

Working Party News

for WACT volunteers - May 2010

Editorial

Some very sad news, with the death of Tim Jolly. Tim was a regular on working parties in the 1980s when he became a personal friend, and one of the people I kept in touch with after going to France. He played a key role in WACT up to the end. Tim will be a hard act to follow, and will be missed by us all.

At a packed AGM on 24 April we were pleased to see the Jack King trophy awarded jointly to Peter Jackman and Dave Kersley. Turlough's speech suggested both gentlemen were known for their frequently-expressed opinions which differ from the 'official' line, but that didn't stop them working hard, and frequently beyond the call of duty, for the common cause. There was a distinct lack of whingeing on the day, I have to say.

Bill Thomson

Thursday and Sunday group

The Devils Hole Lock backpump was commissioned and worked satisfactorily. Easter Sunday, and the water from above DHL was released and started to fill up Loxwood pound.

The following Sunday a temporary wharf was built to enable the VIP party to go onto DHL bridge for the formal opening, which took place the following Saturday!

For some little while, at DHL, we will be finishing off those jobs put to one side for the opening. Not least of these is sorting out the stop planks. To enable the lock to be filled additional stop planks were required at the top of the lock and these had been robbed from the set for the bottom of the lock. Now we will have a full set of planks and will make a shelter using re-cycled plastic. Similarly there is to be a shelter built for the back pump.

I was particularly pleased to see the ferns transferred by Keith Nichols back in 1995 from within the lock in its demolished state, to the back of the training wall where the pump has been installed, have survived all the concreting and tramping around in the area. They have sprung up in the last week in April and are a brilliant green.

The planning application for Southland lock has been put in, so preparatory work has started. Initially to move equipment there but also to establish by survey, levels and temporary bench marks.

There will be no working party meetings on 13,16 & 20 May

Eric Walker

The Mrs Bucket group - Keeping up appearances on Mondays

Regretfully we have to report that Brian Crossley is in hospital as he has suffered a chest infection which has developed complications. We very much miss him and wish him a speedy recovery.

12th April saw us busy on the Loxwood Link, installing the repaired info post at 'Viagra Falls' at the winding hole below Drungewick Lock; at the aqueduct site cutting, strimming and tidying up on both sides of the canal including around the slipways at the request of Peter Wilding ready for the small boat rally. At Loxwood, clearing debris from the banks of the river,



ZK takes the VIP party from Loxwood to DHL for the opening - the water levels held up

removing stones and rocks and strimming the grass in the overflow car park beyond the paper recycling bins. We then moved onto DHL and, at Eric's request, removed all the accumulated debris from the lock chamber in an innovative manner (rather like those exercises we used to undertake on management training courses!).

Three members of the group did their bit as car parking marshals for the DHL opening day and our final meeting of the month allowed us to catch up on our nine regular sites.

We meet again on the 10th and 24th May.

Nick Wood (for John Empringham)

Mid-week working party

The MWWP has started to clear the section of canal between Tickners Heath and Compasses Bridge. This includes the 'common' land which until recently was under the stewardship of Waverley Borough Council. The MWWP steel punt came into its own being used to clear the 'off side which at the Tickners end appears to be the airfield side. We came to a temporary halt, to assist with the towpath reinstatement between Loxwood Lock and Devils Hole. Thank Goodness the weather changed in our favour.

After the big bash on 17th April, we spent a day at Southland Lock, retrieving the cut timber and barrowing (five wheelbarrows) to the Doctor's house (a bit of PR).

As I write, (26 April) future work will be:

A return to the Tickners/Compasses section, exposing the concrete lumps and hopefully some spoon dredging to open up a channel for the Compasses small boat gathering;

We have the two trees at Run Common to finish off and some fencing, class stuff, materials to be supplied by the land owner;

Boundary fencing at Tickners Depot (unless David Junkinson's team gets there first); and Pulling out Himalayan Balsam at Shalford. This is new ground for WACT, for sure.

A quick word on the AGM. I was totally floored by the joint award to David Kersley (well deserved) and myself, which I feel is a team award and I would like to thank all members of the MWWP for their continued support.

Peter Jackman

Editor's note: Because I was out of the country and couldn't check my post, Peter's contribution for the last issue didn't make it into print. The important bits are below:

The MWWP is not restricted to North of Loxwood, as readers might have thought. We have worked at Toat, clearing trees and scrub and erecting fencing, including farm gates south of Lordings. We have worked at Malham. But we do seem to spend an awful lot of time between Drungewick and Shalford, which is where the work is for a team of 12 to 20 volunteers.

Following the annual clearance at Run Common (north) we crossed the road and started clearance where the stepping stones are, this section had two big, and I do mean big, trees

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Have there ever been more boats on the Wey & Arun Canal above Loxwood at the same time? JJ (and canoe) returns to Loxwood Lock from DHL on 24 April with some of the Wilderness boats going the other way

blown down and straddling the canal and towpath.

