

Working Party News

For WACT Volunteers
August 2008

Editorial Comment (*Wendy Andrews*)

It's early August and already there's just a hint of autumn in the air. Somehow the summer seems to have slipped by almost unnoticed. Nonetheless our volunteers have continued to be busy with a variety of interesting activities. Thank you to the group leaders for their contributions to this edition of Working Party News.

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

During late June and July we have concentrated on our nine sites. In addition and at an urgent request from Eric, the team started the flood alleviation work at Drungewick lock. Unfortunately, due to heavy rain and hurricane force winds on 7th July, the members were unable to complete the painting of Haybarn bridge as planned so that remains outstanding. Nevertheless two members of the Group have brought the mowing and strimming at Lordings up to date at the request of David J and with the compliments of the landowner.

At present we have two meetings planned for August, 4th and 18th.

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

Apologies from the editor – Ron's contribution for last month's edition got lost somewhere between his computer and mine, once again defeated by technology! Herewith a bumper update:

On the first Thursday in May the group planned to work at Newbridge for the last time this season. Unfortunately we had to cancel because the site was flooded, not the best conditions for lighting bonfires. The next week the group was asked to return to Brewhurst Lock to rectify a problem with a pipe which is part of the pumping system in that area. It had to be dug out and realigned; we hope this will be OK for the future.

The following week we were back at Lordings to continue with the maintenance on the water wheel and to start on the general clearing up operation and the restoration of the site to its natural state. The 3rd Thursday in May saw us still at Lordings continuing with the clearing up programme and after many years' service we moved the infamous caravan to a position to make it easier for the landowner to dispose of. The group removed the posts and barbed wire from the working compound and destroyed some of the disposable unwanted items.

The last Thursday in May was very wet which made access to Lordings very difficult so the team spent the day, with the help of Dave Kersley, transporting hardcore from Loxwood to be used to improve the access track for future visits.

Access to Lordings on the first Thursday in June was still difficult so we found ourselves at Gennets Wood to do a recovery job on a notice board. After some delay the board was loaded onto Tony Clear's trailer and taken back to Tickner's for renovation. I'm sure we'll see it again! For the rest of June we continued our tidy up at Lordings.

We've been at Lordings all through July except for one week when we had to abandon because of bad weather. We've done some work on the water wheel, slow and tedious but the new scrapers should improve performance and last longer. A new tool bund has been installed to replace the dear old caravan, giving us a secure place to keep our tools. We've given it a coat of green paint so that it blends better into the site. The wooden footpath bridge which Winston built a few years back has had a coat of preservative and is being painted, one more session should see the job done. David and Bob have been working at sealing the leaks in the rebuilt lock by preparing to spread some additional clay while Chris took advantage of low water levels in the very hot weather and did some re-pointing. A start has been made on the assembly of a new information board to be erected at the site.

Tickner's Heath Depot (*Colin Gibbs*)

Because of ongoing problems with my knee I have had to give up trying to look after our Tickner's Heath Depot:-

- keeping it tidy (impossible)
- keeping a check on gear being taken out of the depot (impossible)
- checking goods being brought into the depot (impossible)
- dealing with the delicate problem when members offer items which 'may be of use to the Trust'

I am hoping that someone will agree to pick up this responsibility, taking the above job description with a pinch of salt! Watch this space.

My thanks to all the guys who have assisted me over the past 6 years and made the task so enjoyable, and a special 'Thank You' to Andrew Black and Richard Watson.

Mid Week Working Party (*Peter Jackman*)

With the number of volunteers still in double figures (18 of us turned out on July 23rd) finding work is still a major issue. Recent clearing at Beevers Farm will hopefully enable the location of an access track to the leased section to be agreed and the lease amended accordingly. This will then enable us to use the hardcore that needs to be removed from Utworth. Not far from Beevers Farm we have been trying our luck at field drainage on one of the possible routes for the restored canal at the northern end.

Work on the generator building at the Tickner's Depot (WACT's equivalent to the Gherkin!) moves on; a steel door frame will soon appear and then...who knows?

