

Editorial

It's the 250th edition of this newsletter. I suppose that must be a cause for celebration - how about a free pass to a working party for every member?

A little later than hoped for this time; all down to various people being on holiday, I'm afraid.

Apologies to Nick Wood, the Monday Group and the photographers concerned for wrongly attributing the two Malham Lock pictures in the last issue to MWWP.

And, as requested, we are reverting to laying out the text in two columns this time, which will make it easier to read on the smartphones and tablets that so many people use now. I haven't ignored the requests to keep things as they were, with the text in a single column - We are just waiting to see how it all turns out, and might decide that one wide one is better than two narrow ones (as the Grand Union Canal engineers should have said).

Bill

Mid Week Working Party

On the first Wednesday of August the majority of the MWWP worked at Drungewick completing the cutting of the reeds. A few of us also worked on the canal between Elmbridge and Utworth Manor removing fallen trees.

The warm and wet summer has caused exceptional growth with the vegetation and overhanging branches along the towpath and the canal banks in the Loxwood area of the canal. So the team spent the second week of the month clearing the length from the Canal Centre to Brewhurst Lock. The following week MWWP worked between Tannery Lane and Gosden Aqueduct clearing vegetation in preparation for the archaeological excavation of Tanyard Lock.

For the last week of the month the team returned to Loxwood, this time clearing the canal bank and towpath from Brewhurst Lock to just beyond Brewhurst Bridge.

Dave Verrall, on behalf of Ray Pick

Visiting Groups

You may have noticed the large tree that fell into the canal at Fast Bridge earlier this year. Over the weekend of 2/3 August the WRG Forestry team removed most of the tree; we are very grateful to them for their continued support. Over the same weekend we welcomed London WRG, who did preparatory work for the viewing platform in the Hunt Nature Park at Shalford.

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Winston Harwood Group

After the wettest winter ever, we finally could take our cars and tools down to the waterwheel at Lordings. Grass cutting went well and a lot of the lock area yielded to the Hayter, plus the brushcutter.

We caught up with unwanted winter shrubs etc on the Canal up to Winston's bridge (as we like to call it). Later in growth was bracken each side of the tow path, since controlled but not killable.

The climbing rose for rose arch bridge was pruned back to five feet by a sharp knife or secateurs - no doubt by a walker! We will not be beaten! Just one year's growth lost.

The waterwheel has taken longer than we wanted. To improve access for the spanners etc some brickwork has been removed. Access is now possible for vandals so a form of gate needs to be bolted on - then we can leave the wheel running.

Tony Clear (for David Junkison)

Hedgelaying Team

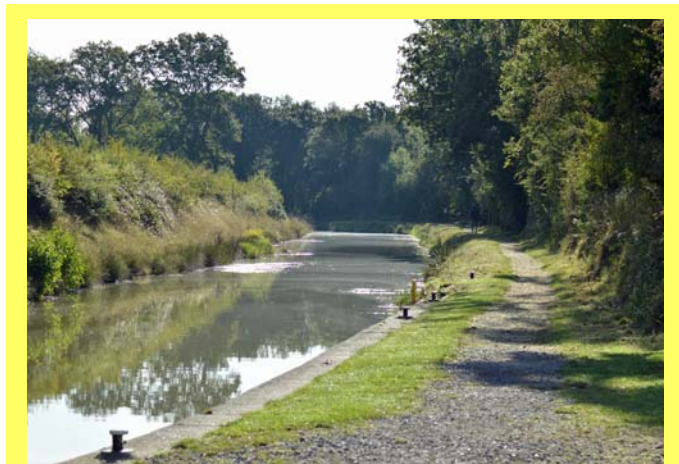
What Ho, What's Up Doc? Well every time I go and see the doctor he finds something else wrong with me. Even 'Muddles' the scrap dealers won't take me now. The answer to the question above must be - don't ever go and see a doctor, then you will be perfectly healthy (or dead).

The bits of me that still work have carried on, when possible, at Roger Dimmock Lane. I was joined on 29 July by Dave Picknell, and we managed to cut 100 stakes for Gennets Lock in what remained of the day. This was something to do with the 'Newt Fence'.

It goes something like this:

Well, here we are at Gennets on this fine day. WACT at number 8 seems to be the favourite.

The Newts are all lined up and ready to go. And they are off! No 7 'Great Crested' has suddenly taken the lead. The 'going' on the field today must be to his liking.



Looking from the Canal Centre towards Brewhurst Lock after clearance by MWWP

And HE'S OVER.....

YES! YES!

It's one for No 7 'Great Crested'

What a shame No 8 'WACT' fell at the first fence.

These things are sent to try us, but they have to be done these days and a good job too. The pressure on the countryside and its wildlife is great and we should be doing everything possible to alleviate this whilst renovating the line.

Enough of that. There was one more solo trip to Roger Dimmock Lane and then, on 19 August with the assistance of Dave Picknell, we finally finished for this last extended season there.

The work has involved doubling the hedge line i.e. one old one at the bottom of the slope being regenerated and one new one, albeit very young, at the top. This involved transplanting some 105 self-seeded mainly hawthorn saplings, and then layering 20 living hazel rods and planting four young hazels to create new stools. Total cost: £0.00.

