

Editorial

Don't forget that on 8 July there is a 150th anniversary celebration of the small boat cruise undertaken on the canal by J.B. Dashwood. Anybody who's heard one of Tony Pratt's excellent talks will be familiar with the epic voyage.

Meanwhile, Drungewick Lock is closed to navigation while some serious movement in the non-towpath side lock wall is investigated.

Bill

Summit (Northern) Working Party

Four days of work took place at Hunt Park over 9-12 June when 21 volunteers (spread over the four days) set about installing the bank protection over three separate lengths of Cranleigh Waters.

The logistics for the event were difficult. With no secure site compound to deliver materials to, all the specialist materials (coir rolls and mats, gabion wire etc) had to be left at Compasses on the previous weekend with Dave Evans not only unloading them on his own but also having to build an artificial pond to keep them from

perishing before arrival at Shalford. Then on the day of the dig, about half the materials plus the Trust's dumper, small excavator and log trailer had to be transported to Hunt Park - not to mention the aquadocks and shower caravan!

On arrival, a further 30 tons of gabion stone and 20 tons of top soil had to be moved from the A281 layby across into the park. It was not surprising therefore that we probably spent about 1½ days out of the four moving materials and kit back and forth, thus reducing our ability to complete the ambitious task list.

There were two types of bank protection to install. One section involved driving a parallel row of short timber poles into the edge of the river, wiring them up and placing coir rolls on top. The bank was then protected with matting. There were problems with this as the poles disappeared very fast down into the alluvial river bed. So an amendment to the scheme had to be devised.

The solution was to re-profile the bank using the excavator so that the piles had something firmer into which they could be driven. The change in plan was successful and we managed to complete



Various stages of the Northern Working Party's long weekend at Hunt Park and Compasses Bridge (pictures from Bill Nicholson)

the section by the end of day 2, although without the layer of top soil under the mat which was detailed on some plans but not ours (helpfully!).

The second and longest part involved a curving length of the river bank further south (close to the viewing platform) with a much higher bank. Here we had to drive longer poles into the river edge using the aquadocks to position them and the digger to push them in. Thick oak timber wailings were then screwed to the poles using timber coach bolts.

Behind the wailings, gabion wire mesh was attached and filled with stone to hold it down against the poles. Coir rolls (with ready planted water based plants) were then placed on top of the wailings with top soil behind. This took us until mid Monday morning to complete. It was only half the job as a second upper level row of the protection is required along the top, close to the park footpath, which is what all this is designed to protect.

Section 3 is a short 9m section adjacent to the small footbridge. Our attempts to drive the timber posts as per section 2 were thwarted by the presence of underwater rocks and we abandoned any further work pending a reconsideration of the design.

The team worked really hard to achieve what we did. We were hampered in our progress by issues with the supply line and design drawings. Another weekend (with the materials already on site) is needed to finish the task along with a re-design of section 3.

Back at Compasses, more progress has been made. The path from the road and steps to the landing stage are substantially complete, as is the path security gate and fencing. The dam has been removed and much landscaping and clearance work done. The end is in sight! Dismantling of the main compound will continue throughout July with extra Saturday working parties planned. Please contact Dave Evans, as below, if you would like to help.

Bill Nicholson

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well here we are again, at last the weather has taken a turn for the warmer - in fact in some cases too warm, but we shouldn't complain. During the month, the boss had sufficient confidence in the workforce to take a day off and yes, you guessed it, things ran even more smoothly. Thanks Mick for running the show with such a marked degree of efficiency. So, what have those strange creatures who inhabit the far end of the runway been doing in the preceding month?

As we have seen an increase in the usage of the Trust's trailers recently it was thought a good idea to check that all was well in the electrical circuits of the beasts so the team dusted off the Wellard patent STIFO box, short for Side, Tail, Indicators and Fog (see picture below). They set to and ensured that everything was doing what it should. All seemed to be in order and at the same time the skipper took time out from his busy and onerous supervisory role to refit a trailer safety cable, proving once and for all that he does occasionally get his hands dirty!

June of course is the usual time for the annual Poddle walk. As it approached, the team could be seen delving into various sheds and store



The STIFO Box ready for action (John Piper)

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Before and after pictures of the Monday Group's fencing work at Gosden Aqueduct (Nansi Taylor)

cupboards to ensure that the organisers had sufficient items to make sure of a successful day out for those brave souls who put so much cash into the trust coffers. The only trouble with dishing the stuff out is that when it all returns one invariably has forgotten where it all resides. But the jigsaw was soon solved and all was stowed away safely and is now awaiting its next outing in 2018.

For some time now the team has been increasingly concerned about the state of the drive belt for the depot's sit on mower. To be honest it's a miracle it hasn't snapped before now, a new one was purchased but proved to be the wrong size chiefly because the boss of purchasing department didn't have his brain in gear when looking at the website of the supplier, so at the second attempt after feeding in the part number clearly marked on the old belt the correct size was obtained. Hopefully, after the belt bedding in, the mower will be back to its efficient best.

Those who have visited the depot will have noticed that there has been an increase in the amount of vegetation around the site and with this in mind the team managed to procure the use of the MWWP's Beaver strimmer, Mick Jones, who is game for anything, then proceeded to reduce said vegetation to manageable levels, so thanks to Margaret and her team you can at least see into the depot sheds. One thing Margaret has asked me to pass on is although I have called it the

MWWP's Beaver, it is in fact for the good and benefit of the whole Trust. So should anyone need a bit of heavy duty strimming, please contact Margaret Darvill or any of the MWWP team and if free it's yours to use.

Well, that's all folks for this month. All the best
John Smith

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

In June we have been 'keeping up appearances' at Haybarn, Newbridge, Drungewick lock, Drungewick bridge/aqueduct site, Loxwood, Devils Hole lock, Southland lock, Tickner's Heath, Three Compasses (now that 'The Summit Team' have finished there) and Run Common. We spent a long time at Loxwood as the location required a considerable effort, particularly on that very hot Monday, inter alia, cutting the overflow car park, tidying up the offside trip boat moorings and installing a new fence post on the lock side. In addition to all that, to meet an urgent request, we replaced four fence posts, after digging out the original concrete bases (hot work in high temperatures) and restored the fence rails on the upstream side of Gosden aqueduct. A lot achieved in two outings by nine volunteers on each occasion. As I write, the rain is falling heavily which means more growth!!

Nick Wood

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 | 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 | Hedge Laying | Contact Keith Nichols |
| Third Saturday of the month | Summit level | Contact Dave Evans |

Thursday and Sunday Group

On the basis that a picture is always worth a certain number of words, here is Eric's 6,000 word account of last month's work.

The Thursday and Sunday Group normally meets at 09:30. Please email Eric Walker if you want to get on the email circulation list for details of when and where the TSG is working



Lock HS Sluice Blade & Connecting rod being installed



Joiners shop: gate for Gennets Winding Hole access and stop plank shelter remake



There are Great Crested Newts there - honestly



Hanix cab off - now find the leaking pipe



Purple Emperor Butterfly at GBL



Group photograph of the Thursday working party at Gennets Bridge Lock, June 29