

Working Party News

For WACT Volunteers

March 2010

Editorial Comment (Wendy Andrews)

It's tempting providence, I know, to say that there are signs of spring in the air. Better weather or not, plans are in progress for 2010 events and projects. Below are pleas for help in a variety of ways. Please offer your services in whatever way you can.

Special Projects (Allan Chambers)

We have identified a number of projects which do not lend themselves to assignment to any particular group, mainly because they are better suited to smaller teams. We are therefore looking for volunteers for the following jobs:

- (i) Filling some 200 bags with clay and stacking them temporarily at Loxwood for onward transmission to Brewhurst via the canal. This can be carried out from now at almost any time. We would need a team ideally of 4 but could be 2 or 6
- (ii) The second assignment is the spreading and compaction of 20 m³ of crushed material at Brewhurst. A vibrating compactor will be provided. The team will then load the bags (see above) on to May Upton and unload at Brewhurst and build a clay bag wall on the edge of the canal, some 15m long. We need a team of at least 4, maximum 6. This will be carried out when the weather improves and the ground is in better condition and could take two days. This will need to be programmed with material and equipment
- (iii) The third job is painting the doors and railings at the WACT office. This will require preparation and two coats. We will supply paint, filling material and sand paper plus small tools if required. Perhaps you might bring your own brushes as this way you will keep them clean. Maximum team of 2 and a job for when the weather improves. Most of the work is external, only on steps, not ladders and is expected to be of 2/3 days duration. The choice of days is flexible.

Willing volunteers please contact Allan Chambers on 01403820607 or allan@achambers.wanadoo.co.uk.

Easter Cruises (Robert Hutty)

Hello to you all and Happy New Year to all those I haven't seen.

The purpose of this message? Well, I am looking for helpers on shore side duties for the Easter Bunny Trips which this year fall on 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th April. The usual tasks need attending to, help in the black shed with pouring out and serving the drinks and the food, entertaining the crowds on the towpath, directing and parking cars, getting messages and supplies to the Bunny down at the lock, putting up gazebos etc etc

Trips are from 11.00 until 4.00 on the hour each day so a 10.00 start is the earliest that you would be needed and a 4.00 finish is the latest. All or any part of the day would be very helpful and much appreciated.

Please contact me on 01959 562205 or email roberthutty@sunbung.fsnet.co.uk

DHL Opening (Wendy Andrews)

I'm sure you don't need reminding that the grand opening of Devils Hole Lock and the naming of our new trip boat, Josiah Jessop is planned for Saturday 17th April. I'd be very grateful for offers of help with putting up signs for parking on the afternoon of Friday 16th April, for car park marshals on the day and tidying up after the event. Please send me an email (wendy_andrews@weyandarun.co.uk) or call me on 01403 752170

Recycling (John Wood)

Many Hands Make Light Work!

Once or twice a year we are offered about 2 tonnes of unwanted home-shopping catalogues. They are in strapped and not too heavy bundles and need to be transported to the paper skip in the car park at Loxwood. To be able to carry out this exercise we would need 3 or 4 volunteers to load our trailer at Worthing and at least 4 to help unload at Loxwood. If you might be able to assist please let me, John Wood, know on 01903 753099 or email me at john_wood@weyandarun.co.uk Many thanks in anticipation.

Just to say that we made £7,333 in 2009 from collecting old newspapers and magazines. Many thanks to all those who support this green and easy form of fundraising.

Restoration Guide *(Colin Gibbs)*

Many thanks to all those who have sent me photos of various restoration projects on the canal. We are sorting them out alongside the hundreds of photos in the Trust's archives - there may even be thousands! No one has sent in anything that would qualify for the section 'It's fun being a navvy restoring canals'. Please think back to the funny things that have happened to you or others - no names mentioned. Please come up with some of your anecdotes - I need about four more. Contributions to me please, Colin Gibbs, on 020 8241 7736 or email

colin-gibbs@blueyonder.co.uk

Thursday/Sunday Group *(Eric Walker)*

February 'Fill dyke' did just that with a good dose of snow and frost but the volunteers at Devils Hole Lock worked on!

