

Editorial

WACT is pleased to report that Compasses Bridge was Commended in the Canal & River Trust's Living Waterways Awards 2017. The certificate was presented to Chairman Sally Schupke at a ceremony in Birmingham on 27th September (below). The project was entered in the 'Community and Volunteering' category, proving what volunteers can achieve. This category was extremely competitive, drawing many entries from community projects as well as other restoration schemes; the category winner was a canal festival on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, second was the Tees Barrage, followed by Compasses.



At Compasses, a commemorative plaque is now in place on the bridge next to the viewing area and the seat donated in memory of Arthur Dalby, along with the mooring bollards.

Most of our visiting groups get involved in construction or large-scale forestry, but over the weekend of 16/17 September, we welcomed volunteers from WRG BITM (Bit In The Middle) who carried out intensive clearance work along the Lordings section near Wisborough Green.

Don't forget the Trust's Autumn Meeting in Pulborough on 28th October, when there will be updates from the various project managers.

Bill

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

At the beginning of September we continued with maintaining our regular sites before returning to Haybarn for our second outing. Six of us cleared another 20 yards; this may not appear much but where we were working the hedge was very thick and dense with very long brambles mixed up with hawthorn etc. We also burnt the cuttings left by MWWP from their earlier visit in the week.

With two visits each from both working parties we reckon about 140 yards have now been completed so far (although by the time you read



Monday Group's recent work at Haybarn (Martin Burgess)

this MWWP may have made another visit).

We were scheduled to meet on 2nd October at our regular sites, and will meet again on the 16th and 30th.

Nick Wood

Thursday and Sunday Group

By the end of September at Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL), the bricklaying in the lock itself, and on the lock copings on the off side was finished, while the lock copings on the haul side were only a few weeks away from completion.

Landscaping is a now the 'order of the day' with the first batch, the 'pond surround grass and flower mix', being used on a narrow strip of top



Thursday and Sunday Group at Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL): left, spreading top soil and grass seeding; right: profiling in the GBL pound (Eric Walker)

soil, around the newt pond by the lock. This mix has nine grasses and 19 flowers in it including Wild Angelica, make of that what you can. The top soil had been stored on the site since it was removed for the access road in the site and the start of the digging out of the winding hole.

With all the newt ponds being as required by Natural England, the temporary newt pond in the canal was removed and the silt taken away, ready for refilling with the winter rains.

One part of the logistics was to remove 20 tonnes of what was said to be 'Type 1', from the Tickners Heath depot to GBL. As it turned out it was totally unsuitable to use on the towpath as intended, however it came in handy along the access track to cover pipes used in the adjacent ditches. As you might expect, there were a couple of items that were sent to Tickners as part of clearing the site that we have had to bring back to GBL, but generally things are going well.

Down to details: the electricity meter was changed to a smart meter, which, having a phone connection, means that the meter can now be read from the SSE offices rather than sending a man. And the WACT diggers, slings and chains at GBL

had their inspections. The Hanix digger had done 53 hours since its last inspection in January, nothing in commercial terms, but really significant in the contribution it makes to the project.

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

Work at Compasses during August concentrated on tidying and dismantling the site support facilities. The area on the airfield side to the north of the access has been completely cleared of Heras fencing, spoil, scrap timber and pump pipes. It can now return to nature. Also on this side more scalplings have been placed on the towpath and rolled in. The compound hoarding took a morning to remove compared to the two days to erect. All the materials have been salvaged pending their use in the next major project.

In September we had a visit from LWRG who, as well as very kindly presenting a cheque to the Trust from London IWA, installed the concrete

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John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk
Kev Baker	Loxwood Link	01489 690241	loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk
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footing for the final retaining wall at Compasses, concreted the steps to the landing stage, installed the blue plaque and fixed a bench donated to the Trust onto the viewing area.

Looking to October, we have big plans. A three day visit (6th to 8th) from NWPG and a diverted WRG week camp (22 -28th) should see some significant progress. During this time we hope to complete the outstanding bank protection work at Hunt Park; at Compasses, construct a concrete bag filled head wall for a drain that enters the canal above the landing stage, complete the final retaining wall; at the Burnsite we shall be digging out, shuttering and steel fixing the side walls of the slipway to be followed by a concrete pour.

Also - a new task, drive steel piling for a new wharf adjacent to the slipway which will be used in the longer term for the discharge of mud hoppers when the de-silting of the section re-commences.

If you would like to join us during any of these dates please let either Dave Evans or myself know. You would be most welcome. Details on page 2.

Bill Nicholson

Hedgelaying Group

Hello, and Top of the Milk to you all. The group started in earnest (even though he wasn't there) on 26th September for the 2017/18 season.

Before I continue, I have to say that I wasn't totally on holiday over the past few months. I did one day, shock, horror, by myself. Oh no! No one wanted to help me and do you blame them? Anyway, Southland Lock hedge had a trim on 15th July. Well, that was interesting wasn't it?

Anyway, Back to the Present, no, the film was Back to the Future. We pollarded six Hazel trees which produced approximately 40 stakes and 60 binders. Pollarding is like coppicing but in the air, if that makes sense: i.e. cutting the trees' main branches down to about 6ft high. This was not bad for four regulars plus one new boy, Alistair. The intention is to be at the Slinfold site until Christmas when we will move the remaining stakes and binders to Haybarn to continue laying.

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm bored. So without further ado I shall say "Adios" from my mobile office that's nowhere near the Anchor tap in Horsham.

Keith Nichols

Tickner's Heath Depot

Yet another quite a quiet month here at the depot. Most of our time has been spent sorting through the piles of unwanted items that have accumulated at the depot over the years. Unfortunately most of them have been deposited into the skip. Here I should like to thank the kind person who dumped their unwanted washing machine in the skip, it gave Mick Jones and Richard Powell hours of endless fun demolishing it so that only the ferrous material was placed in the bin. For future reference if any member wishes to avail themselves of this facility would they please contact me first!

JJ Price has continued to clear areas of the depot not seen by human eye for many a year. Most of this is in preparation for what is to come from the various working sites which are due to be completed in the near future. His expertise with the 360, gained at Tickner's, has proved such an asset. All sorts of ferrous items have been reduced to manageable chunks so that they can be man-handled into the skip.

Our depot generator still gives cause for concern but our local ferret, Danilo, has been on the case and found out that we had a two year guarantee rather than the one year which I had thought, so we should be able to get it repaired or replaced free of charge.

One final thing: could I please ask those who use our Trust Land Rover to kindly remember that it has a roof rack. This means that it is about 12in higher than a normal vehicle of this type. Bearing this in mind will save embarrassment all round although damage to the rack does mean the team gains skills through the resulting exercise in metal straightening.

All the best

John Smith

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 (not in summer)	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans
28th October, 2.30pm	WACT Autumn Meeting	At Pulborough Village Hall (see <i>Wey-South</i>)