

Editorial

The boating season should be well under way by the time you read this - beginning with the Mothering Sunday special public trips on 31 March, then normal weekend cruises will continue from 6/7 April. Let's hope for enough rain to keep the boats afloat, but not enough to dampen our enjoyment or delay restoration work elsewhere.

David Arnold's team have worked hard during the off-season to keep the boats up to scratch, while almost 70 skippers and crew have undergone pre-season training. So all is looking good for the season.

If your preferred boating is self-propelled rather than powered, you can take advantage of new canoe landing stages at Brewhurst and Baldwin's Knob.

Don't forget that the Trust's Annual Meeting is being held at Billingshurst on 27th April in the afternoon. During the morning there will be a guided walk to Harsfold, or, alternatively, if you have your own canoe or similar small unpowered transportable boat, you can get afloat at Gennets Bridge Lock. Full details of the meeting and events can be found on the website (<https://weyarun.org.uk/agm-2019>) or in *Wey-South*. Please book for the morning events via the Trust's website,

Bill

Hedgelaying Group

We are continuing to lay hedges, and have strived to maintain Keith's standards. Finally, we finished laying the mammoth 500-plus metre length of hedge planted by the Trust north of Haybarn swingbridge (upstream of Pulborough) - this has taken us three seasons (with other work as well). To commemorate this achievement, Alistair produced a temporary sign, explaining that the work was carried out by WACT volunteers and also marking Keith's achievement in schooling volunteers in the black art of hedgelaying, and, more importantly, keeping us in check!

Subsequently, we have produced more stakes and binders, thanks to Peter Foulger for letting us work his coppice, in order to re-lay a hedge adjacent to Brewhurst Lock (previously laid by Keith and his team probably about 10 -12 years ago) - highly visible, and hopefully, adding to visitors' enjoyment of the Canal.

We have been joined by a number of new hedgelayers, who strangely, have not been put off by the task or the team! We welcomed Jonny (well trained by Ray Mears as a superb fire lighter) who on his last outing created Japanese patterns by raking the towpath - very zen (just what we needed as we contemplated the task and our teas!), plus Digby (who let us join the slow-tea movement using a Kelly kettle - proving that a watched pot almost never

boils) along with Clare, and more recently, Ed, who came along on a volunteer taster day (and amazingly eventually found us down near Pulborough).

My thanks to all for their hard work. We will continue at Brewhurst until part way through April, then we intend to go back to the wood to cover the cut hazel stools with brash in the hope that might deter the deer from eating re-growth!

Please do go down to the Haybarn section - not just to see what three years hedgelaying looks like, but also in April-May to hear the nightingales singing all day long - just magical.

Nick Baxter

PEST Boat Group

March saw the Passenger Environment Safety Team (PEST) clearing the navigation south of Brewhurst Lock down to Baldwin's Knob Lock in preparation for the start of the season Mothering Sunday trips.

Working with Maintenance Manager Kevin Baker we focussed on removing debris from the canal, this ranged from small logs to much larger branches and dead wood brought down by the recent high winds. This in addition to our usual work of cutting back the growth from the offside bank, much of which has been neglected for many years. In places it has been possible to recover two to three feet width of canal as well as removing higher overhanging vegetation.

Next month should see us continuing to clear southwards from Baldwins.

Anyone wishing join the working party should contact Peter Hyem (phone 01403 752393, e-mail peter@barscorner1.plus.com) or Chris Jones (phone 07745 793243, e-mail chrisryderjones@outlook.com) or just join us at 09:00 at the Canal Centre on the first Friday of each month.

Chris Jones



The temporary sign commemorating Keith Nichols' leadership, and the completion of the Haybarn section of hedge

Eric Walker Group

Since the last report the group has been predominantly continuing its work on the Tickner's Depot refurbishment. The installation of the electricity mains supply has been completed by a specialist contractor and we are awaiting the fitting of a meter by our electricity supplier. Electrical wiring and sockets/lights to John Smith's new workshop and the various storage sheds is also now almost complete.

The partial demolition and conversion of the old sheds into sand, aggregate and bulk material storage bays is due to be completed by the end of April. All the hazardous asbestos roofs have now been removed by a specialist and the old fuel store and scaffold shed have been demolished. A waste storage tank has been delivered and a new fuel store has been built.

A new water main has been laid throughout the site serving the new workshop, welfare cabin and proposed new toilet block.

A 35 cu yd yes, 35 cu yd skip has been sourced and there will be no problem filling it! We are also now on our fourth 10 cu yd scrap metal skip. Future tasks include the completion of the security fencing, entrance gates, painting of the various new (second hand) storage containers and crushing all of the hard demolition rubble to provide aggregate for the hard standing storage areas.