The big job during the past month has been getting the pre-cast copings from the Tickners Depot and cutting them to suit the radius on the training walls which will be finished in the next little while. The bollards have now been installed and when access is available the foothold quadrants will be put in. Colin Durbridge connected up the electricity at the lock. Subsequently we found that faulty pumps were causing problems. The construction of the winding hole was completed, how I will never know for the conditions were atrocious. A start was made clearing the silt in Loxwood pound but timescale constraints dictated that a contractor be engaged to do the work. They put on site a 13tonne digger similar to our Case machine but with a longer reach and a 10 tonne tracked dumper. The dumper had only been in use for a few hours when a track split and came off. The replacement, which weighed a tonne, had to come from Norwich. A couple of days later the other track was found to have a bad split in it. At that point they were off-hired and the digger did some useful work in the Onslow car park. The volunteers will move the rest of the arisings.

With the DHL gates due on site on March 16th action has been taken to reduce the tremendous volume of water coming off the adjacent fields and flowing through the lock. Next is to get the lock clean and dry for the gates to be fitted. Work on the back-pump chamber also requires the water level in that area to be dried out and the adjacent area of canal armoured.

The additional spilt rail fencing for the lock arrived and a start was made to erect it. The next major jobs will be the wharf, which is to be made of recycled plastic, and the landscaping!

Extra meetings on Tuesdays are being held, give Eric Walker a call on 07717 855340 to see what is happening.

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

Our first outing in February saw the work between the 90 degree turn in the Canal north of Haybarn and Lee Farm lock completed, a total of 5 sessions and 282 man hours! Now we must make sure we (i.e. the Trust) do not let it get into such a state again.

At an additional meeting on February 7th seven members of the group installed a seat at Drungewick aqueduct in memory of Bob Bockett in the presence of his widow, Chris, having used the large workboat, Wasp, to move it from the slipway side of the canal to the towpath side. We also cleared up a lot of cut reeds, barrowed them to the bonfire site in Roger Dimmock Lane and burnt them. Thereafter moving on to Barnsill Bridge where, at Peter Wilding's request, we undertook some more clearance work and the burnt the results and the large bonfire pile we had produced before Christmas (see January WPN).

On February 15th the group split into two, 3 members installing a seat at Brewhurst lock in memory of John Lawson and 5 of us started clearing the towpath between Firtree Copse and lock 16 in Sidney Wood.

We are very pleased to welcome Chris Richardson to the group as a regular member. There are now 13 of us! It must be John's inspired leadership...

We meet again on March 1st in Sidney Wood and then on 15th March.

Tickners Heath Depot *(John Smith)*

Sorry I missed last month's dead line but unfortunately I was otherwise engaged taking a 7 day sabbatical in Worthing hospital.

Ken Bacon continues his ministrations to the engine shed. He and Dave Kersley are keeping me informed as to happenings at Tickners so I am not completely out of the loop.

The space vacated by Wasp has now been filled by the green roll along from the far end of the Onslow car park. This was moved by Dave with the help of Peter Jackman and his crew. Thanks to all those involved.

Also, thanks to the MWWP, a large amount of scrap was loaded onto the flatbed trailer and taken to Muddles. The resulting cash has no doubt helped bring a smile back to the treasurer's face.

Well I think that's it for now other than to thank everyone for your kind words and thoughts. Hopefully it will not be long before I meet up with you all again.

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

The group has been very busy again this month continuing the work at Rowner lock and Newbridge. Despite some pretty nasty weather conditions our trusty stalwarts have been able to get a good deal of clearing done and will carry on with this work next month
See you in March.

Hedge Laying Group (*Keith Nichols*)

No news from Keith, however he will be in touch with the team in due course.

Mid Week Working Party (*Peter Jackman*)

No news from Peter this month

Working Party Diary for March/April/May

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	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 Nichols
Saturday 17 th April	Reopening of Devils Hole Lock	More information in March Wey South
Saturday 24 th April	WACT AGM in Billingshurst Village Hall starting at 14.00	More information in March Wey South
Sunday 30 th May	Small Boat Rally at Loxwood	More details next month

Working Party Directory

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