Having stripped the branches (some up to 20 inches in diameter) we dragged the trees with the Tirfor winch up and on to the bank. We have now left the job until after the 'no cutting green' (alias the bird nesting) period when we can combine cutting up the trees with fencing.

With four days of cutting/clearance to go, with David K we moved the MWWP steel punt to Dunsfold Park where we cleaned up its bottom, painted it and moved it on to Tickners where we launched it for the start of

clearance - very rewarding. As at 30th March we were due to move to between the Brewhurst section and Devils Hole for removal of dead branches and any other unwanted articles.

Future plans include a return to Dunsfold Park, exposing the concrete lumps (ex Simmonds Bridge?).

A welcome to our new members, and thanks to all from the biggest and best, the MWWP.

Winston Harwood Group

We have been busy clearing and burning the non-towpath side, between the lift bridge and Newbridge. Some had not been done for years - but we are winning! We had to stop because of the bird-nesting season.

Moved on to Devil's Hole Lock to do half of the turfing, after levelling clay soil. A worthwhile 'fit in' job.

On to Lording's Lock and aqueduct and Winston's bridge area. Grass to cut and some cutting back.

It was found that the unique water wheel had stopped. The main central shaft had allowed the wheel to lose level and tilt slightly sideways and jam up... a major engineering problem.

We have some mechanical expertise among Trust members and we have put up scaffolding in the adjacent river to enable finding and correcting the problem. (David Junkison deserves a medal for spending time up to his chest in cold river water!) David also has the original construction drawings and copies which may help.

Ron Chamberlain has 'retired' after many years and will be really missed, having had eye operations. No, not caused by smoke from his fires (just one of his enterprises)

Brian Crossley has for years cut grass in the Lordings area. He regularly met with our group and does not deserve to end up in a top hospital with a serious chest problem. Two of our group visited him in hospital, need we say more, and he is making progress, thank goodness.

Tony Clear

Recycling

In the last *Wey-South* bulletin I appealed for some helpers to load and unload quantities of unwanted catalogues, perhaps just once or twice a year. The need was to have four or five to load our Landrover and 4-wheeled trailer at a trading estate in Worthing, and ideally six to unload at the canal car park in Loxwood. The catalogues are usually packed in brown paper and strapped with plastic. They are not heavy to lift, but at Loxwood the brown paper and the plastic strapping has to be removed before putting into our Aylesford Newsprint paper banks.

Usually there are only a few days grace before we know if the catalogues are available to the Trust, so would need to phone/email round to see who is available from the list of willing volunteers. Up to now have just two for loading at Worthing and three at Loxwood. Obviously we need to have more than this, because with only a short notice some will not be available on the day. The reward to the Trust will be at least £200, so please, is there anybody else willing to go onto the list? For more details please contact me, John Wood on 01903 753099 or email me john_wood@weyandarun.co.uk



Lady Egremont names 'JJ' at Loxwood Lock on 24th April in green fashion (no broken glass involved)

Restoration booklet

The booklet *A Guide to Restoration Progress* is nearing completion. Many thanks to the guys who sent me photographs and anecdotes. We're still working on the photos alongside the thousands from the archives. The lack of hard hats has reared its ugly head again!

The regulations on Health and Safety have proved a problem with both the photos and the anecdotes. Of course, all the best ones, especially the anecdotes, can't be put in print, which is a great pity.

I would also like to remind the group leaders to send me their attendance figures please - the hectic run up to the AGM has probably put them on the back burner.

It has been suggested that a member of one of the working party groups has a photo of the aqueduct and lock full of water at Orfold. If they read this would they please send it to our Secretary, Julian (contact details in *Wey-South*), for him to copy for possible inclusion in the GTRP booklet.

Colin Gibbs

London's Lost Route to the Sea

There seem to be no new copies of this essential volume available these days but a donor has generously given us a copy of the first edition (1965 - before any restoration started) which will be sold for WACT funds to the member making the highest bid before Monday 31 May. Some of the illustrations differ from those in the 1986 edition. The book is in quite good condition. Please phone any bids to Geoff Perks on 01403 262855.

Working Party Diary		
Every Sunday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Contact Eric Walker for details
Usually first & third Mondays of the month	'Mrs Bucket' - Keeping Up Appearances	Details from John Empringham
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 Wednesday	Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot	Contact John Smith
Every Thursday	Winston Harwood Group	Contact Tony Clear for details
Sunday 30th May	Small Boat Rally at Loxwood	
Sunday 13 June	38th annual Poddle	Contact the WACT office (helpers to Jo Holcombe, 01483 418195)