

Editorial

Notice one subtle change - what was previously referred to as the Thursday & Sunday Group is now named the Eric Walker Group, reflecting the change of day and in honour of its recently-retired founder and long-time leader.

We were sorry to learn of the recent death of Brian Tanner. He had joined the Trust at around the same time as Eric Walker. Brian was one of the nine original members of what became the Mid-Week Working Party. He also ran a workshop producing concrete blocks with imitation stone facing, for use in various lock reconstruction projects. Brian served as a director of the Trust for a while and chaired a couple of committees. He had plenty of ideas, some of which proved at variance with official policy, and he contributed many of these thoughts to *Wey-South*. The Trust needed, and probably still needs, people who ask questions: that's where new and often better methods come from.

Finally, one reader asked for *WPN* to run to four pages, which would enable the pictures to be reproduced at larger sizes. This is a nice idea,

though not always feasible (there is not usually a lot of time to play with different page layouts) but I will endeavour to do so where possible. Typically, a rush of last minute contributions meant that this time I had to re-make the newsletter and go to six pages to get the bigger pictures in.

Bill

Hedgelaying Group

Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to the beach we go! Yes folks, the group are on their summer hols. So, with a hop, skip and a jump I shall review our efforts for this last season.

But first, what did we do in May? Well we worked the first two Tuesdays of the month and got to exactly where I wanted to get to, using all our stakes and binders up in the process. Joy of joys, the three Nightingales continued singing whilst we were working and so we had free natural music on our breaks. Wonderful. We collected the last 40 stakes from Devils and laid 25 yards as well as thinning another 20 yards, and also had a small bonfire on the 1st. It was a lovely warm day. Martins were wheeling over the flooded field whilst two Lapwings waded about.



Two pictures by Keith Nichols taken on the last day of the hedgelaying season

On the 8th we managed to dispose of a lot of brash. We then laid the last 20 yards. This was on a day that was scorchio, so with our fire as well, nobody got cold. No Nightingales got roasted though.

The review: in January we made up the cut material required, adding to what had already been cut at Slinfold, to produce 460+ stakes and 460+ binders. We lost three days due to weather: rain, snow and more rain. We worked a total of 15 days and laid 230 yards of canalside hedge. This now leaves another 150 yards to do when we restart at the end of September, requiring 300 stakes and binders to be cut. I wish to thank all the chapesses for their hard work even if they weren't. Thanks guys.

Mr Horne and I are now off to Bona Trippettes to see what Jules and Sandy can come up with... in the way of interesting hols!

This missive comes to you courtesy of my mobile office in Horsham so that I can lubricate my pen with Sirens 'Shattered Dream'.

We shall vada your dolly old eeks again in the Autumn.

Cheers, Keith, Das Kapitan der Hedgelayinggruppen.

Keith Nichols

Eric Walker Group

With a week of very welcome good weather in April, we managed to get all the preparation done at Gennet's Bridge Lock (GBL) in time for the very successful completion ceremony attended by about 150 people.

After the opening it was decided for a number of reasons that it would be better to aim to get the group together on Wednesdays and Thursdays rather than Sunday and Thursday. In line with this change we have also renamed the group to the Eric Walker Group or EWG. Eric retired earlier this year after many years of dedication as Project Manager of the group.

Work continues with a major restructuring of the Tickner's Depot. This will include laying on a power supply as the only electricity supply to date is by a generator - which as you will glean from John Smith's reports is not the most dependable

beast - setting up a new workshop and a reorganisation of the outside storage to make various items more easily accessible.

Towpath repairs and an investigational dig at Drungewick Lock to examine the precise construction behind the walls are also on the agenda.

The group is always looking for new volunteers so if you can spare any time on some Wednesdays or Thursdays and fancy having a go at helping with construction work then contact Dennis or John. No prior construction or engineering experience necessary - just be reasonably active and willing to lend a hand.

John Reynolds

Tickner's Heath Depot

Well at last the better weather has arrived in our neck of the woods and we have turned our attention to items which have for months lain in the 'to-do' folder.



