

Editorial

Not much from me this time, but plenty going on along the canal, as you will see from this issue. I think it is marvellous how many different work groups, and how many volunteers, we have.

Bill

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well, here we are again. It only seems a short time ago that I put pen to paper for our last missive, well keyboard to PC really, but then I suppose it was quite recently.

Last month we continued our efforts to get the Mariner outboard running and as you will see from the picture below we had some success. After changing the impeller the beast ran a treat, that is once we managed to get it started. However, after consultation with the experts at the depot it was decided that getting this temperamental beast running was far too difficult to inflict on volunteers at the sharp end, so it will remain at the depot and be used for spares.

Also, during the month one of the trusts chainsaws was returned to the depot. We had originally given it to the MWWP but it refused to run properly and the experts at Honey Bros had guessed that it needed a new carburettor. As the saw was over 20 years old it was decided that this was too costly, so we decided to have a look. We rummaged through our stock of used carbs but unfortunately couldn't match the one on the saw, so even though we managed to get it running, as it would not 'tick' over it too has been added our spare parts department.

During the month, we took time to refurbish the 'Puddle' signs. Ken Bacon and David Robson set to with a will to repaint them, unfortunately my efforts to obtain a stencil came to nothing as the firm I found to supply said stencil promptly went bust, so you see the type of influence I have in the wider world.

On the last day of the month our honorary member Danilo tuned up with his trailer and carted off most of our non-ferrous scrap to a firm in Horsham. It took quite an effort as most of it had been lying in the depot for years, Dan later informed us that it took two hours to sort at Horsham but the good news was that it raised £501 for Trust funds. We have left Dan to decide where this can best be used.

So, other than a general tidying up and grass cutting that's about it for April. All the best

John Smith

Thursday and Sunday Group

The better weather is a great boon and with J.J. Price and Geoff Thomas working extra days, time lost earlier at Gennets ridge Lock (GBL) is being made up. Blow me, just a couple of days after the Telegraph published 23 reasons to visit Sri Lanka, I got an email from a TSG volunteer who is visiting there, offering advice on bricklaying. Come home young man we need you here! In May one TSG escapee is taking his sailing boat to Denmark and another is off to the Galapagos Islands and Peru. It seems par for the course that yet another recommends a six-hour trip on the Manchester Ship canal, which he had just enjoyed!

The last major concrete pour was expected to take place at the end of April, despite those gallivanting off. On two occasions the lorry broke down on the site and had to go back to the depot for repairs. For the TSG we benefited from the breakdowns and probably achieved more than if it had gone to plan. After that excitement the rest of the job should be routine - bricklaying and casting the copings, with a few special events to spice things up. In other words it seems that we are almost at the beginning of the end of the GBL project.



Hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil (otherwise Mick Jones, Richard Powell and John Smith)



**Top: concreting at Gennets Bridge Lock,
Bottom: Progress at the Gennets winding hole
(pictures provided by Eric Walker)**

The re-certification of the digger drivers duly took place, with result that the winding hole is starting to take shape and we have a great heap of topsoil to be used for the site landscaping at the end. We now have other returning drivers who need to be qualified so the winding hole will get

even further on - making the pound ready for boats, or do I romance?

Having provided bird boxes last month, the yellow wagtails have shown us they prefer to nest in one of our cabins as they did previously. They are no trouble really.

At the Gennets Winding Hole site, the yellow markers are where the electricity cable has been located, the white posts are where the fence and hedge will be and the black posts show the top of the bank around where the winding hole will be, and inside that is where the top soil is being removed. The next stage will be to remove the clay, where the top soil was, down to bed level.

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

Eric Walker

Summit (Northern) Working Party

Progress continues to be made at Compasses though completion dates pass with, guess what? - no completion! I shall abandon the concept as we have time. Nearly all the work has been at the top of the bridge and on finishing off the landscaping and access works.

At the end of the month NWPG made a three day visit during which the retaining wall on the airfield side was finished and back filled; the area between the bridge and main gate was paved. Towards the pub the road drain was concreted and the bollards sorted out so that they all fall in a line rather than staggering along the road edge!

Installing these is no easy task as about 9in (20cm) down you have to break through the old road surface. Looking at the site now, it's difficult to remember where the old road was.

