

Editorial

Not too much from me this time, I shall leave it up to our regular contributors to explain what has been going on. But first, a request to donate to the Gennets Bridge Lock appeal. Please click on the 'Donate Now' button that can now be found on the WACT website.

Our other current important strategic site at the far North of the canal, known as Hunt Park, is the subject of a planning application currently with Guildford Borough Council, and we await news that this has been granted, allowing work to start in the summer.

April sees our Annual General Meeting at Shalford. I won't be there (overseas again) but it will be a chance to meet all those people who really count. And, of course, to volunteer for the many tasks that help progress the project that bit further.

Bill

Thursday & Sunday Group - Southland and Northwards

At Southland the weather has not been as bad as across the nation but still continues to hamper the work. The farmer started ploughing at Southland on 28 March and that was with great difficulty. The lock ground paddle jack-heads have been bolted down. The fishplates to extend the ground paddle connecting rods and the deflector plate for the back pump outlet pipe has been fitted. Fitting the walkways to the lock gates, both top and bottom, is finished. The back-of-lock split rail fence and the display board have been installed. Connecting the pump to the pipe-work (to take the water to the top of the lock) required new components to be made and a consequent delay. The result of this is that we have some items in stock ready for Gennets Bridge Lock.

The back pump shelter is taking shape. With warmer times comes more concreting, the block laying and concreting of the training walls. The terms of our agreement with Natural England mean that the walls need to be three times longer than would normally be the case, for wildlife protection reasons.

Final adjustments have been made to the safety ladders fitted behind the Onslow Arms. Next will be the fenders. At Loxwood Lock repairs have been done to the pump feed to the waterfall and the damaged bridge coping stones removed. A new set of stones is being made and will be fitted when ready. Also at Loxwood Lock the fitting of the top gate walkways hit a snag so that is delayed for several weeks.

Julian Cheek and his team have finished marking out the Forest Enterprises area in Sidney Wood. One of their tasks was to count the trees and identify any that could be a danger to the public. The topographical survey has been done, a much bigger job than expected, and there is yet more to do. We are awaiting comments from FE regarding the trees over 100mm diameter on the survey line and they will be removed after the bird-nesting season is over. The next task is to remove the tree roots, as requested by FE on health and safety grounds.

For Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL, lock number 8) survey work (levelling) is yet to be done from Southlands lock. Agreement for the site drags on, but until this is finalised there is work that can be done at Barberry Bridge, fitting a kissing gate supplied by WSCC, and repairs to its brickwork and parapets. When it dries up (+10°C for a couple of windy weeks without rain) the access track to GBL will be put in.

Rob Taylor has magically modified the digger to enable it to sit in the bed of the canal and profile the banks to the required angle. Fundraising for GBL has yet another string to its bow, car battery recycling. If you can get them to me I can get good money for them.

Join us: The Thursday & Sunday Group generally meets at 09:30 at Southland; if you need directions please ring 07717 855340 for latest info.

Eric Walker

Northern Working Party/NWPG

To ensure that Gun's Mouth Island was ready for the dredging contractor to start in the middle of March and to support the work of MWWP, an extra two-day working party was arranged on 8/9 March. There was a definite feeling of déjà vu, as having previously cut up the remnants of WRG Forestry's efforts in the middle of February, on our return in March, it was almost as if we had imagined that earlier work party! The weather was atrociously wet on the Friday but with three chainsaws in action we completed the Gun's Mouth work in one day. The few very largest stumps were left to the contractor to push out of the way into the middle of the island.

On the Saturday we cleared up the trees felled by the contractor on the site of the proposed compound for the Hunt Park summer camp. Tree trunks were arranged to define the area, forming a temporary barrier to retain any fill needed, and to provide a hard surface on which materials and the site cabin will be stored. This latter job awaits the outcome of the planning application currently with Guildford Borough Council and will be a task for NWP before the summer camps start at the end of June.

Bill Nicholson

Tickner's Heath Depot

Hey its spring - although you wouldn't think it in this neck of the woods. We at long last managed to Hget to the slipway and complete the repairs to the dredger, excluding painting the engine room doors that is, but this will have to wait until the warmer weather arrives as Peter Foulger needs the 'old girl' on the canal.

Pleased to say that recently the Green Goddess (6in pump) proved reliable and helped drain the new lock so that Kev Baker and his team could carry out some much-needed repairs. It seems as though disconnecting the lead from the water temperature sensor stopped the beast cutting out. Our experts (Francis Wellerd and Mick Jones) think that the relay in the magic green box is a trifle too sensitive so plans are afoot to introduce a larger resistor in the circuit. This should, hopefully, allow us to reconnect the sensor. Francis and Mick have also fitted a water trap in the fuel line, which will help keep the fuel clear of moisture.