The Finished Article - (Mick Jones)

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 Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans

The depot has had its first grass cut of the season which has made Mick Jones very happy. He is never so at peace with the world as when sitting on the depot motor mower.

The white container shutter door finally gave up the ghost, which in some ways was a blessing as when opening it one needed to have developed skills of which a

weightlifter would have been proud. A design was produced, then Richard Powell and Mick Jones scoured the depot for suitable substantial sheets of plywood. Finding some, they left them in situ in preparation for fitting the next week. On arrival the following week not a sign of the said sheets could be found, so own up - which of you plywood knobblers is the culprit? Luckily there were other sheets in the piles of old timber, not I should add of the same quality but as is usual at the depot we made do. So now the container has doors which are much easier to open and close. Notice the shabby chic look.

With the weather set fair yours truly set to with a will and managed to paint half of the depot gates in WACT colours. Unfortunately we only had enough for one side, but I am assured that fresh supplies are forthcoming. Soon the entrance will be resplendent in Buckingham Green, well green anyway.



Picasso I ain't, but just to prove I do occasionally work - (John Smith, photographed by John Piper)

Finally, our resident generator guru John Piper is still trying everything he can think of to get the generator running, his middle name must be Percy (perseverance, get it?).

All the best

John Smith

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

Two bank holidays but three meetings in May all concerned with bringing our regular sites 'up to scratch'.

With the intermittent warm weather, periods of heavy rain and the growing season in full swing, there was much mowing, strimming, brushcutting and trimming back to do. Accordingly we visited Run Common, Three Compasses, Tickner's, Southland and Devils Hole locks, Loxwood, the Drungewick aqueduct site where the Hogweed was

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
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	01489 690241	loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	depot@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		dave_evans@weyandarun.co.uk
Chris Jones	Boat group PEST	01403 752393	peter@barscorner1.plus.com
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk



sprayed, Newbridge and Haybarn. At the last-named we opened the swing bridge. The pictures (above) were taken at Haybarn before and after by Roger Wilson and Digby Ridge.

In addition to all that, two visits were made to Hunt Park which we have added to our 'list' at Alistair's request.

Looks like we shall need to get around these sites again in June!

Nick Wood

Northern (Summit) Working Party

May has been a good month for weather, and consequently for progress on the slipway and wharf on the summit. Hot sunshine and double digit attendance on all three days on the early Bank Holiday weekend enabled visiting group NWPG to complete all its allotted tasks and more.

At the bottom end the north side slipway return wall was dug out, shuttered up and concreted. This involved drilling holes in the concrete to insert tie rods to help bond the old wall to the extension. Two sections of the slipway deck were levelled up and poured with concrete - hand mixed by shovelling ballast direct from the dumper into the mixer and barrowing down the slope. On the Monday it was so hot (27 degrees C) that Dave Evans provided us with his large gazebo which ensured that all the operatives (including the one loading from the dumper) were in shade. In

between concreting the two sections of the slope we cast the side walk to the southern wall and about half of the beam that sits behind the piling on the wharf wall to the south of the slipway. In total the team mixed about 15 tons of concrete - all by hand!

On our regular third Saturday and, in the absence of our leader who was on child minding duties because of a certain wedding, a good turnout enabled yet more concrete to be mixed and poured on the penultimate section of the ramp - more difficult this time because of the increased gradient of the slope. Just for good measure we also added to the wharf wall so that this is now about seven-eighths complete. Elsewhere and only after yours truly had it pointed out to him that there were more jobs on the reverse side of the paper we delivered two dumper loads of topsoil to Compasses Bridge for some unfinished landscaping works in advance of a pedestrian gate that Dave was to install during the following week. Another thoroughly good and enjoyable hard days' work.

In June it would be nice to complete the last section of the ramp and the wharf wall beam. With the NWPG week camp in July working on Loxwood improvements, an early autumn completion for the slipway and wharf would be a realistic objective and perhaps an imperative before the site returns to the quagmire that it was over the last winter.