Other work done included removing all the scaffolding from the canal (having completed the final short section of wall coping); more de-silting of the canal back towards the dam; installing an

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
Julian Cheek	Maintenance coordination	01483 505566	julian_cheek@weyandarun.co.uk
Maurice Cranefield	Visiting working parties	01483 505566	Maurice_Cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk
John Talbot	Health & Safety Director	01483 429918	jcst@weyandarun.co.uk
Eric Walker	Gennets Bridge Lock	07717 855340	tsg@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
Kev Baker	Loxwood Link	01489 690241	loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	depot@weyandarun.co.uk
Keith Nichols	Hedge laying	01403 753882	hedging@weyandarun.co.uk
Bill Nicholson	Northern working parties	01844 343 369	bill@nwpg.org.uk
Dave Evans	Summit working party		compasses@weyandarun.co.uk
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk

escape ladder and drilling the final weep holes into the bridge brickwork. It's good to see the grass coming up on the areas that we have soiled and seeded. We have continued this work during the month.

It is always good to have new members of the team and we welcomed Brian Morgan for his first day of volunteering on the Bank Holiday. We hope that he enjoyed his day and comes back! We will be back on site on 20 May if not before. Call or email Dave Evans or me if you would like to help us.

Bill Nicholson

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

Three meetings in April, one extra! Apart from a very short stretch between the spill weir and lock 16, to which we will return, we have completed work in Sidney Wood.

Accordingly, we have resumed clearance on our regular sites, visiting the Drungewick aqueduct site, Loxwood, Devil's Hole Lock (DHL) and Southland lock so they looked tidy for the Easter cruises. We also assisted Ian Burton by planting 20 rare black poplar saplings on the reverse bend in the canal between DHL and Southland locks.

At our third outing we paid a visit to Haybarn where we trimmed the Keith Nichols-laid hedge north of the bridge and swung the swing bridge. We tidied up Newbridge and cut all the long grass at Tickners. All our regular sites, with the exception of Run Common, are now up to date.

We meet again on 8 and 22 May, to include a visit to Run Common.

Nick Wood



Top - Haybarn, 25 April 2017, photograph by Hannes Gysin; Bottom: two views of Sidney Wood, by Martin Burgess, all showing work completed during April by the Mrs Bucket Monday group

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

Hedgelaying Group

Here follows an exclusive interview with Keith Nichols, Hedgelaying Group Leader extraordinaire, by Keith Nichols.

The team finished the 190 yards of laying at the site of Lock 11 (Highbridge, Rosemary Lane) going south towards Gennetts on 4th April. This was celebrated the following week by having a big bonfire of all the brash and cooking baked spuds par excellence.

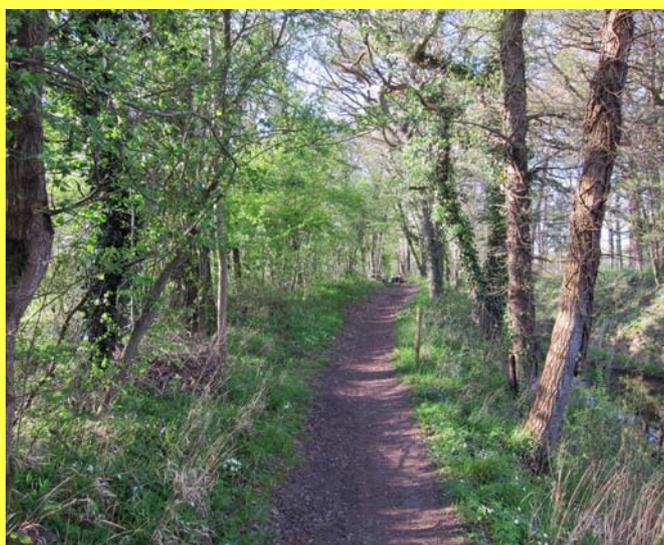
This section of laying was started on 10 January 2017 and has taken a total of 13 days of work, in mainly fair weather: in fact so good that we've been renamed by other groups, who have had rather a lot of wet, 'The Good Weather Group'.

We have since moved to the lock side of Lock 10 as the amount of coppiced material we had left was just enough for laying the 30 yards or so of the lock side and the run-up to it. This will leave a 200 yard run to connect Lock 10 to Lock 11's layed section. This is planned for the 2017/18 season with laying also being done north of Haybarn on the southern part of the canal.

The good thing about hedging in these areas is that they are quiet (if I don't start up the chainsaw) so you get to see Grey Wagtails walking past, the Red Kite circling overhead, lots of Buzzards, over the last week hearing four nightingales singing, the warblers - blackcaps and others, the redwings and fieldfares and a bank vole has stuck his head out and looked at us. Now it's the turn of May blossom as the blackthorn has finished, crab apple, cherry and on the ground primroses and bluebells have early purple orchids showing in them. In fact at Lock 10 in a very small area we counted over 120 early purple orchids.

Finis

Keith Nichols



**Top right - Early purple orchid at Lock 10;
Above and right - Lock 10 area before hedge
laying (photographs by Keith Nichols)**