The small steel punt has been wire brushed inside and out, apart from its bottom, and painted with red oxide. On completion of undercoat and gloss we will turn it over and wire brush and black the underside. Hopefully we can 'rally' it at the Dunsfold Small Boat gathering even if only to test out our recent channel clearance. For the 30ft steel workboat (ex National Trust - 'WASP') new steps are made for access to the cabin and the deck head insulation and hardboard have been removed (a filthy job carried out by John Lee who definitely needed a bath afterwards!! Thank you John). A number of the steel sheets for overlaying have been wire brushed and coated with red oxide; all being well Tony Clark could be cutting the sheets up ready for welding. On July 30th the group split with 4 volunteers working at Drungewick clearing the bank in readiness for lowering and at Bramley 9 of us laid the drainage pipes on a bed of shingle, put more shingle on top and back filled with spoil. Then we cleared scrub from the ditch and the adjacent area and had a good tidy up. Job Completed!

Thank you to Ian Edwards for doing ALL the brush cutting in preparation for the summer camp.

The team doesn't like to be split up so we start August working as one group at Drungewick.

Thursday/Sunday Group (*Eric Walker*)

The fitting of the gate on the bridge at Devils Hole lock is now held over until September.

Pointing up the voids between the pre-cast beams on the Loxwood Bridge as indicated last month has been held over until September.

The fitting of walkways for the top gates at Drungewick lock has been proceeding and is ready for the stop planks to be fitted to enable that part of the work, which is normally underwater, to be done.

At the Canal Bridge, Loxwood, the view from the pedestrian walkway gives a good sight of the work to establish the towpath. Before too long the road will be open without traffic lights.

The summer break this year means that the TSG will have met on Sunday 20th July and then next on 30th August by which time we will be into our autumn programme, and we all know what that means - bring your toe-tector wellies and waterproofs. Early in September there will be a meeting to review the extensive jobs-to-do list to establish some priorities and a schedule. There are so many jobs that it may be agreed that the Wednesday meetings are re-convened. I even wonder if there is support or need for a Saturday meeting. It was never lack of enthusiasm that slowed things down but an inability to get at the site. Frustration over, I hope, come September it will be ALL SYSTEMS GO!

Educational Projects (*Don Gibson*)

My recent illness has put a stop to my activities insofar as the Infoposts® are concerned, but I am on the recovery phase, which has miffed the medics, as one doesn't recover from old age, so now they are not quite sure what is wrong with me! As I get stronger I'll take up more of the requirements, such as the leaflet re-prints, which must be becoming a little urgent in some cases. The addition of an acrylic bracket to the base of the dispensers, to improve security, is being carried out on an ad hoc basis.

Bridget Glynne-Jones, one of our Office Managers, has taken over my series of walks and has planned a butterfly-themed walk of about three miles for August 6th, starting from the car-park of the Onslow Arms, taking in various canal sights. For details of future walks see <http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/walks.php>

Administration (*Wendy Andrews*)

A gentle reminder to group leaders that attendance sheets need to be sent to Colin Gibbs please.

Working Party News is available free of charge to all members, past and present, of Working Parties and to anyone who has expressed in interest in receiving it. Distribution costs, borne by a donor, are rising all the time so if you no longer wish to have a copy please let me know; if you are able to receive your copy electronically just send me an email. Otherwise consider making a small donation by way of stamps or sae's to help reduce overheads.

Most of you are members of the Trust. For those who aren't, we are grateful to you for your hands-on help but please consider joining. The subscription is modest and membership numbers are a powerful indication of our support. Contact the WACT office for an application form or download it from the website:

Working Party Diary for August/September/October

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	tba
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	Contact David Jessop for latest plans
Varying dates in the winter months	Hedge Laying	Check with Keith Nichols for next season's venue
September 13 th /14 th	Heritage Open Days & Steam Rally at the Onslow Arms	More details next month
October 5 th	Small Boat Rally at Dunsfold	Contact Sally Schupke on 01483 503029 email rallies@weyandarun.co.uk
October 25 th	Autumn Meeting	More details in the next Wey South

Working Party Directory

WACT Office	General enquiries	01403 752 403	office@weyandarun.co.uk
Wendy Andrews	W P News Editor	01403 752 170	wendy_andrews@weyandarun.co.uk
Turlough Bamber	Restoration Manager	01483 421 305	restoration@weyandarun.co.uk
Michael Bates	Health & Safety Officer	07786323515	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
tba	Tickner's Depot		
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