

Working Party News

For WACT Volunteers
May 2008

Editorial Comment (*Wendy Andrews*)

Publication of this edition is long overdue for which I apologise; a week away at the beginning of the month has put me 'all behind'. I had a lovely break in the West Country, highlights being visits to the Eden Project and the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Not a canal in sight but both are wonderful examples of nature conservation and restoration, well worth the long drive down to Cornwall. Back to West Sussex and Surrey and wonderful examples of conservation and restoration continue to be seen along the route of the Wey & Arun Canal! Since I will be on holiday again at the beginning of June the next edition of WPN will be published in early July.

Guildford Volunteer Fair (*Sally Schupke*)

I have booked a stand at the Guildford Volunteer Fair, Guildford Guildhall (very posh), in the High Street, Monday 2nd June 2008 10am-2pm. I will get together the materials but if some of you volunteers could help with manning the stand for an hour or so this would be very much appreciated. It would be great to have you there as you would actually be able to talk about the jobs to be done on the canal.

Please give me a call with your offers (01483 503029) or email SallySchupke@weyandarun.co.uk

Celtic Twilight Whisky Tasting Cruise (*Sally Schupke*)

We still have lots of tickets spare for this cruise and since we would very much like it to run, to you my friends, a special offer for the last places - half price - or in other words 'buy one get one free'. 6pm from the Onslow Arms on Saturday 24th May. I would appreciate your support. £19.50 for two tickets. If you would like to bring along a partner who doesn't drink whisky we will accommodate with some nice wines. Please give me a call with your offers (01483 503029) or email SallySchupke@weyandarun.co.uk

Recycling (*John Wood*)

Is there anybody living in the Lancing/Worthing area who could help with transporting a weekly supply of undelivered 'freebie' newspapers for collection each Thursday and subsequent delivery to either the Loxwood or Crawley Down Recycling skip?

Our Aylesford Newsprint skip at Hurst Farm, Turners Hill Road at Crawley Down has experienced a sharp decline in old newspapers and magazines being taken there. This may be due to the fact that the local authorities have now provided residents with wheelie bins for recycling. Our problem is that unless the paper input is increased Aylesford may take the skip away. Please encourage friends and neighbours in the area to support us.

For offers of help and more details please contact me on 01903 753099 or email: john_wood@weyandarun.co.uk

Mid Week Working Party (*Peter Jackman*)

May I first thank members of the MWWP for supporting our 'annual' boat trip on ZK - to Di for a really scrummy cake, to Alison, Betty and Fred for organising the lunch party at the Compasses and to the boat trip skipper and crew. Both Beryl and I would again like to thank you for the lovely bouquet in respect of our Golden Wedding Anniversary - and all this in perfect weather!

So much for the social side. Work has been carried out at Beevers Farm and Westland Farm (Shamley Green). Whilst respecting the nesting season we have concentrated on clearing dead and fallen trees and removing the remains of an old iron fence. Plans for May are to finish clearing at Westland Farm and then, hopefully, to start to clear away the hard core from Utworth - a bit 'iffy', please contact me or Alison for confirmation.

Finally, if there's anyone out there who can weld, or knows a man who can, please get in touch.

Winston Harwood's Group *(Ron Chamberlain for David Junkison)*

The group will have spent the whole of the past month at Newbridge clearing the non towpath side of the canal in line with English Nature guidelines. We have cleared and burned a great deal of fallen trees which were lying in the canal. This work will now cease with the approach of Spring (we hope) and the bird nesting season.

We are pleased to see Bob McHardy join us again this week after a long absence and hope his renewed interest will continue.

That's all for this month - see you in May.

Thursday/Sunday Group *(Eric Walker)*

We will be fitting the gate walkways to Baldwins Knob lock (BKL) and Drungewick lock as soon as they are delivered – any day now. These are the result of a generous donation by a member and will enable us to meet an IWA requirement for lock design. They will also make it easier for boat crews when taking a boat through these locks.

The making of concrete copings and blocks for use at Devils Hole lock has continued at the Tickners Heath depot and will continue on Thursdays over the next little while. The gate to fit on the bridge at Devils Hole lock has arrived and is ready for fitting. It will be used at the request of the landowner to replace the fixed bars. The donkey steps on the bridge will also be removed to enable him to use his quad bike on that part of the farm while stopping the lads using the fields as a motocross track. From our point of view, with the gate in place, the causeways to the east of DHL can be removed.

This last month the Sunday group spent some time preparing more metal for recycling and clearing the rubbish from the Drungewick slipway access lane. We will be moving the construction materials being stored in the car park to maximise the area used by the boat passengers.

