

### Editorial

The big news this month is that the major part of the work at Compasses Bridge has been successfully completed and the road has been re-opened for traffic which is now using the new bridge as shown in the photos taken by Dave Verrall. Elsewhere on the canal, longer days and better weather are helping the volunteer groups to carry on with their maintenance and construction work. Read on.

*Geoff (for Bill)*



### Thursday and Sunday Group

The weather always affects what we are doing. Recently Thursdays have been dry and ideal for brick laying and so Geoff Thomas reached the top on the off side bridge abutment wall. The foundations for the bridge parapets have been completed on the haul side and the off side parapet foundations are nearly finished.

For the bridge the next task will be to fill in between the parapet foundations where the bridge approach ramps will be. This fill will be 'DTp Type 1 rolled in at 100mm layers'.

The site routine, mixing the mortar etc and bricklaying continue, the bricklaying now being about a quarter completed.

For any passers-by, the top of bottom gate quoins, now painted black, give a good indication of the top level of the lock copings, when the lock is finished. This will also be the exit level from the bridge and the restored level of the towpath, which will be about 5ft (1.5m) above what is there now.

Our tracked vehicles, the horses, pedestrians and in particular the very wet weather caused the bridleway and footpath to Barberry Bridge to get a bit muddy. So at the end of March some urgent repairs will be done using 40 tonnes of material.

*Eric Walker*

### Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

It being a leap year = 3 outings late February & March. Odd job day on 29<sup>th</sup> Feb; we tidied up at Loxwood including cleaning the two bench seats by the canal centre and inspected the landing stage at Brewhurst lock in order to determine the repairs necessary. In addition we equalised the paper in the skips as, following the floods earlier in the year, much of the paper was

sodden and a couple of the skips were too heavy to move. This required climbing into the skips through the top with the aid of ladders etc and transferring paper from one skip to another. The things we do for the canal!! We also installed an info post at lock 8 (Gennets Bridge) and removed the old noticeboard at Newbridge and replaced it with a new interpretation board.



*Recycling the Monday Group? (Hannes Gysin)*

In view of the approach of the Easter cruises, at our second meeting we effected temporary repairs to the landing stage at Brewhurst lock. It needs a complete rebuild later but we'll leave that to Kev's Loxwood link group. We also continued with clearing the banks at Haybarn to facilitate hedge laying.

At our third meeting half the group, 'southerners' continued with the clearance work north of Haybarn. Our third visit and good progress is being made, more to be done though.. The 'northerners' worked at Tickners maintaining the 'common land' as the Trust undertook to do about a couple of years ago and disposing of all the accumulated debris from the overflow grating. Time was found to work on number 2 culvert in Sidney Wood to aid drainage of the canal. But that job is not finished either and we shall have to return to dig out the channel to allow the water to flow more freely. In addition we started tidying up at Loxwood and Devil's Hole locks, two of our regular sites.

We meet again on 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April, if anyone would care to join us.

*Nick Wood*



*After clearance work near Haybarn (Roger Wilson)*

## Summit (Northern) Working Party

March has been the busiest month so far at Compasses Bridge with everyone working towards an Easter deadline when the access to the airfield was to be closed to enable the road to be diverted across the new bridge. On one occasion there were three different contractors and a team of volunteers all working together in and around the bridge – happily thanks to Dave Evans' careful management. A critical moment occurred at 7pm on the Tuesday as Thames Water at last completed the diversion and isolation of the old 4 inch water main



*Paving the southern footway at Compasses Bridge*

that runs through the causeway thus enabling many other road related tasks to continue.

