

### Editorial

There's another 'volunteer taster day' scheduled for Thursday 14th March. The previous two have proved very successful - if not already committed to one of our working groups please come along, find out about volunteering, and learn some new skills, like dumper driving or bricklaying. There's no shortage of work, the Trust just needs the people to do it.

*Bill*

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

Thanks to a good turnout of volunteers on 11th February (the 4th was cancelled due to heavy rain), we managed to almost complete our winter task in Sidney Wood (see last *WPN*). I say almost - it's with the exception of a small amount of non-urgent tidying up on the non-towpath side of the canal, which we will do later in the year. The towpath and offside of the canal now looks a lot better all the way from Firtree Copse to Lock 16 (1500 yards).

Working under the direction of Dave Evans we spent two glorious sunny and warm Mondays at Gosden Aqueduct building a new fence and associated bits and pieces on the downstream side of the aqueduct, thereby replacing the Heras fencing. We also repaired the vandalised notice board and created a compound for the bricklayer who is expected shortly to repair the upstream side of the aqueduct. Progress on the fencing (all completed) allowed a detachment of some members of the group to visit Hunt Park for tidying up and opening out views of the river.

We have a number of tasks in hand for March. More of that next time, but with the warm weather we may have to make a start on our regular sites too.

*Nick Wood*

### Summit Working Party and Visiting Groups

February has been a month of bungalows and boats. Each day we have been working has been blessed by glorious sunshine - that is provided we were not at Birtley where the weather for some reason is very often against us.

As expected, dismantling the log bungalow at Philip Oliver's house was a task and a half. Day one was spent taking down the inner linings, windows, doors and insulation from which hundreds if not thousands of nails had to be extracted and timbers stacked. Once the scaffolding had arrived late from Speedy Hire, we were able to get up onto the roof to start taking off the metal sheet tiles - again to be stacked.

Day 2 concentrated on removing the roof, an activity that got fully into swing once Dave had worked out a system - about three quarters had gone by the end of the day. Our hope was to finish on the Friday so that the expected larger Saturday team could work back at Birtley. To achieve this we would have to remove the rest of the roof, most of the side walls, the internal wall and the floor. By mid-morning it looked like another day was inevitable.

However Dave Evans, as he does in these situations, came up with a plan to deal with the floor - cut it up into small enough chunks that could be loaded into the horse box of the cabin's new owners at Westlands Farm. It worked and as a result the job was complete by 5.30pm and we were in the pub for a well - earned pint by 6! You can't say that volunteering for the Wey & Arun doesn't provide variety.

We made it to Birtley for the third Saturday where a partly exhausted team continued with fencing the west (non towpath) side of our boundary from the



**New fence installed by the Monday Group, on the downstream side of Gosden Aqueduct. (Steve Steere)**



**First picture of the Trust's dredger in action (Brian Morgan)**

causeway uphill to the south. We are now in sight of completing the fencing on both sides of the section south of Birtley Bridge, but still have the footpath to the Downs Link and the canal north of Birtley Bridge to keep us busy.

I mentioned boats - some of the team were at the dredger launch at Compasses at the beginning of the month and later at the first training session when some real de-silting using the new flotilla was carried out. The dredging teams are being established and if anyone wants to join us please let me know. The same applies to our Birtley work.

It was heartening to see many new members joining our team during the month - long may it continue. Welcome and thank you.

Coming up we have four days completing a concrete road/ramp at the Dunsfold slipway on 23 - 26th March plus our usual third Saturday at Birtley on 16th March.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Tickner's Heath Depot

What a lovely month February turned into, sunny and warm (well in places) just what was needed for the hard graft being done by all at Tickner's Heath.

So, what's been happening here beside Dunsfold airfield?

Well the depot crew ably assisted by the chaps from the EWG have spent most of February preparing and then moving out of our old workshop into to a fresh workshop. The 'new' one has been adapted to our needs from one of the old buildings by the lads from the EWG.

The building has had the asbestos roof sealed so things are much cosier, and we no longer have the fear of water cascading down upon us from on high.

But, one great advantage of the move is that it gave us a better idea of which items in the workshop were superfluous to requirements and so could be deposited in the various skips in and around the depot.

The only trouble with moving house as we all know is that you must then find a place in the new home for all the stuff you have accumulated over the years, which in our case may take some time.

We now await with anticipation the connection to the newly installed depot mains electricity supply, then we can return to our true *modus operandi*, I bet the boys from the EWG will be happy too as they can then return to digging bits out of the canal and building things, the work that they really enjoy the most.

So other than our giant spring clean that's it for this month. All the best

*John Smith*

## Eric Walker Group

Since the last report the group has been predominantly working on the Tickner's Depot refurbishment.

After a long delay there has been progress in the installation of the electricity mains supply. The trench has been dug between the substation and the switchboard kiosk on the site. A specialist contractor laid the cable on 14th February. Work has also started digging the trench for the site distribution cable to the new workshop and the small Nissen storage huts. We completed work to the new workshop and we helped John Smith and his team move the plant and equipment from the old workshop.

On 18th March a specialist contractor will start the removal of the asbestos roof to the old workshop and we will commence partial demolition and conversion into sand, aggregate and bulk material storage bays. A waste storage tank has been delivered and installed and a new hazardous materials store will be created, allowing the old 'fuel' store to be demolished, following the asbestos roof removal.

A small team has also been assisting Kevin Baker to construct a concrete and brick landing stage at Brewhurst Lock.

*Dennis Gillen*

## 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



An excellent turn out for the Navvies' Lunch at Cranleigh Golf Club (Nick Houston)

## Mid-Week Working Party

MWWP has only had three outings this month as we had the Navvies' Lunch on one Wednesday. At the beginning of February we were down at Drungewick. We split into two groups, one helped Dave Evans take down and clear some dead ash trees south of Drungewick Bridge. There are still many more to do.

The other group helped clear the towpath, making it possible for a vehicle to get down to do maintenance work. It is all looking very tidy between Barnshill Bridge and Drungewick slipway. The next two weeks we went down to Haybarn where we have been cutting the hedge and clearing the towpath of

perennial weeds and brambles. We have one more week's work there and then we are hoping to do a clearance of Guns Mouth Island.

This year's Navvies' Lunch was held at a new location; Cranleigh Golf Club which proved to be an excellent venue.

There were six tables of eight. Members of MWWP were joined by some of their partners and members of other working parties. The lunch was a great success and our thanks go to Di Miles who master minded the whole event. Good food, excellent company and a friendly venue. I recommend you sign up early for next year's lunch.

*Margaret Darvill*

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