compasses Bridge a combined London WRG/Northern WP team cleared the last of the debris and Heras fencing panels from the now former site compound and all is tidy there. With the aid of our smaller digger, the *John Smallpeice* was dragged from her mooring across the silt bar and tied up at the new Compasses Wharf by the bridge ready for work to be carried out to convert her to a work boat.

The slipway work continues steadily. London WRG dismantled the formwork shuttering from the southern side walls and started to re-erect this on the northern side. Brick laying can now start on the copings; though progress will depend on the weather. Over the Christmas holiday week Dave Evans plans to have a major servicing session on the mechanical plant, large and small. Saturday 30th December is pencilled in if you need a break from Christmas. We have a wood burning stove in a now-insulated cabin/rest area which is very cosy.

Looking ahead into 2018, we plan to complete the slipway in the Spring - after which we have been asked to carry out some vital repairs to the brickwork of Farnhurst and Fast Bridges. This work will run in tandem with our planned work to install a path/site access along the canal at Birtley. For now, thank you and Happy Christmas to all of our volunteers who have either worked on the canal in 2017 or who have helped to raise the

funds to keep us in work. For 2018, we could do with some new helpers on the team. So why not make it your New Year's resolution to join us. Please call, text or e-mail me if you would like to help. We meet every third Saturday of the month and often on other Saturdays as required.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Tickner's Heath Depot

Is it that time of the month again? It seems like only yesterday I put pen to paper (well hit the keyboard really) for this prestigious journal. So what has been happening to the guardians of the Trust's equipment, both old and new?

Well, more and more stuff seems to be appearing at the depot each week, most of it coming from GBL. Luckily after the previous month's efforts there is now more space to put the stuff. Once it has all arrived we will look to move it into more sensible piles so similar items are in the same place. This hopefully makes accounting for items easier and allows working groups to see exactly what is at the depot.

Wheelbarrows have been looked at by Richard Powell and Mick Jones. Those that are sound were



**'I'm sure I dropped it here' - Ken Bacon and John Smith in action, Mick Jones in the background sensibly keeping well away (John Piper)**

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put into storage whilst those failing the inspection were consigned to the ever-mounting pile of scrap in the skip. Our pair of scrap hunters, John Piper and David Robson, have been beavering away searching for items that have laid in the long grass for years, reclaiming what is useable and sorting the remaining unserviceable stuff into the relevant pile ready for dispatch to our tame scrappy.

Talking of long grass, Mick Jones has given the depot lawn its final cut of the year. He seems happiest when sitting on the powered motor at peace with the world, looking for sighting of the various forms of wild life that inhabit the skies above and vegetation around the depot. Seriously though, we are very fortunate in the location of the depot. For a 'twitcher' there are ample opportunities for rare sightings in and around Tickner's.

We did have a short moment during the month using our technical skills (yes we do have some) but we must admit to failure trying to get the pictured chain saw going. Despite the combined efforts of Mick Jones, Ken Bacon and yours truly the beastie had to be consigned to the ever-growing pile of scrap machines. We did, however, have more success with a donated petrol powered hedge cutter which runs a treat, so if any of the working parties have a need for such an item please give me a call.

We have also had a look at a couple of the Trust brushcutters. One we had to pass on to the experts as no matter what we tried it could not be stopped using the stop switch. After checking the electrics it seemed that there was a fault with the microswitch. Although it could be stopped using the decompressor button it was thought safer to refer it onwards. We had more success with a brushcutter which had been returned to the depot sans safety guard, luckily we have a pile of old machines at the depot which we use as spares and managed to convert the safety guard from one of them to make the newer model useable.

Well I think that's about it for this month, keep smiling.

*John Smith*

## Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

During our first outing in November we visited most of our regular sites and brought them 'up to scratch'. As part of that we collected, repaired and installed the permissive path notice at Drungewick and completed the repairs to the fence at Devil's Hole Lock.

MWWP did a great job and completed cutting the final 90 yards of the hedge between Haybarn Swing Bridge and Lee Farm causeway, so we have started on the section from the causeway to Lee Farm lock. About 100 yards of hedge has been done so far. We intend to return to this site after Christmas.

We spent almost a whole day at the Tickners site clearing the towpath southwards to the causeway and northwards around all the planted areas which were much overgrown. A big litter pick was also necessary and clearance of all four culverts, a job which Dave Kersley used to do. A visit to Gennets Bridge lock was undertaken to 'scope' the task ready for the New Year.

Finally we have made a start in Sidney Wood and cleared up to the second causeway from Firtree Copse. The post in the Copse, which has six waymarks on it, was repaired by attaching a spur post to it as it was not possible to remove the waymarks.

We shall continue in Sidney Wood on 4th December but intend to visit Lordings on the 11th where we have three special jobs to do apart from the usual grass cutting.

The Monday Group sends best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our working party colleagues.

*Nick Wood*

## Hedgelaying Group

Festive Greetings to one and all. I could have been like the shops and the adverts and said that in the middle of summer but, call me old fashioned if you like, because I prefer to say it nearer to Christmas. Enough of that so, Happy Easter then.

### Working Party Diary

Every Sunday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Contact Eric Walker for details
Every Monday	'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
Various Tuesdays (not in summer)	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans

## Hedgelaying group - November



**Pollarded hazels with hedge in background**



**This year's laying with last year's in the distance**



**Carrying on regardless (all pictures by Keith Nichols)**

So, I am writing this in my mobile office which is not in Horsham and definitely not in the Anchor Tap. Shock! Horror! I've given up drinking beer! Well, until someone offers to buy me a pint. Sorry, I've got bored with waiting so I'm off to the bar.

Ah! That's better. As no one has asked me what we've been doing I'm going to tell you anyway.

Over the past two months, 10 Tuesdays, at Slinfold we have cut over 400 stakes and binders, pollarded 38 trees and layed 50 yards of hedge. There are about 20 yards left to do. This has not been an easy job by any means but has kept the group members out of trouble. My chainsawing came to an abrupt stop on Tuesday 28 November, as I hit a hidden high tensile straining wire that some lazy fencer, working for the neighbour, had attached to one of the bigger trees in the hedge. Sparks flew, and the saw stopped cutting as the cutting teeth on the chain very suddenly became blunt. I do love people that attach wire and barbed wire to trees to create a fence.

The Tuesdays have been almost dry. The wildlife has been boringly absent so not the most interesting of places to work. We have only had the last two Tuesdays with bonfire cooked food which have been that old staple of baked spuds and, despite the team comments, have been cooked to perfection.

Well, I don't like to overstay my welcome so Happy New Year everybody and with that, that's yours truly signing off. 'Bye

*Keith Nichols*

## Mid Week Working Party

**M**WWP numbers held up very well all through November. We finished our four sites at the beginning of the month, these being the hedging at Haybarn as far as the causeway, clearing the canal cut of trees by the swing bridge, and clearing Rooks Hill Farm and Rushetts. All of these areas are all looking so much better.

For the rest of the month we have cleared both sides of the canal at Birtley going North as far as the dam. We have continued to clear up to the boundary on the East side and we are now clearing trees from the base of the canal. This we have found very difficult as it is heavy going underfoot.

Sadly George Breach, one of our longest standing MWWP members, was killed in a road accident in November and we all extend our sympathies to Judy.

*Margaret Darvill*



**MWWP get down to work at Birtley (Alan Jennings)**