

Editorial

It's sometimes all too easy to forget that the restoration work described in this newsletter has to be paid for. The Trust is, fortunately, very good at raising funds for its major projects and has been very lucky to receive many generous grants, gifts and donations over the years. Volunteer labour is a very important part of this, the hours our people put in are equivalent to many thousands of pounds over the year. But smaller cash sums are essential too, to meet the numerous minor expenses for equipment and operational costs.

There are ways in which small donations can be increased in value, such as Gift Aid, and the 'Grow Your Tenner' scheme at Localgiving, from which we have benefited substantially in the past. The latest 'Grow Your Tenner' was launched last month, and works slightly differently. Single donations of £10 or more will attract additional funding of £10. Regular monthly donations of up to £10 a time will also be matched, but only the last six out of 12 - so your £120 over a year will be worth £180 to the Trust. For full details, and to sign up, see www.localgiving.org/charity/wact. The total 'pot' is £200,000; the scheme will stop when this is all accounted for.

If we can attract votes, we will be in with a good chance of benefiting from the Aviva Community Fund. The Trust has entered the Birtley project in the Health and Wellbeing category. You, and anybody else you can persuade, can cast your vote on the website www.aviva.co.uk/community-fund before 21 November.

Bill

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

As mentioned in the previous WPN, the October calendar gave three Mondays in the month for our meetings. With the mild and sometimes damp weather our regular sites needed much attention, with the result that our first two outings were spent working there. As part of this we replaced two rotten fence posts at Devils Hole lock and tidied up Birch Copse. At Loxwood we cut all the overflow car park and cleared the ditch at the bottom of the canal bank. In addition, we mowed and strimmed Brewhurst lock following a request to our leader.

In fact we have been out four times in October. On the 23rd the Group spent all day at Lordings and once again cleared from the lock all the way



The repaired chain stile on the towpath near Lordings has been installed by the Monday Group (picture by John Empringham)

to Winston's flood gates and bridge. The towpath 'chain' stile (south of the bridge) was installed following repair by Tony Clear (see June WPN).

The following Monday (30th) we continued to cut the hedge between Haybarn Swing Bridge and Lee Farm causeway. We reckon we 'did' 80 yards which, given the large amount of work undertaken by MWWP on this site, leaves only 90 yards to do.

We are quite happy to undertake maintenance requests as they arise, but we are finding that the workload we are experiencing demands more than our regular bi-weekly meetings (occasionally three depending on the calendar), so we have decided, subject, of course, to the availability of group members, to increase our outings to four per month. This is going to be essential once we assume responsibility for the Gennets Bridge Lock site. Accordingly henceforth we shall now meet every Monday. For November we need to visit our regular sites again and complete the outstanding work at Malham Lock. An early start in Sidney Wood is on the cards. The culverts there will no doubt need unblocking following the end of the leaf-fall season.

Nick Wood

Thursday and Sunday Group

By the end of October at Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) the making of lock copings on the haul side and the termination of the back pump pipe at the top sill, off side, were complete.

The fence along the towpath was completed except for a pedestrian gate at the top end of the

lock, a late request from the Boat Group for their benefit when using the lock.

The ground behind the copings on both sides of the lock were made up with clay and then top soil. The weeds, that had grown so well over the recent warm and wet few weeks were knocked back by strimming. So finally a 'hard wearing grass seed mix spread' was spread on it. Weeds are going to be a problem for some time, their dormant seed in the top soil being just ready to pop up once the temperature is above 10deg C.

Len Hasler and his group are preparing to pour concrete at the last bit of the lock, the bottom training walls. What a really mucky, muddy, wet job that is and they deserve thanks for sticking to it - that is sticking both to the task in hand and to the mud.

Kev Baker came and put the top planks in at both ends of the lock, another major milestone done. He also replaced the stop planks in Gennets sluice, so when water starts to flow from the lakes the canal will fill. Surprisingly, with the amount of rain we have had recently, this has not yet started.

There are two spoil heaps in River Drive, the woodland between the canal and the Loxwood stream, Terry Spiller has profiled one and covered it with the silt from the canal bed, 'slop on the slope' you may say. Anyway a very skilled job. A similar task is to be done next month on the other spoil heap.

In preparation for the removal to the Tickner's Heath Depot, the painting of the cabins was started, but it being too late in the year we were unable to complete this due to the wet conditions. At the end of the month two of the cabins were moved near to the gate, while the date for moving the other has been pencilled-in to happen in early November.

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

Northern (Summit) Working Party

October has been a busy and productive month. NWPG visited for a three-day weekend early on with the team working on split sites. At Hunt Park, the uncompleted work from the June working party was tackled. The two river bank sections close to the viewing platform were worked on using the digger to drive in timber posts; a timber waling attached to the posts and then steel mesh nailed on behind that and back filled with stone and covered in top soil. We successfully finished the job and hopefully the path should be protected from any future flooding. The Sunday was a glorious autumn day and it was pleasing to note that the park was being well used by picnickers, people fishing, jogging and strolling - a real amenity for all.

At Compasses, JJ Price has now finished the fourth and final retaining wall for the bridge, meaning that there are only a few small tasks outstanding. These include building a concrete bag head wall to a culvert that joins the canal at the northern end of the working section. A replacement blue plaque has been installed on the garden wall of the Three Compasses PH with the correct opening date for the canal on it!