The Aqua-dock is now safely back at the depot and has been checked. There are some items missing, but as these only seem to be spare internal pins and washers it will not prevent the dock from being assembled correctly. There is, however, one point to note: care should be taken when assembling the dock as the steel assembly tools have a tendency to tear out the internal lugs of the plastic external pins if over tightened or too much pressure applied. So for those who intend to assemble the dock please don't eat too many Shredded Wheat for breakfast.

So other than some housekeeping and gardening a bit of a quiet month. All the best.

John Smith

The Mrs Bucket Group - keeping up appearances on Mondays

What awfully unseasonable weather, only two days of spring temperatures and those on days we weren't out! Most of our deployment at our March meetings has been at Drungewick Lane, the first working with the Hedge Laying Group and the second continuing the work cutting the hedges. We've tidied up quite a lot but some remains to be done. At the request of Chairman Sally, three members of the group cleared most of the ivy off Gosden aqueduct leaving only a small area which we did not have the owner's permission to touch.

With the holidays intervening, we meet again on 8 April and 22 April, possibly to start work on our nine main sites.

Nick Wood

Mid Week Working Party

I won't begin this with the obvious and seemingly now obligatory observation concerning unseasonable Iweather patterns, exceptional levels of water and associated ooze, general shortages of gas and hot air etc, etc. No, I said that I won't, but however, for whatever reasons, the Mid Week Working Party has not been able to get out that much recently. But as we didn't manage to hit the last WPN copy date there are a few things to report here from over the past couple of months.

Working Party Diary		
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
Thursday and Sunday	Eric Walker's Group (construction)	Contact Eric Walker for details
27 April morning	Small boat rally at Gun's Mouth, Members' boat trips to view work at Gun's Mouth	See <i>Wey South</i> For more details of Boat trips email events@weyandarun.co.uk
27 April 2.30pm	WACT Annual General Meeting	Shalford Village Hall

At Gun's Mouth at Shalford the team has been the largely unsung heroes who have gone in behind the lumberjacks collecting all the felled tree boles together, cutting them up in to more useful bite-sized lengths and splitting them into usable logs. Much wielding of axes, and the application of wedges and those wonderful little devices, 'grenades'. A bit like those dwarves in *The Hobbit* but without the beards... and the chainmail... and those awful songs... and not underground... and quite a few other details, actually. Not really, but this sort of activity week after week can get a bit monotonous.

And then, thanks to Ray's ingenious ropeway arrangement at the southern tip of the island, the cut and split logs were then manhandled and punted through the A281 bridge and stacked in the Chairman's garden for marketing and distribution. The island is looking a lot clearer now, certainly since the MWWP first set foot on it a couple of years ago, and ready now for the dredging and opening-out of the river channel once the floodwaters abate a little.

Elsewhere, the team has started work in the vicinity of Lock 10 at Bonfire Hanger off Rosemary Lane at Alford. Here, with the full support of the landowner, we are clearing a margin around the fencing on the offside of the canal. Young trees and bushes, and brambles and general scrub to be pruned and cut back, and then put on a small fire or two. Sadly only one week's work was accomplished here before the latest bout of weather made the access route, and possibly the site itself, impassable. It's looking good already but probably needs another week or two when the actual Spring comes.

As I write new horizons open up as we are called to Tannery Lane bridge in Bramley for another bout of undergrowth clearing and general tidying up following some recent tree felling in the area by Surrey CC.

Peter Lander (for Ray Pick)



MWWP at Gun's Mouth (Peter Lander)

Hedgelaying Group

Good day all. I note that Spring has officially started and British Summertime hours start at the end of this present month i.e. 31 March, so, who has forgotten to tell the Weather Gods, then?

Three of us assisted the Monday Group in trimming around Drungewick Lane, slipways and towpath on a warm sunny Monday 4th or was it my imagination? Ah! Yes, back to reality as Tuesday 12th was cancelled due to the bitter cold, ice and snow. That's more like it, isn't it? On Wednesday 20th two of us started on the Drungewick slipways section, managing to lay 6m before the weather remembered what the forecast was and decided to buck its ideas up and hail, rain and hail on us for the last 45 minutes. Without more ado and with the usual provisos, here are the dates left:

April - Fri 05, Mon 15, Tues 23; May - Wed 01, Thurs 09, Fri 17

Cheers all

Keith

Situation vacant - Volunteer time sheet recorder

Di Miles, who took on the above duty when the late Colin Gibbs became ill, would now like to retire. As a result we need someone to take over the job. The basic task is to chase working party leaders to return their time sheets, then to collate the information (a suitable system is set up, or you could devise your own) and prepare a yearly report. If you would like to discuss what the job involves, please email Di at di913@btinternet.com or, if you are interested in taking it on, contact the Chairman.

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	07777 668 928	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk