

### Editorial

December saw some extra volunteer work, besides that by our regular working parties, when some WACT volunteers and a visiting group from WRG Forestry cleared several trees and large branches that were potentially obstructing navigation between Loxwood and Devil's Hole. This will make things easier for future public boat trips along that section.

Dave Verrrall has now retired from the Trust's staff, though he will still be active as a volunteer. This means there is a vacancy for a Canal Centre Supervisor, which needs to be filled before regular public boat trips re-start. Details of the post are on the website.

There is always a need for new volunteers on working parties, but, if physical work doesn't appeal, the Trust needs more help on the admin side, with planning, fundraising, publicity etc.

*Bill*

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

At our first December meeting we continued our work in Sidney Wood as planned, particularly unblocking the first culvert and trimming back branches overhanging the towpath. In due course we will visit again. It will take another three sessions to reach all the way to lock 16.

The 11th saw appalling weather with heavy rain and sleet, so our visit to Tickner's Yard was deferred until the 18th. We have now cleared the 'route' for the installation of 12 steel fence panels by others. We took the opportunity to undertake more clearance in the yard at the request of John Smith and repaired the sign by the canal.

We meet again on 8th January when we intend to continue cutting the hedge from Lee Farm causeway towards Lee Farm lock.

*Nick Wood*



**Monday Group members at Tickners Yard on 18th December (Martin Burgess)**

### Mid Week Working Party

This month we have only had two weeks work as in December over 20 people attended George Breach's funeral and I cancelled the working party. The first week we cleared the land at Whitley Bridge which we now own. This included clearing all the brambles and saplings as well as moving the cut logs that had been left in an incorrect place. We have now moved them to the bottom of the bank so nature can take its course supporting bug life. The group have done a wonderful job .

We have had another week at Birtley. The group has finished clearing the car park that we have been very kindly lent so we can park 20-plus cars. We have cleared many of the trees from the base of the canal and both sides to the north of Birtley Bridge are clear of brambles etc. We have had many complimentary comments from passers-by on how nice it is to see the canal from the footpath.

Hopefully we will be clearing the navigable section of the canal in January and working down at Haybarn again to finish off cutting the hedge.

*Margaret Darvill*

### Northern (Summit) Working Party

The weather has not been kind to our plans for the month. Having completed the north side shuttering for the slipway, Dave had booked a concrete pour for the third Saturday. Two days before, the heavens opened and the level of the canal rose to well above the towpath to inundate the whole slipway area. The earth dam was partially breached and we expect that, although the shuttering appears to still be in position, the timbers and steel work will now be contaminated with silt. The whole will probably have to be dismantled and reassembled. At the end of the month the water levels remain high and we have not been able to pump out the workings. The dam will need to be piled – the piles are on order and will be re-used on the Tickner's project so are an investment. The 13 ton digger is going away to be adapted so that a piling head can be fitted and used. In the meantime, once the water level drops below the wharf piles, we can continue with the task of installing a re-inforced concrete beam behind and a timber wailing on the front.

Confined to our compound we have used the time to tidy up the site and also to service all the large and small plant ready for the year ahead. We have also installed the new galvanised steel gate posts at the Tickner's Depot so that this long

outstanding job may be completed soon. Further small scale fencing and other works have been completed at Compasses Bridge.

If you are making a New Year's resolution, then why not make joining the Northern/Summit working party one of them? We can always use more help and can offer the widest range of work (with the best equipment) of any volunteer canal project in the UK – quite a boast I know. If the Trust's plans for 2018/19 come to fruition then we are certainly going to need a bigger bank of volunteers to call on.

Please call, text or e-mail either myself or Dave Evans if you would like to help. We meet every third Saturday of the month and often on other Saturdays as required. We also have a very cosy site cabin so we enjoy all creature comforts working in the unpredictable winter months.

*Bill Nicholson*

## Hedgelaying Group

I'm sorry I haven't a clue what to put into this missive. Ah, yes. Greetings all from my Loxwood office at the end of 2017.

I must thank my secretary, Samantha, who is sitting on my right hand as usual and handling my missive with perfection.

Here are some meanings of words:

Edgy - a bit like a hedge.

Tree - an Irish number between 2 and 4.

Barbed - a bed with a range of drinks.

I think that I may have drunk too much over Christmas.

We worked just three Tuesdays in December, laying 18 yards after having cut out a lot of unusable material which should leave just two yards left. I then decided that we could finish this stretch as there was only another 10 yards beyond the fence. So on the first and second Tuesdays of January I hope to finish these 12 yards as we can't move any material down to the canal until at least the second Tuesday. There are 350 stakes and binders waiting to be transported.