Dennis Gillen

Summit Working Party and Visiting Groups

London Waterway Recovery Group (LWRG), one of our regular visiting groups, joined us at Birtley in early March.

They were set and completed the major task of relaying the temporary plastic road sheets that enable dumpers to bring materials onto the site from Birtley Courtyard. We are grateful for the help of both LWRG and our friends at Birtley Courtyard for letting us use their access and storage area. For our regular third Saturday we were back erecting fencing.

Continuing our work on the west bank and with the help of Steven Darvill and his post-bashing tractor, we managed to install all the remaining posts to fence both the canal and the new footpath link back to where it will join with the Downslip Path. The wiring up will take place in April. After that we will focus our efforts on completing the access track and other work needed in advance of the WRG Summer Camps in July.

In late March we spent four days back at the summit slipway. Boaters' experience at the opening ceremony last year showed us that a fully concreted roadway from the slipway to the top of the slope was going to be needed if cars/boats on trailers were going to be able to easily exit the site. The same applies to the dumper loads of canal silt that will appear later this year from the de-silting operations on the summit.



The Eric Walker Group has continued to beaver away at the Tickner's Heath Depot during March

To resolve this, 16 volunteers spent four days digging out, shuttering and steel fixing about three quarters of the ramp and a smaller section of level ground leading to the wharf. Completing the work, the last day saw the delivery of three loads of ready mixed concrete which was pumped to where it was needed, part tamped by machine and finished off by human effort. The delay in receiving the deliveries meant that long periods of waiting around were interspersed by spells of manic and exhausting activity. Somewhat inevitably we were one cubic metre short of concrete and the rest had to be hand mixed by an exhausted team.

It has been good to welcome more new volunteers to the team who have joined following the taster days. If you are interested in helping with our extensive and varied work programme please drop me an e-mail or give me a call.

Bill Nicholson

Mid-Week Working Party

This month we have only had three outings, as one week, when we were due to be going to Guns Mouth, the river was running too fast.

The first week of the month we finished off at Haybarn. It now looks tidy for the summer especially with the wonderful backdrop of the new laying of the hedge by the hedging group. Passers by congratulated us on how good it looked and how much easier it is to walk along the towpath.

The other two weeks were taken up clearing Guns Mouth Island. It took a long time to all get over there as only three could go in the boat at one time. The group have not been to the island for over five years so it was good to give the island a tidy up.

Job now finished and hopefully the next time we do it, the canal will be coming down the side of the island.

Margaret Darvill



**Above: Mid Week Working Party completing clearance work at Guns Mouth on 27 March;
Right MWWP at Guns Mouth (by Alan Jennings)**

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John Talbot	Health & Safety Director	01483 429918	jcst@weyandarun.co.uk
Dennis Gillen	Eric Walker Group		dennis_gillen@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	07920 755957	kevin_baker@weyandarun.co.uk
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	depot@weyandarun.co.uk
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Chris Jones	Boat group PEST	01403 752393	chrisryderjones@outlook.com
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

In March we have visited Loxwood on three occasions; at the beginning of the month we tidied up the bank from the canoe landing stage to Brewhurst lock, around the lock and stop plank shelter and burnt all the accumulated rubbish on the non-towpath south side of the lock.

Returning to Loxwood the following week we constructed half the fence at the end of the overflow car park, then cleared the undergrowth and put the posts in for the remainder at our last March meeting. Kev Baker will complete the job. We also mowed both sides of the lock.

The Gennets Bridge lock site received our attention on the 18th; having mowed both sides of the lock, we cleared the towpath embankment up to the spill weir and the path to and over Barberrry Bridge.

We were also able to detach three volunteers that day to Sidney Wood to clear culvert number 1 which was clogged up with debris. Two visits to Haybarn mean that repairs to the fence by the swing bridge have been completed (see picture on the WACT website) and we gave the area a lot of time so that we can give attention next month to the navigable section of the canal. Newbridge (A272) received its first visit this year too.

Nick Wood



Three photos taken by Roger Wilson, two showing the work undertaken by the Monday Group at Brewhurst and preparing for the fence at the end of the overflow car park, also the new fencing at Haybarn.

Working Party Diary

Every Wednesday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Details from Dennis Gillen/John Reynolds
Every Monday	'Mrs Bucket' - Keeping Up Appearances	Details from John Empringham
Every Wednesday	Mid-Week Working Party	Details from Margaret Darvill
Monday to Friday (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 Nick Baxter
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans
First Friday of the month	PEST boat group	Contact Chris Jones/Peter Hyem
April 27th	WACT Annual Meeting, Billingshurst	See <i>Wey-South</i>