

Working Party News

For WACT Volunteers
September 2008

Editorial Comment (*Wendy Andrews*)

Summer of 2008 really does seem to have been and gone unnoticed. I don't hold out much hope for one of those glorious Indian ones either – let's hope I'm wrong. Nonetheless WACT working parties have been busy and the contractors at the B2133 crossing were moving off site when I last looked at time of writing. Eric's only just back from holiday so no news from him this month; I'm sure he'll have plenty for his group to do now that the coast is clear and volunteers can take over. We look forward to his contribution for October. The questionnaire in July's edition of Wey South has brought forth a long list of members who are interested in joining a working party. It will take me quite a while to contact them all and to help them decide which group to join – if you'd like to share the load of phone calls please let me know. Meanwhile please welcome any newcomers with a friendly smile and a helping hand until they learn their way around.

Administration (*Wendy Andrews*)

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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:

<http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/membership>

Hedge Laying Group (*Keith Nichols*)

Hi Folks!

Doesn't the summer just fly by (what summer?). So another hedge laying season gallops towards us like the 5 Horsemen of the Apocalypse!

So what does this season hold for us, you may ask (if you want to).

First of all, there is the annual trimming of the recently laid hedges and weaker ones, which will be:

1. Baldwins Lock east to field gate.
2. Brewhurst Lock east towards Brewhurst Bridge.
3. Harsfold. Flood Lock Bridge south to boundary gate.

That will keep us busy for an hour or two.

As for laying, I am at the moment, presuming that we will be in the Drungewick Aqueduct area starting from the previous finishing point near the slipway landing stage, working east towards the Aqueduct.

There was a possibility of a 400m hedge at Run Common but after viewing it and talking to the landowners, they decided to leave it as it is and just trim it themselves.

Dates for the start of the season:

September - Wed 24th, possibly Sun 28th

October - Thurs 2nd, Fri 10th, possibly Mon 13th - Fri 17th, Mon 20th, Tues 28th, possibly Sun 19th

November - Wed 5th, Thurs 13th, Fri 21st, possibly Sun 9th

Please note that Sundays will only be worked if anyone else can come and also 13th -17th October is dependant on when anyone else can make it, by prior arrangement, as it is my holiday week, so I need to know ASAP.

I look forward to hearing from any stalwarts.

Cheers for now.

Educational Projects (*Don Gibson*)

Not much to report; there is still no news of permission to install an Infopost® at Southland Lock.

WALKS: - My leg has not been put to the test, yet, but is still showing signs of improving. Bridget has been doing a sterling job, having taken over my walks whilst I'm out of action. Maybe I'll give autumn and winter a

miss, before I venture on to the wide, open spaces! So next May might see me taking up my walking pole, once again. For details of future walks see <http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/walks.php>

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

The group has spent the last month working at Lordings. The painting of the foot bridge has now been completed and it looks a lot better. A new notice board has been constructed and installed on the site near the water wheel and we hope this will help to keep any notices clean and dry.

The maintenance on the water wheel is still in progress but the water that lifts it is not being put into the lock at the moment as we want to keep the lock as dry as possible.

David has had 20 tons of clay delivered to the site which is being wheel barrowed rather tediously across the river bridge and will be used in conjunction with some Bentonite powder and puddle into the lock to stop any leaks. There will be a small amount of brick work and some concrete to be done on the floor of the lock which, along with the jobs mentioned above, we hope to be able to get done, if the weather improves, before the winter prevents us from getting to the site.

That's all for this month!

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

Rebranding Mrs Bucket??

As we are such a hard working Group (!) we always have to stop for 'elevenes' to get our breath and of course on such occasions we put the world to rights. So it is not surprising that we got on to the subject of our Olympics competitors being rebranded 'TEAM GB' (ugh!). It was suggested that the Monday Group be rebranded as 'Team Mrs B'. But as we don't get any medals, new tracksuits wouldn't suit us and we weren't young or modern enough for such flippancies, we decided against it. Just as well really, the thought of approaching the Treasurer for funding put us off too!!

Hey ho, back to the real world.

Despite the hot and humid weather on 31st July, a four man 'subset' of the Group held an additional outing and compressed a full day's work into 5/6 hours at Lordings. The toughest job was trimming the hedges at the Flood lock (towpath side both sides and just the canal side on the far side). It was well over 12 feet high in places. For the first time ever, completion of the work was greeted by a spontaneous round of applause for Barry by the rest of the team. The next hardest task was collecting the cuttings into piles for burning on another day. The 'tunnel' between the two sites is now neatly cleared, and the grass mowed as usual.

A passing rambler, who was walking to Pulborough following the Trust's walking guide, was asked by The Winston Harwood Group to keep a good look out for their dinghy, which had disappeared some time ago - news awaited.

We also had our normal two meetings in August 'keeping up appearances' at our main sites. If you would like to join us in September please give John Empringham a ring.