The second week of the month saw volunteers on site from Monday to Saturday. During that time the following tasks were progressed or completed:

- Construction of service access chambers, re-routing a drain culvert running under the road, back filling trenches with sand and Type 1;
- Paving the southern footway across the bridge to match the already completed northern one;

- Tidying up the Burnsite using the Trust's newly acquired 360 degree excavator.
- Cleaning out one of the airfield drainage ditches that feed water into the canal;
- Installation of a new traffic island onto which the new barriers will sit;
- Supporting the contractors installing the new road kerbs;



*Preparing the carriageway at Compasses Bridge*

- Completion of fencing and installation of a new pedestrian gate that will give access to the southern side of the bridge at canal level;
- Further block laying and concrete footings on the bridge training walls

On Good Friday, the first day of the road closure, the team returned to remove the old electric road gate, complete the paving of the traffic island and numerous fencing works connect with diverting the road onto its new route. This latter operation is expected to take place as I write this as it requires one more day from the contractors.

This has been an intense period of activity and we have been fortunate to have had (generally) good dry weather and a fantastic turnout of volunteers from our Northern Working Party Team. It's not too late to join us as there is much to do to get boats under this bridge in time for the Trust's Bicentenary celebrations in October. We meet every third Saturday of the month and often more often. Our regulars also support visiting groups, two of which KESCRG and NWPG are coming down in April. We are fully inclusive and everyone is welcome, skilled or otherwise. Contact Dave Evans or myself if you would like to help.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Hedgelaying Team

Top Ho all. We've gone round the bend! Well, anyone that works with me must be 'round the bend'. The team has been out for the 4 Tuesdays of March although we were down to 2 on the 29<sup>th</sup> which meant that we didn't get enough coppice material from Devil's Hole. Devil's Hole is really going well with spring flowers, a good show as a result of coppicing.

The laying side at Haybarn is progressing well with 175 yards laid to date and we have literally gone round the first bend. This means, if all goes well, that we might have laid half or more of the total length of 525 yards by the seasons end.

Nature wise there is a lovely display of Marsh Marigolds just ahead of us and creatures are starting to get it together as frogs are croaking away for mates' with spawn in evidence. Buzzards are up in formation with mock ariel battles.

We have enjoyed baked spuds with ham and cheese and soon the bacon will be frying. Can't you smell it?

With that lovely thought.....'That's All Folks' as a wise Bugs Bunny once said.

*Keith*

## Tickner's Heath Depot

Well spring has sprung and the grass is rize, the days are growing longer and we will soon be hearing the gentle tone of leather on willow – hooray.

Here at the depot life goes on as it has for most of the recent months and we managed to turn our attention to a bit of housekeeping as the volunteer work force seems to be treating the Trust's equipment with the respect it deserves and so there is only the odd call on our services.

As I mentioned we have managed to do a bit of tidying around the depot cleaning and putting the remaining Kwik stage scaffolding under cover and making another home for the odd lengths of plywood we have at the depot. This made the depot look less like 'Steptoe's Yard', that is, until Storm Katie took a hand and ruined some of our hard work. Roofs of our small wooden sheds were much the worse for wear and the odd branch from our neighbour's trees littered the area, one of the trees is of immediate concern as it seems to be diseased and could well pose a threat to one of our larger sheds. But no doubt we will survive.

Well that's it for now. All the best

*John*

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	Details from Margaret Darvill
Every Wednesday (plus Thursday and Sunday as required)	Loxwood Link Maintenance	Check with Kev Baker
Every Wednesday	Maintenance sessions at Tickner's Heath Depot	Contact John Smith/Ken Bacon
Tuesdays or Fridays	Work in Lording's area	Contact Tony Clear for details
Various Tuesdays	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans
23 April	WACT Annual Meeting	See current issue of Wey-South for full information

## Mid Week Working Party



The first week of March was spent at Compasses clearing a ditch so that the new road has suitable drainage and the water can flow into the canal. The group were fantastic in working in high freezing cold winds and hail one minute and a few minutes later sunshine. The rest of the month we continued working at Bonfire Hanger, we have had record numbers and have made really good progress. We have completely cleared down to Lock 9 Gennets Wood and are progressing down to Gennets Bridge Lock. The bed and banks were covered in brambles.

*Margaret Darvill*



*Before and after photographs courtesy of Alan Jennings.*



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