It only remains for me to thank the whole team for their time, i.e. Steve Darvill, Richard Emsley, Stuart Elms, Steve Hinds, Mike Hobbs, Dave Picknell, Bob Potts and Jeremy Simpson.

I hope to see you all in the new season starting around the end of the month, possibly Tuesday 23rd or 30th September for some coppicing.

Top Ho, Peeps. From the Irascible Old Git at his mobile office.

Keith Nichols

P.S. Apologies to all as this is a late August and September report cobbled together.

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

It was good to see that MWWP has visited Rowly lock; it looks in good condition. Once again a busy month for us. In addition to TLC at our regular sites, we widened the towpath and cut the hedge from the 90-degree turn in the canal to Haybarn Swing Bridge and received the thanks for

our efforts from a large walking group whilst work was going on. With the assistance of Dave Kersley, we replaced two posts at Brewhurst lock and spent considerable time tidying up the 'triangle' bank by the Onslow Arms.

At the request of Tony Ford, the Group cleared debris left over from the work on common land north of the road at Tickner's and had a large bonfire of piles of brush and branches etc. Some tangled metal and logs were recovered to the Tickners yard. After the excellent work carried out by the work camps this area is already starting to "green up" with nature taking over. We also



*Two photos taken at Malham;
'Waiting to launch' by Roger Wilson, and
'The finished job' by Hannes Gysin.*

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
WACT Office	General enquiries	01403 752403	office@weyandarun.co.uk
David Daniels	Visiting working parties	01483 505566 Mon- Thurs 8.30-12.30pm	support@weyandarun.co.uk
Michael Bates	Health & Safety Officer	07786 323515	michael_bates@weyandarun.co.uk
Eric Walker	Loxwood Projects	07717 855340	tsg@weyandarun.co.uk
Ray Pick	MidWeek Working Party	01483 272443	anne.pick@btinternet.com
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk
Kev Baker	Loxwood Link	02380 861074	loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	depot@weyandarun.co.uk
Tony Clear	Winston's Group	01903 774 301	winstonsgroup@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
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk

planted a few small trees in the 'gap' to increase the privacy of the house there which had been opened up by tree felling on the canal bank. More planting is required here.

As anticipated in last month's *WPN*, we gave the slipway site at Barnshill Bridge another cut and paid a second visit to Malham lock and burnt the piles of cuttings left over from our first August visit and gave the lock sides another mow. As readers will be aware, for some time we have been attempting to obtain a suitable boat to enable us to clear the foliage growing out of the bottom of the lock walls, so we are indeed grateful to Dave Kersley, who at our request, repaired an old inflatable dingy and conveyed it to Malham for us; so our long term objective was finally achieved this month!!

Our September outings are scheduled for the 1st and 15th. Locations from John Empringham.

Nick Wood

Situation vacant

Ray Pick has informed the Trust that he will be retiring as leader of the Mid Week Working Party. The Trust would like to thank Ray for his work in leading the team during the last few years.

We now need to find a new leader for the MWWP. Working party team leaders plan, organise and manage work which has been allocated to their team by the restoration manager. The work involves site visits, pre-planning of work, organising materials and equipment. The MWWP meets every Wednesday.

The team leader will be responsible for managing the team during that day. The applicant will ideally be a recently retired person with email who enjoys organising. However, an essential attribute will be an easy ability to work with others.

Attendance at the Trust's restoration group meeting, which happens about every six weeks, is helpful, but not essential. Support will be provided by the deputy leaders of the MWWP.

Dave Verrall

Thursday and Sunday Group - Southland and GBL

At Devil's Hole pound, re-profiling the silt bank in the old winding hole and in the canal channel has continued. The silt slip halted when the weight of material on the top was reduced and the bank gradient made less steep. We hope that this re-profiling work has now finished. Soil nails are to be used to further pin the bank.

In September, following the end of harvesting, the silt on the bank opposite the towpath, south from the new winding hole, will be dressed and where the haul road was, in Southland field, the topsoil is to be replaced. The 'drain' waterfall at the new winding hole has been finished. This drain brings significant amounts of water into the canal in winter so it is expected that it will fill this pound over the next few months.

Because we don't want to submerge the land drains that feed into the Devil's Hole pound, there will be a winter or summer regime for the water level. The 'monk' will assist in maintaining the water level. The winter/summer water level regime will also apply to the next two pounds above the DH pound where there are similar land drain problems. After that for the next eight pounds up to the summit, it is thought there are no similar problems.

Work has started on the debris screens for the monk, back-pump intake, ground paddles and bywash. With the back-pump screen in place we can then let the pound fill.

During the last month Hargreaves Lock Gates visited to trim and reset the top gates at DHL. They should now hold water better.

The repairs to the towpath from DHL to Southland have been going well and the removal of the material from the Paddock Wood haul road is almost complete.

Work at GBL is still on hold, Natural England having originally promised a response within 30 working days, are now saying 82 days!

The Thursday & Sunday Group meets at 09:30.

Eric Walker

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	Check with Ray Pick for confirmation of venue
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
Tuesdays or Fridays	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
14 September, 2.30pm	Heritage Day - Guided walk, Shalford	Email support@weyandarun.co.uk or tel: 01483 505566
25 October, 2.30pm	WACT autumn meeting, Bramley	See current <i>Wey-South</i>