Tickner's Heath Depot (*Colin Gibbs*)

I thought I'd managed to find someone to keep an eye on Tickners. However he didn't realise it consisted of anything other than repairing machines so there is still a need for someone to take on overall responsibility for our plant and equipment stored at the Depot. The job only requires one morning a week and it would be advantageous if there were two people involved. Please get in touch if you're tempted to help.

Mid Week Working Party (*Richard Watson for Peter Jackman*)

We've had to scratch around for work to keep us busy during the sacred nesting season but have recently been busy in the Bramley area on land owned by sympathetic residents. This would seem to be encouraging as it's all relevant to the link through to the Wey Navigation.

The sites concerned are Tanglewood, Beevers Farm, and more recently, the stretch at Tannery Lane Bridge. In the last two weeks we've been clearing the area at Tannery Lane (yes WH group, since you worked there not very long ago Nature has been quick to re-possess!) partly to reveal the canal bed and partly so surveyors can establish the landowner's boundary which we might later be fencing.

At Beevers Farm there is the issue of access from the road to our leased section and when this is settled, it might be a suitable site for the hardcore we amassed when we demolished the causeway at Utworth last year. It's all about timing as the hardcore is only accessible when the ground is reasonably firm.

Then we've had a call from the southern area where we haven't worked in recent times. An owner at Toat is asking for clearance work and this is a site which hasn't been attended to in five years or more. Though out of the current limelight, this is nevertheless all within our remit and it will be good to enjoy the warmth of the deep south for a change.

Summer Camp 2008 (*Allan Chambers*)

A Week in the Life of a New Boy Getting a Toe In

Having offered my services to Turlough to take responsibility for the Summit section of the canal, following Andy Bowerman's withdrawal earlier in the year, I agreed to assist Graham Baird with the Dig Deep weekend and summer camps.

Very much as a learner, I helped (watched!) the team working at Tickners early in March. The proposed Summer Camp was to be from 26th July to 3rd August and the project would be the improvement of the tow path from the Sussex Border Path to the County Boundary. Graham initially led me by the hand and set up the budget arrangements and early discussions with the County Council – Thank You Graham!

Since I already had a brief holiday planned for the week prior to 26th July I arranged that I would return on 25th July - first mistake - July 25th was a key date for the delivery of plant and some materials and I needed a Key Lieutenant to cope with this. Anyway I could overcome some of the problem by having the 300 tonnes of road planings delivered early when I could supervise the tipping. Before that I needed to organise the strimming of the tipping area. Despite inclement weather and thanks to sterling efforts by Ian Edwards this was achieved in time.

Dave Kersley kindly agreed to be my Key Lieutenant and receive the plant and the plastic membrane on 25th July and to also help me on the morning of 26th for access at Tickners and loading of equipment for the site camp.

Saturday 26th dawned and at 09.30 Dave and the Team were all present, accommodation was OK despite a new controller at Witherton Hall and Dave had achieved it all. Without his considerable assistance I would certainly have fallen over. Thank you Dave!

On the first day progress was a little slow but was overcome considerably by the presence of Peter Read and the use of his small but adaptable digger. Thank you Peter!

On my day off at Goodwood, (where I lost every race!) the whole world visited the site and the Health and Safety Officer inspected the team's accommodation. Having condemned some old hats at Tickners we need replacements for such teams in the future. On this occasion we borrowed from Loxwood, again via the trusty Dave. Also there were some lovely nurses in the team who will be sending recommendations for additions to the First Aid kit. We had one accident with a cut thumb; the patient recovered, not a reportable accident.

After some last minute changes to our initial design brief the job was completed by the end of the week and to the satisfaction of the land owner who thanked us for all our efforts. Incidentally the land owner to the south who had earlier said he felt the quality of our work was not to the standard he would accept indicated on the Friday, the last active day on site, that he would like us at least to improve isolated parts of the tow path on his land. Unfortunately we had to say we had 'no time and no material' – maybe next time!

The last action was for all of us to meet in the Sun public house for a good-bye drink and to collect those well earned expenses from Jim Phillips.

On the Saturday I was pleased to join the ever present Dave Kersley to clear up the tipping area and to refuel the hired plant before returning to the suppliers. Dave found a loose track on the digger which he fixed on Sunday. Before letting me go we traversed the field which lay between the tipping area and the bridle path where on our hands and knees we collected a bucketful of chippings which had fallen from the dumpers. I had never done anything like this since I was a Boy Scout. Dave reminded me that farmers need to do this - another lesson for a die-hard townie!

I can't wait for the next time. I can do better.

Regards from a recovering 'canalaholic'

Working Party Diary for September/October/November

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	See Keith Nichols' piece for next season's dates
September 13 th /14 th	Heritage Open Days & Steam Rally at the Onslow Arms	
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

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