

Editorial

During compilation of this issue news was coming through of a 20-strong visiting work party from London Waterway Recovery Group (LWRG) at Compasses Bridge. The group was mainly engaged in laying the brick pavement on either side of the bridge. It's great to be receiving such a level of physical support from the general waterways movement. At the same time, our own Northern (Summit) Working Party has been making good progress with the brickwork underneath the bridge.

A reminder that the canal is being restored for a much wider public than just the narrowboating fraternity and local walkers has come through with the most welcome award of a grant from British Canoeing, given to help improve facilities for canoeing on the canal, which of course lends itself admirably to unpowered craft like canoes. The intention is to use the money, amounting to some £10,000, to build landing stages at Hunt Park, as well as on the currently navigable sections in the Loxwood area and on the summit pound.

Another recent news item concerns the purchase by the Trust of a JCB excavator. As we know from experience, owning second-hand heavy plant can often be a nightmare rather than a boon, with the need for expenditure of time and money on maintenance and repairs. The relative costs of hiring and buying have to be weighed up very carefully. In this instance, the amount and scale of work to be undertaken in the Alfold and Dunsfold area has been thought sufficient to justify the purchase of a 13ton excavator, which we understand has been given the name of 'Sally' (can't for the life of me think why).

Finally, due to a prolonged absence 'down under' on my part, compilation and distribution of the next two editions of *WPN* will be left in the very capable hands of Geoff Thomas. Many thanks to Geoff for

agreeing to step in to prevent a gap in the publishing sequence, and for agreeing to co-ordinate the restoration reports in the next *Wey-South*. Normal service will be resumed with the June edition of *WPN*.

Bill

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

Well, hopefully that's our Sidney Wood task finished for another year. At the beginning of February we completed tidying up from the overspill weir to lock 16. We 're-staked' eight gravel boards that support the towpath (one may have to be replaced later on in the year) and cleared the undergrowth around the exit from culvert 2 to allow the water leaking out of it to run away freely.

Part of the team relocated to Tickner's, removed a large tree that had fallen in the canal from the non towpath side just above the bund south of the crossing and cut it up.

We decamped to Haybarn for our second meeting and there we helped the hedge laying group by brushcutting the bank in order to clear plenty of space for them to work. We also cleaned the swing bridge and undertook some measuring up in preparation for repairs to the fence.

Nick Wood



The Trust's newly-acquired 13ton JCB excavator is already being put to work near the new Compasses Bridge, digging the access road foundations (picture: Julian Morgan)

Hedging at Haybarn



The two pictures by Keith Nichols referred to in his hedgelaying group report

Hedgelaying Team

Oh all. Go Compare, Go Compare... The two photos. The Monday Group and I attacked the towpath canal bank on a cold but sunny Monday 15 February, lots of trimming, cutting back and bonfires.

The dense bramble, as thick as your thumb, was a nightmare but the Monday Group wouldn't be thwarted. Excellent work chaps, cutting along 200 yards-plus of the bank. This makes it much easier for us, as the towpath was otherwise quite narrow.

Now to the team. We've worked the four Tuesdays of February and have laid a startling 98m, which is excellent going. The weather has been kind with lovely sunny Tuesdays. The 23rd gave us a quick, sharp shock with some thunder at about 14.30 followed by a torrential four minute hail storm. Bracing!

Well then, what of nature? 40 geese on one day, good formation, three buzzards, a large gathering of shags taking off from one big oak, two merlins but they were RAF on another day. The 23rd produced some snowdrops that had been covered

10m x 2 deep x 1½ high of bramble, a nuthatch, heard a tawny owl (male) and last but not least a high flying skylark.

All the walkers, zero to 10 per day, have complimented us on our work, but I won't let it go to our heads.

So that's it for February so 'Mind How You Go' as Dixon of Dock Green said.

Keith Nichols

Thursday and Sunday Group

The bricklaying is concentrating on the bridge abutments and the bridge parapet foundations. On 14 February Eddie Fairman reached the top on the haul side abutment. Geoff Thomas has been on holiday recently, but the side he has been working on should be up to the top of the wall soon. Meanwhile the foundations for the bridge parapets are coming on too.

Half term at the schools means lighter traffic on the roads but also more holidays for members of the group. The site routine at Gennets Bridge Lock is mixing the mortar and the back fill at the beginning of the day, then laying the bricks, so on the

Working Party Diary

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| 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 |
| Tuesdays or Fridays | Work in Lording's area | Contact Tony Clear for details |
| Various Tuesdays | Hedge Laying | Contact Keith Nichols |
| Third Saturday of the month | Summit level | Contact Dave Evans |
| 23 April | WACT Annual Meeting | See next issue of <i>Wey-South</i> for full information |

next working day the void behind them can be filled. At the end of the day putting up and repairing the new fence are regular tasks.

The team, Brian Whibley, Len Hasler and George Mundy under Martyn Baker, are preparing the top sill for the reinforced concrete invert.

Dave Verrall came and took some photos at the end of the month. Also during the month there was email correspondence with a gentleman from the USA who had been comparing the initial brickwork at Southland Lock and GBL. The query concerned the first course of blocks in the lock. At Southland, they were on edge and at GBL on their backs, he wondered why. This underlined the importance of reports and photos for the wider community, who are monitoring what we do.

One battery has been received this month for recycling.