The main work for the month has been at the Slipway. A transferred week WRG camp (from the Grantham and Chelmer navigations) gave us a great opportunity to kick start this job. NWPG spent three days digging a vast hole for the structure which revealed the incredibly thick layer of blue clay that lies under this section of canal. I don't know how anyone can say it leaks here! Our local team then spent the first of six and a half days pre-fabricating the steel reinforcing cages to support the concrete side walls. The camp, led by Rob Nicholson, then set the cages into the hole, casting them in concrete at the correct level. The second part of the week was spent building and fixing the shuttering for the southern wall of slipway, a lengthy and complex task. The target was the booked concrete delivery for lunch time on the Friday. The team worked under lights until

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Northern workers at Hunt Park and the slipway

19.30 the previous evening and had about five minutes to spare between completing the frame and the arrival of the concrete. The pour went smoothly and the results will be revealed when the shuttering comes down in early November.

Next to the slipway, a row of piles was driven along the canal bank, the first part of an operation to provide an unloading wharf for spoil when we re-commence the de-silting operation.

We have much to keep us busy over the winter months. London WRG will visit in November to progress both the wharf and the northern side wall of the slipway. As well as the third Saturday (18th) there will be other dates in the programme.

If you would like to help us in this interesting project please let either myself Dave Evans know and we can provide more details of the plans for any particular day.

Bill Nicholson

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well, here we are again with another fun-filled article about those funny types who inhabit the Trust's depot in that far flung corner of Dunsfold Airfield.

Mind you, coming to the depot has its perks as you get to see all sorts of interesting sights which in time will no doubt grace the small or large screen, the most recent being what I thought might be a gas station but seems to be morphing into a diner. But less of that, lets get onto what's been happening since last I wrote.

As I have mentioned on previous missives we are slowly clearing the depot of unwanted items in preparation for the arrival of the large amount of equipment at present housed at GBL. Most of the last month has been spent disposing of the vast amount of timber which has been cunningly camouflaged under the depot vegetation and was no longer useable. This has been overseen by our resident pyromaniacs Richard Powell and John Piper, ably assisted by David Robson, who always ensured that they conformed to the Trust's code of conduct regarding the safe use of bonfires. Luckily some kind soul had deposited half a dozen fire extinguishers in the skip (they obviously didn't read my gripe in last months issue), the full CO₂s were very useful in preventing the spread and putting the fire to bed, but once again we had to take the empties to the local tip as they cannot be put in the skip.

At last I booked the right type of weather and am pleased to say that we have managed to fit new anti-slip strips (say that after a few fire waters) to the granary steps, which has now been renamed 'The Emerald City'. Give it a visit and you will see what I mean.

We have, though, managed to a bit of work of a technical nature. Some months ago a yellow trailer was donated to the Trust which in the event of having nothing else more suitable was utilised as a second skip. Unfortunately its former owner after consultation with yours truly decided that it had a use after all, so Mick Jones set to restore it to full health, tyres were pumped up, electrics checked, bulbs and plugs replaced ensuring that

Working Party Diary

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| 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 |

it was once again useable. Hopefully Tony will be able to use it for many years to come.

One final thing - some of you who live in and around the Costa Geriatrica will remember transporting bundles of newspapers from the 'Cactus Farm' at Ashington to the paper skips at Loxwood, I have to report that after quite a few months absence bundles are slowly reappearing. Not in vast quantities I'll grant you, but sufficient for a monthly check to see what has accrued.

Well that's about it for this month, all the best
John Smith

Hedgelaying Group

"BOO" Well it was Halloween when I wrote this but apparently I'm more frightening in the flesh. I am writing this in my mobile office which is nowhere near The Malt Shovel. In fact, I'm not even in Horsham, Shsh, you didn't see me, OK!

So far (not a comfy seat for two or three people) the team has spent six days at a secret location nowhere near Slinfold. The weather has been kind to us sofa (yes, that was a comfy one). We have cut 200-plus stakes and binders, the 'plus' ones being used on site as we have laid 20 yards (that's 40 stakes). This 20 yards has produced a lot of bonfire material, most of which has been bending over into next door's garden. I'm talking about 15ft to 20ft of 2in to 3in diameter branches, which is a lot of weight. The bonfire was going non-stop every day and our cars looked like they had been parked in Pompeii.

My mobile office is very mobile so not I'm not in

the Anchor Tap either, which is lucky because I don't drink, I spill most of it!

Well now, I've tried to be brief but someone was standing below me, or do I mean Under? Where? Oh! Knickers to this if you get my drift. Yes! That is all, thank goodness.

Love and kisses to you all and I'm off to the Mental Home.

Keith Nichols

Mid Week Working Party

This last two months we have been very busy in different places. For a number of weeks the group has been working at Rooks Hill Farm, Rushetts, and two different places at Haybarn.

At Rooks Hill we had one person digging test holes to see what the filled-in part of the canal contained, and six of the group cleared saplings from the base of the canal whilst others cleared the base of the canal at Rushetts of bramble and other shrubs. Both of these areas need one more week to finish the job.

Meanwhile at Haybarn, some of the group continued to clear the base of the canal of willows and other shrubs and others continued to cut the hedge. This is a long job which I think will take most of the winter to complete. We are hoping to go back there in November. Our latest outing has been to Birtley where we are clearing the north east bank to establish the state of the bank. Many of the group have never worked on this site, and it is good to be working in a part of the canal that is still in water

Margaret Darvill

Before (right) and after (below) views of MWWP's efforts at Birtley (pictures courtesy of Nick Houston)



Boat share for sale



We have been asked to notify WPN subscribers of a chance to purchase, for £4,300, a one-twelfth share in *Shelton*, a 58ft semi-trad 4-berth 2009-built narrowboat.

The share allows for four or five weeks use per year, with overall running costs shared 12 ways, currently working out to £105 per share per month. The boat is currently based at Braunston marina in Northamptonshire, but this changes periodically.

For further details or more information on the boat and the syndicate, please call Nick on 01252 792048 or Email nick@hous2n.plus.com.