The Northern (Summit) group's efforts at the slipway continue, with the assistance of visiting working parties (Bill Nicholson)

Please call, text or e-mail either myself or Dave Evans if you would like to help. We meet every third Saturday of the month (next one 16th June) and often on other Saturdays as required. We always have work to do!

Bill Nicholson

Boat Group PEST

First of all let's explain the background to the Boat Group's PEST working party. PEST stands for 'Passengers' Environment Safety Team'.

Some months ago we set up a team of Boat Group volunteers to look at the navigable section of the canal (Southland to Drungewick) from a skipper's perspective to ensure that it is safe for our passengers, crew and boats. Practically this means keeping the navigation clear of any obstructions that would inhibit the safe operation of our boats. Such obstructions include protruding or overhanging brambles and small branches which might cause injury to passengers or crew, material in the water which might foul a boat's propeller, overhanging foliage or growth on the bank which might impair visibility of the navigation particularly at the approaches to locks, bridges and landing stages.

PEST does not undertake major work such as removing large branches, trees, heavy growth on the bank or in the water or work on locks or other infrastructure which are tasks for other working parties, WACT staff or contractors.

The PEST team pays particular attention to conserving the natural environment of the canal. Whilst the team is concentrating on ensuring the safety our passengers and crew we make every effort to avoid disturbing the wildlife such as nesting birds at this time of year.

Fortunately, the nature of our work, mainly dealing with light outgrowth, makes this straightforward. Removal of vegetation is done sympathetically and to the minimum extent necessary.

Another important issue is health and safety: all our working party members are required to wear appropriate safety clothing including life jackets in certain adverse weather conditions.

We use both the *May Upton* work boat and *Josias Jessop*; *MU* for the heavier work such as lifting trees and logs out of the canal, *JJ* for lighter work such as cutting back outgrowth and for more distant work locations where her speed relative to *MU* comes in useful.

The team has been in action since December 2017 and continues to work on the first Friday of every month meeting at the Canal Centre from 09:00.

To date we have concentrated on the section of canal between Devils Hole Lock and Baldwins Knob Lock (BKL).

June sees us working between Loxwood and Devils Hole removing obstructions from the water (small fallen trees, sundry floating logs and branches, etc.). In addition the group plans to be clearing growth from around the landing stages to restore their visibility to skippers and, moving south of BKL, to clear encroaching vegetation down to the Slipway.

The coming months will see a continuation of this type of work, call it 'housekeeping for the navigation' if you will, complementing the work of our colleagues who maintain the locks, trim the banks, maintain the towpath and do all the other jobs which contribute to the pleasure of our passengers and of the public more generally.

Would anyone spotting remedial work needing to be done to protect passengers and crew on the navigation or wishing to join the group please get in touch via the contact details shown in the directory on page 3.

Chris Jones

Mid-Week Working Party

We began the month at Bonfire Hanger clearing the brambles from the cut. The first week it poured with rain all morning and justifiably most people did not turn up. Those that did, worked really hard.

The next week we completed the task. It was lovely to see a canoeist paddling all the way from Littlehampton to the first bridge in Surrey where it is blocked. He hoped to get to Stonebridge. He walked where there was no water. Whilst there we were regaled by a cuckoo and some of us watched a tree creeper making a nest. The orchids and bluebells were beautiful in that area.

We then spent a week clearing the towpath side from Drungewick Bridge to Drungewick Lock. It is amazing what two wheeled trimmers and a group can do in a week.

For the last two weeks we have been down at Birtley in squelchy mud. We are slowly clearing the timber out of the water with a Tirfor and we have cleared the entrance to a culvert. Meanwhile three of the group cleared the public footpath up to the River Arun from the Arundel to Ford road. See pictures of before and after. One of our group each week mows the lawn and keeps the flowerbeds in order at the canal centre.

Margaret Darvill



**River Arun footpath clearance prior to the Poddle - before (above) and after (right)
Pictures from MWWP.**