

### Editorial

Don't forget the Navvies' Lunch on 13 February in Cranleigh. Full details were in the last WPN; if you no longer have your copy it can be found on the Trust's website. By now it's probably too late to book a place.

Bill Nicholson's report gives some idea of the amount of work coming up in 2019, including three whole weeks of work camps. And that's just on the summit level. The prospects are particularly exciting because the Trust has actually purchased a section of canal at Birtley - great news.

*Bill*

### Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

We started the year off by completing the work undertaken by the Summit Working Party adjoining the road at Tickner's, referred to in the January WPN. It was a new experience for us using the Trust's chipper. We also visited Three Compasses Bridge, gave it a good tidy up and spread two tipper loads of topsoil transported to the site by Dave Evans.

Apart from a short visit by two of the group to Compasses Bridge to re-erect the metal fence which had slipped, the other three outings in January were spent working on the leased section in Sidney Wood, clearing the towpath and both sides of the canal, a big task. We shall require another two visits, possibly in February, to complete the job all the way from Firtree Copse to lock 16 (1500 yards).

As a point of interest and as mentioned in the last WPN, owing to our increased workload requiring the move from bi-monthly to weekly in October 2017, the Group increased its volunteer hours by 31.8% in 2018 compared with the previous year!

*Nick Wood*

### Tickner's Heath Depot

Well that's one month of the new year gone already and the temperature isn't showing any signs of increasing - brrr.

In the short time the depot crew have been back we have made a start on refurbishing the small portable generators held at the depot. Unfortunately the first we chose was not in a cooperative mood and refused all encouragements to start. Fuel down the bore or carburettor had no effect and when we looked into the tank the reason became obvious: there was more crud (technical term) than fuel. So the whole engine and associated parts needed to be stripped down. We now must wait until a gasket set wings its way from darkest China before we can put it back together and prove that our hard work has not been in vain.

On the first Wednesday back, our Land Rover



**The Monday Group in Sidney Wood - top: in action on 21 January; Below: Not the Navvies' Lunch, 14 January. Pictures by Roger Wilson**

decided that, having had the hand brake applied over the Christmas recess, that it would rather like to keep it that way. So when yours truly attempted to refuel the beast nothing I could do would persuade the old girl to move. Luckily the chaps at Harwoods in Pulborough decided they needed a change of scenery and so paid the depot a visit. Although they managed to free off the hand brake, the beastie still needed extensive repairs, so it was taken to Pulborough for a short stay. There was one positive however in that as the annual service was due this was completed whilst there, saving a further trip in February.

May I suggest that, due to our experiences of the above, until the warmer weather arrives, when drivers return the Land Rover to the garage at the depot that the hand brake is left off. Many thanks.

You may remember that in last month's issue I was a trifle concerned that one of our generators (a Honda 1Kw) had disappeared from our workshop at the depot. Well good news, it has been returned safe and well and seemingly none the worse for the experience, so thank you to whoever borrowed it for returning it.

Well that's about it for this month. All the best.

*John Smith*



**NWPG in action on the summit level, building the fences and improving the towpath (Bill Nicholson)**

## Summit Working Party and Visiting Groups

For the first working party of 2019 the NWPG contingent returned to Birtley where we ran the successful WRG week camp in October last.

For this weekend the main focus was on carrying on with the boundary fencing. This has moved on with help from Trust member, Stephen Darvill who has been back with his post thumping tractor. This removes the laborious task of bashing in the fence posts by hand - very helpful given the ever increasing average age of our team! Also since October the

WACT teams have cleared and thinned many of the trees that either overhung the canal or lined the bank. This allowed NWPG to erect the boundary fence on the off side of the canal - work which had progressed significantly on the previous Saturday.

Two other jobs planned for the NWPG visit were a temporary repair - or should I say permanent repair to the temporary spillway. The second was levelling off the towpath surface and to tidy and profile the canal banks.

To say that 2019 is going to be busy year for visiting volunteers is an understatement. The main focus will be at Birtley, with the construction of a

### Working Party Diary

Every Wednesday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Details from Dennis Gillen/John Reynolds
Every Monday	'Mrs Bucket' - Keeping Up Appearances	Details from John Empringham
Every Wednesday	Mid-Week Working Party	Details from Margaret Darvill
Monday to Friday (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 tba
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans
First Friday of the month	PEST boat group	Contact Chris Jones/Peter Hyem

lifting bridge designed by NWPG member Robert Nicholson. A planning application has been submitted.

WRG have generously allocated three weeks of work camps in July to the Wey & Arun Canal, when we hope to build much of the supporting structure for the bridge. NWPG are running the first week and KESCRG the last. If anyone is interested in leading the second week and cooking for it please let Bill Nicholson know.

Work up until then will concentrate on completing the access road (main job for the NWPG visit over the May 4/5/6 bank holiday weekend) and putting in earth dams either side of the bridge site, then, hopefully, to excavate the hole into which the structure will be built.

The Trust plans to run a fundraising campaign when all the necessary permissions are in place.