The Thursday and Sunday Group meets at 09:30. The TSG has a work briefing form emailed out before the working day. Please email Eric Walker if you want to get on that circulation list.

Eric Walker

Mid Week Working Party

Because of the WACT email system treating MWWP messages as spam, we had no report in the last issue, so this time round there are two months of Mid-Week activity to catch up with.

January gave us three really lovely days to work and one really wet one. We spent three weeks clearing the non-towpath side at Brewhurst Bridge. It was covered in brambles, and now it looks very clear. We had record turnouts of over 25 people. Some of the group spent time at Hunt Park clearing some of the brash left by WRG before Christmas.

The last week was spent in the rain clearing the bank of the canal at Bonfire Hangar. The group put in an extra day on a Saturday clearing the ditch and rebuilding a small wooden bridge by the static mobile homes at Compasses in preparation

for the new road, ably managed by Chris Tavener and Alan Jennings under the guidance of Tony Ford.

February saw us spending the time at Bonfire Hanger. For the first couple of weeks, we tidied up an area we had covered two or three years ago and the canal and banks are now looking very smart. We have now moved on to the area to the far side of the wooden bridge, clearing the canal and banks that have not been touched for over 20 years according to one member of the group. It is full of brambles and other small trees and will take us some time to complete. However, it is very satisfying to see the cleared canal.

Thank you to Mike Davison who has given us another brush cutter which should make our progress faster.

February 10 was our annual Navvies' lunch at Foxbridge Golf Club which was attended by 54 people. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended and a big thank you to Trish Loveland and Di Miles for the organisation.

Margaret Darvill

Summit (Northern) Working Party

We've held two working parties this month as the pressure is now on leading up to the diversion of the Dunsfold access road over the bridge at Easter.

Work has concentrated on service diversion and in particular the new water main. To reduce the large costs associated with this work we have been digging the trenches (by machine) and the connection boxes (by hand). Thames Water's contractors came in mid-February and glued together the new pipe with its valves etc before dropping it back into the trench. During our regular third Saturday (with a record attendance) we started the installation of the ducting for the telephone and power cables and back filled the trench in areas where we needed to get our access back.

| 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 |
| Dave Evans | Health & Safety Officer | | compasses@weyandarun.co.uk |
| Eric Walker | Loxwood Projects | 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 | 02380 861074 | loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk |
| John Smith | Tickner's Depot | 01903 235790 | depot@weyandarun.co.uk |
| Tony Clear | Winston Group (Lordings) | 01903 774 301 | winstongroup@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 (Apr/ May Geoff Thomas) | Working Party News | 01903 744767 | bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk geoff.thomas@ntlworld.com |

The weather made a timely return to double figures which enabled our 'Team Brick' to lay some more courses on the walls under the bridge. We have also started the northern side flank wall. Other jobs included felling ash trees next to the causeway, which are leaning out over the road and which will be in the way of bank retaining and other works when we start to remove the causeway.

Looking ahead, LWRG were due to visit at the end of February and will have the job of digging out the area for the new road leading to both sides of the bridge. This is advance of the contractors returning in early March to build the road itself. Extra working days are planned for the week commencing 14 March so if you can help out please contact either me, Bill Nicholson, or the site manager Dave Evans.

Bill Nicholson

Tickner's Heath Depot

Wow, where did that month go? Thank goodness it will soon be spring, these cold days get really into our bones at the depot, but of course you lot out there busying yourselves on the canal know all about that. Who said we should work harder?

Glad to report that the team has at last finished its electrical project at the depot and we now have an embarrassment of riches when it comes to light, of course it comes as the days get lighter, but who cares? Under the supervision of our chief designer Ken Bacon the team of highly qualified electrical engineers (don't laugh) have produced a system which can only benefit future incumbents of Tickner's. So well done one and all (self-praise is great isn't it).

Mike Davison once again put a bit of work our way. Having found a brushcutter languishing in the MU team's shed he thought that as we didn't seem to have much going on he would pass it on to us to give it the once over. Unfortunately it was showing its age and rust so the team set to with considerable fortitude. With our usual skill, we diagnosed the beastie as being unable to start, mainly as the recoil spring didn't seem to function correctly. But help was at hand and Dave K was able to obtain a new spring. Once fitted, the old girl roared into life. Yet another success for the undoubted combined skills of the Tickner's Depot team.

We have also taken delivery of a signboard which some kind soul had decided was better situated in the canal rather than beside it. As it marks the kind donation of picnic tables at DHL the team is at present attempting to produce a suitable marker for such a kind thought.

During the month one of our stalwart helpers has decided to retire and move on to other things. Richard Watson has been keeping the grass in the yard trim for many a year, thus saving us time and energy for other things. But you can only stretch the joy of wombling your way round the depot so far and our thanks go out to Richard for all his help over the years. Any volunteers to take over the job?

Finally many thanks to Di and Trish for organising an excellent lunch at Foxbridge. Ken, Mary and I enjoyed it immensely; good food and even better company. The only drawback was that I literally started as a stick in the mud so thank you to all those who helped push me out.

Well, I guess that's about it for this month. All the best.

John Smith

The Depot's Daylight

**And The Lord said
"Let there be light"
(left to right: Ken
Bacon, John Smith,
Francis Wellerd &
David Robson);
photo by Mick
Jones**