At the Canal Bridge, Loxwood, following the excitement of putting the precast beams in place on 8th April, the deck was cast on 18th April. Given time for the concrete to cure and then a week applying the waterproofing, to be followed by the black top and kerbing, by mid May the traffic should be diverted to the east of the road..

Monday Working Party *(Nick Wood for John Empringham)*

In April, with the completion of our winter programme, we returned to working on our nine regular sites. Inevitably, because we have not visited them since late October, there was a considerable amount of catching up to do, in fact at the time of writing we have not found time to tidy up Devils Hole lock before Eric is let loose on it! Apart from the usual strimming and mowing, our work has consisted of the removal of extensive litter, restoring the WACT notice board, which someone had 'kindly' thrown down the bank and trimming unsafe tree branches at Run Common, repair of the steps and unblocking the culverts at Fastbridge, the removal of a large oil drum & deckchair from the canal at Three Compasses as well as burning all the heaped tree stumps and branches left there by another working party. We also moved the debris from the culvert at Tickners, left by the roadside, into the yard and cleared the heavy tree branches, brought down by the winter rains, from the culvert at Newbridge. All in all a rewarding two meetings at which a lot of maintenance tasks were undertaken.

The dates for our two May meetings are yet to be finalised, the bank holidays get in the way! Please contact John Empringham if you would like to join us.

Hedge Laying Group *(Keith Nichols)*

The 'Final' Word from the Hedge Laying Group for this season, unless my boss chips in.

Two of us spent two days clearing the towpath and field of remaining debris, burning it on two bonfires, sweating and eating five baked potatoes. There was also a little trimming around three canal side trees to allow maximum light onto the hedge plus the trimming of the last 160 stake tops. The final touch was planting eight small Crab Apple trees into the hedge and some home grown wild flowers in the vicinity.

Once again our wonderful changeable weather kept us on the look-out, with heavy rain, hail and thunder (we stayed in our cars) then full sunshine and very warm, not the weather for bonfires, followed by heavy rain again once we had finished. Variety is the spice of life. Why would I want to live on the Costa del Sol/Brava?

So with the birds singing and a pint in my hand, that's it from the Group Office (Three Compasses this time) until October this year.

Thanks to everyone for their support. Cheers all and mine really is a pint.

Working Party Diary for May/June/July

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| Usually first & third Mondays of the month | 'Mrs Bucket' – Keeping Up Appearances | Details from John Empringham |
| Most Tuesday mornings | Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot | Check with Colin Gibbs |
| Every Wednesday | Mid-Week Working Party | Check with Peter Jackman or Alison Saville for confirmation of venue |
| Every Wednesday | Loxwood Link Maintenance | Contact Peter Wilding |
| Every Thursday & Sunday | Mainly construction work. Meet at the Onslow Arms, 09.30. | Contact Eric Walker for details |
| Every Thursday | Winston Harwood Group | Contact Ron Chamberlain or Tony Clear for details |
| Some Saturdays | Conservation and Maintenance | Get in touch with David Jessop for latest plans |
| Varying dates in the winter months | Hedge Laying | Check with Keith Nichols for next season's venue |
| Varying date once a month | Photo Library project | Details from Wendy Andrews |
| May 18 th | Loxwood Small Boat Rally | rallies@weyandarun.co.uk |
| May 24 th | Celtic Twilight (Whisky Tasting Cruise) | Contact WACT office to book |
| May 28 th | Pirates and Princesses (half term event for children) | Contact WACT office to book |
| June 8 th | The Poddle (Sponsored Walk) | More details from WACT office |

Working Party Directory

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| Michael Bates | Health & Safety Officer | | michael.g.bates@btinternet.com |
| Eric Walker | B2133 Crossing | 023 9246 3025 | eric_walker@weyandarun.co.uk |
| Peter Jackman | MidWeek Working Party | 01483 772132 | a.m.saville@btinternet.com |
| John Empringham | 'Mrs Bucket' | 01483 562657 | john@empringham.com |
| Peter Wilding | Loxwood Link | 01483 422519 | peter_wilding@weyandarun.co.uk |
| Colin Gibbs | Tickner's Depot | 020 8241 7736 | colin-gibbs@blueyonder.co.uk |
| Ron Chamberlain | Winston's Group | 01293 532 715 | ronchamb@tiscali.co.uk |
| Tony Clear | Winston's Group | 01903 774 301 | penny.clear@btinternet.com |
| Keith Nichols | Hedge laying | 01403 753882 | |
| David Jessop | Saturday Group | 01403 269384 | david_jessop@weyandarun.co.uk |
| Bill Nicholson | Visiting Groups | 01844 343 369 | bandsnicholson@tiscali.co.uk |
| Don Gibson | Educational Projects | 01903 201375 | doncanalgibson@hotmail.com |