

Working Party News

For WACT Volunteers

August 2009

Editorial Comment (Wendy Andrews)

Summer, what summer – it comes and goes! At least there's still enough water to keep the boat trips going but more than enough when the working parties are out doing their bit.

Tickners Heath Depot (John Smith)

Well the summer progresses, work on the site has slowed slightly due to the amount of ferreting required to find the various bits and pieces required for the work camp and people having well earned holidays.

Dave Kersley and I, hindered by myself, have attempted to replace the seals in the steering ram of the wheeled dumper only to be snookered by a cursed mounting pin which moved 5mm then steadfastly refused to move either up or down, hopefully its exertions during the work camp may free it off so we can complete the repair. On the plus side Dave made an excellent job of painting the battery box; obviously he has been well trained in the DIY arts (he is available for hire at a nominal charge – cheques made out to JF Smith please!)

I'm pleased to say that the team, along with David Junkison, have made a start dismantling the shelving in what was Richard's shed which should give us more room for storage.

Ken Bacon has been banished to the Security store to hopefully sort it into some kind of order and give some idea of what is in there. Rumour has it that a working party was seen to enter and that was the last the Trust saw of them, so watch this space....

The next job is to get rid of the mounting pile of scrap metal around the site, although a back breaking job, this does have the advantage of passing on a few coins of the realm to the Treasurer (got to keep him sweet). Also before the really bad weather sets in we need to replace the corner post of the Scaffolding shed.

Finally may I ask that items such as generators etc removed from Tickners are returned prior to people disappearing on holidays and breaks etc.

Thursday/Sunday Group (Eric Walker)

The sani point to support Wiggonholt has been connected up both to the sewer and the water supply. Doors have been fitted and the excavations filled in. A water stand-pipe has also been put up alongside where Wiggonholt usually moors, to line up with the bow tank.

The installation of the rubbing strake under the B2133 Bridge is almost complete using the workboat May Upton as a base. Team effort was the key to this work.

A number of extra mooring rings have been put in where the boats moor to avoid the use of mooring pins, which may just pierce an electricity cable.

The replacement pins for those damaged in transit from Italy eventually arrived and were fitted to the back pump at the new lock. With the right tool to fit the circlip it was very easy. The motor has been painted black, in preference to the blue as delivered, which has somewhat subdued the visual impact. A louvered box or shed to protect the equipment from the elements is in design as this goes to press.

Rob is keen to give the 13 Tonnes Case digger a distinctive look, for security reasons of course, so it is getting oxford blue livery on the balance weight and boom as time allows. A set of window covers has been made, painted and fitted.

The soil investigation on the site of the DHL winding hole was completed which confirmed that the canal was constructed over the original riverbed, without the removal of all debris in the original river course.

The move of the TSG to DHL is still almost there. Initially we will be getting contractors in to do the major masonry removal at the head of the lock. The volunteers will then move in and start the restoration. All we hope for is more dry weather.

Monday Working Party (Nick Wood for John Empringham)

The holiday season is upon us so numbers were depleted in July. Nevertheless we managed at our normal two meetings to get round all our regular sites to keep the grass cut and the 'undergrowth' in check. An additional outing saw 3 members of the group strimming at Lordings at the request of David Junkison in preparation for sealing the bed of the aqueduct. Our August meetings are scheduled for the 3rd and 17th. Why not come and join us.

Note from ed: Thank you to Richard Emsley for his follow up to Nick's report last month:

Nick Wood mentions the praise we received in IWA's Waterways magazine. I also found the following in a letter towards the back.

"A good guide to running the waterways can be taken from the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, which is under the control of Essex Waterways Ltd (a subsidiary of IWA), whilst the Wey & Arun Canal restoration project is another pointer to good practice, being undertaken by knowledgeable volunteers – not those who have let the system deteriorate in the first place." Another pat on the back!

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

July has been a rather bits and pieces month as far as the Working Party News is concerned. The first week we were at Lordings which was the hottest day of the year (does anyone remember that promise of summer?!) The task we undertook was to replace the decking on Rose Arch Bridge which was more or less completed in one day but my blood fed the insects enough to last them the whole year - I almost felt I was left suffering with anaemia. The following weeks we were back at Lordings doing some general tidying up and cutting back the ever invasive weeds and brambles.

Dan has finished the remainder of the brick work in the bottom of the lock and a start has been made on getting the clay ready to be mixed with Bentonite. Now we muster a team in a couple of weeks time to make a concerted effort to spread the clay/Bentonite mixture and lay the Bentonite sheeting to complete the sealing of the leaks so we can then start filling the lock again. We will be able to do all of this when we can get a full team together, when Chris is back from sick leave and the holidays are finished
See you next month!

Mid Week Working Party *(Peter Jackman)*

With the sudden and unexpected 'stop work' on the proposed access track at Beevers Farm we have been unable to remove the hardcore and concrete resulting from the demolition of Utworth Bridge. Instead we have moved north and for the past four weeks we've been clearing the willows from the winding hole below Southlands. This has involved working in mud and water, using bow saws to cut down the trees, digging out the roots and pulling them out with a Tirfor winch, all the time being aware of the birds and their nests. At time of writing (4th August, late as ever!) we plan to do some bank side clearance above the New Lock while the canal is devoid of water.

Surprise, surprise, we've had a late request to clear a route for small boats between Compasses Gate and Tickners Heath in readiness for the Rally in September – more work for our webbed feet!

A word or two about the 3rd annual boat trip – the social side of the MWWP which is a thank you to the team and an opportunity to spend all the day chatting. This year we were on board Wiggonholt which enabled us to invite past MWWP members, John Smith, Dave Kersley and others who service all the working party groups. It was a super day, the weather could not have been better. The Drungewick section looked like 'African Queen' country, thanks to no reed cutting in the bird nesting season! The crew did us proud and coped well with the access lift which I believe, for them, was a first time operation. Who knows, we could be going up through the new lock next year!

Special thanks to Fred and Betty Mills and Alison Saville for help with organising the lunch and to Di Miles for the scrummy cakes.

Come and join us, the biggest working party the Trust has got!

Silly Season Competition *(Wendy Andrews)*

August tends to be a quiet month, hence the 'silly season' contributions to the newspapers and news magazines on TV and radio. Last month's contribution from Bill Nicholson gave me the idea for a WPN 'silly season' competition: Who is the longest serving currently active Working Party Volunteer??

If you think you qualify or know the answer please send me an email, give me a call or send me a snail mail.

No doubt Colin Gibbs, attendance record keeper exceptionale, could give me the answer but I'd rather hear from the horse's mouth. No prize for the correct entry!

Administration *(Wendy Andrews)*

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

Thank you for your support

Working Party Diary for August/September/October

Usually first & third Mondays of the month	'Mrs Bucket' – Keeping Up Appearances	Details from John Empringham
Every Wednesday	Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot	Contact John Smith
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
Varying dates in the winter months	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith for next season's plans
Sunday 6 th September	The Pedal – sponsored cycle ride	Contact Simon Clark on 07784 676 938 or email pedal@weyandarun.co.uk
September 12 th /13 th	Heritage Weekend	Brewhurst Mill, Loxwood open 2pm – 4pm Saturday and Sunday
September 20 th	Small Boats Rally at Dunsfold	More details from Sally Schupke on 01483 503029, email to rallies@weyandarun.co.uk or look at http://www.weyandarun.co.uk/events_2.php
September 26 th /27 th	Public Consultation for the Bramley link	Shalford Village Hall
October 24 th	Autumn meeting in Pulborough	More details next month or in Wey South

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