Other W&A work anticipated on the summit during 2019 includes the start of the major dredging project. The dredger, two barges and the tug are due to be craned in at Compasses bridge on Saturday morning of 2nd February. The plan is for a new dredging team to start work on digging their way back towards the slipway to create a central channel. Dave Evans says that he would like the dredger to be working for up to three days a week. He has a number of volunteers but would like to hear from others who wish to help. This will involve small teams (2/3 people) working on a rostered basis so we are seeking regular commitments, even if just once per month.

Another job will be to finish concreting the access road at the slipway/wharf. The plan is to do this work on a four-day open working week from 23 -26 March. We will use pumped ready mix as there is far too much to mix by hand.

The most unusual job we have been asked to do is to dismantle a log cabin in Farnham. This is to be transported to Shamley Green where the owners are to re-erect it as a classroom. Why you may ask? Well the cabin is part of the deal through which the Trust has purchased the Birtley length of canal. The work is programmed for four days, 13th to 16th February, and offers of help are sought. Tea and homemade cake are promised!

So in 2019 we will need all the volunteer help we can get. To this end the Trust is running a number of volunteer taster mornings to try and encourage more local people to get involved with the canal.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Mid-Week Working Party

MWPP have had a busy month with 28 volunteers out on one Wednesday. We have now completed working south of Gennets Bridge Lock. There is a wonderful view from the bridge and hopefully in a few months time it will be full of water.

We have also completed working at Birtley. This stretch has been cleared of years of unloved vegetation. We have removed many fallen trees in the canal and all of the overhanging laurels. From the bridleway over the canal, you can see a long stretch of canal in water and in the sun on it it looks beautiful. The water now is clear instead of being covered and the trees make this a lovely stretch of canal.

We are now working down near Haybarn. We have completed cutting the hedge and clearing the excess vegetation on the stretch from Lee Farm Lock to the causeway. We are now cutting the hedge and clearing the vegetation from the causeway to the swing bridge. It is a long job even with our large numbers of volunteers.

*Margaret Darvill*

## PEST Boat Group

The Boat Group PEST ('Passengers' Environment Safety Team') working party aims to keep the navigation clear of obstructions that would jeopardise the safety of our passenger and crew or interfere with the safe operation of our boats.

Last autumn, in addition to its routine clearance work, the team tackled the weed infestation in the navigation south of Barnshill Bridge where there had been a quite unusual growth underwater of a very thick and dense weed. This weed caused our boats considerable difficulties making the trip to the Drungewick Slipway. The PEST volunteers managed to clear a significant amount of weed from the navigation around the Slipway. However, it was

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John Talbot	Health & Safety Director	01483 429918	jcst@weyandarun.co.uk
Dennis Gillen	Eric Walker Group		dennis_gillen@weyandarun.co.uk
Margaret Darvill	Mid Week Working Party	01483 894606	margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk
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Chris Jones	Boat group PEST	01403 752393	chrisryderjones@outlook.com
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk

apparent that, in the future, mechanical means of weed clearance would be required in order to effect a complete solution to this problem.

November saw the team following up the work of the tree-felling party south of the Drungewick Lane Bridge clearing all the debris from the felling operation from the navigation. The team continued along the currently unused section of canal to Drungewick Lock removing debris from the water and cutting back some of the more egregious outgrowth from the bank. Plenty more work of this nature remains to be done if we are to keep this part of the navigation in good order.

The New Year commenced with the team clearing the off-side bank of the navigation from Loxwood Lock to Devil's Hole Lock cutting back growth encroaching on the waterway and removing the debris from the water. The many hazel saplings that had grown up along and around the winding hole south of Devil's Hole Lock were also removed. This should keep the bank clear of small trees for another two or three years.

Anyone wishing join the working party should contact me (see p3) or Peter Hyem (01403752393, e-mail: peter@barscorner1.plus.com)

*Chris Jones*

## Eric Walker Group

The group has spent the last few weeks carrying on the refurbishment works at Tickner's Heath Depot.

We have now agreed a contract with UK Power Network and a cable laying subcontractor and we have started work on excavating the mains supply cable trench from the nearby substation to a brick built switch box kiosk on the site. Cable laying is scheduled for 14th February.

Since the last report a specialist contractor has sprayed the internal surfaces of the four Nissen huts on site. This has the dual purpose of encapsulating the asbestos based sheeting and providing insulation.

The next planned operation is to fit out part of the large Nissen hut as a workshop for John Smith and his team. This will be completed in the next two weeks and then we will help John to move all of his equipment and tools.

Following the move another specialist contractor is scheduled, beginning on 18th February, to pay us a visit to remove the asbestos roof sheeting from the existing workshop building as well as two other buildings.

*Dennis Gillen*



**EWG at Tickner's**  
**The Eric Walker Group's (and specialist contractors') work at Tickner's Depot has resulted in a safer and warmer store and workshop for our plant maintenance team (pictures provided by Dennis Gillen)**