A stupid thing can happen: On 28 November I

spent so long packing up the car and changing my clothes in the middle of a field in the dark, with the car doors open (7 lights) and the radio on that, yes you guessed it, I ran the battery flat. Panic ensued but I did get sorted after four phone calls. Silly me.

Anything can delay you: minus 7 degrees caught me out on 12 December trying to leave home to go to the site. A very frozen car and shed padlock took me an hour to defrost so as to be able to get the tools from the shed packed into the car.

I get many communications from people and I have just received a letter from a Mrs Trellis of Staines: Dear Jack, why don't I live somewhere more interesting like Slough?

Happy New Year Mrs Trellis et al.

*Keith Nichols*

## Volunteer Training

As our society is getting more and more litigious it is ever more important to have training. Please could all volunteers who use power tools or need other training please let me know, copying your leader, so that I can organise the training. This will include those whose certificate is more than five years old.

No dates have yet been decided, as it depends on the number of people requiring training. I will send out preferred dates and see if we can get a consensus.

Please email [margaret\\_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk](mailto:margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk)

## Navvies' Luncheon, 14th March

The 2018 Mid Week Working Party Navvies' Lunch will be held once again at Foxbridge Golf Club, Foxbridge Lane, Plaistow Road, Kirdford, RH14 0LB.

All past and present members of the MWWP and other groups, and their partners, are cordially invited to attend.

The date, set for 14 March, is a little later in the year than usual, but this is intentional - it marks the 25th anniversary of the first ever MWWP working party, held in mid-March 1993. Organiser

Name	Group/Project	Tel	e-mail
Julian Cheek	Maintenance coordination	01483 505566	<a href="mailto:julian_cheek@weyandarun.co.uk">julian_cheek@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Maurice Cranefield	Visiting working parties	01483 505566	<a href="mailto:Maurice_Cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk">Maurice_Cranefield@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
John Talbot	Health & Safety Director	01483 429918	<a href="mailto:jcst@weyandarun.co.uk">jcst@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Eric Walker	Gennets Bridge Lock	07717 855340	<a href="mailto:tsg@weyandarun.co.uk">tsg@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Margaret Darvill	Mid Week Working Party	01483 894606	<a href="mailto:margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk">margaret_darvill@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
John Empringham	Monday Group	01483 562657	<a href="mailto:mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk">mondaygroup@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Kev Baker	Loxwood Link	01489 690241	<a href="mailto:loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk">loxwoodlink@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
John Smith	Tickner's Depot	01903 235790	<a href="mailto:depot@weyandarun.co.uk">depot@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Keith Nichols	Hedge laying	01403 753882	<a href="mailto:hedging@weyandarun.co.uk">hedging@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Bill Nicholson	Northern working parties	01844 343 369	<a href="mailto:bill@nwpg.org.uk">bill@nwpg.org.uk</a>
Dave Evans	Summit working party		<a href="mailto:dave_evans@weyandarun.co.uk">dave_evans@weyandarun.co.uk</a>
Bill Thomson	Working Party News	01903 744767	<a href="mailto:bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk">bill_thomson@weyandarun.co.uk</a>

Di Miles says that any photos or memories of those early days would be welcomed.

As numbers are limited, bookings will only be accepted with a Menu Choice and Cheque together, and must be received by Friday 23rd February 2018 at the latest, by post only.

Cost for any two courses £19.15, for three courses £22.50.

For your convenience, you may print or copy the form below and send it with your cheque, with menu choices marked, to Di Miles. Please fill in a separate form for each person attending.

Please make cheques payable to Mrs D.J.Miles and send ,with menu choice, to: 8 Newlands, Buckingham Close, Guildford, GU1 1TR. Home phone : 01483 575804.

**Attendee name:**

.....

Email address for confirmation of booking

.....

**Menu Choices :**

**Starter:**

Butternut Squash & Tomato Soup, Croutons  
Baked Field Mushroom, Red Onion & Goat's Cheese  
Mackerel Pate, Melba Toast

**Main:**

Chicken wrapped in Parma Ham, Stilton & Cream Sauce, New Potatoes  
Steak & Kidney Pudding, Creamed Potatoes  
Smoked Haddock Gratin, New Potatoes  
All served with a selection of fresh vegetables

**Dessert:**

Treacle Tart, Vanilla Ice Cream OR Custard  
Vanilla Panna Cotta, Berry Compote  
Chocolate Sponge and Chocolate Sauce

**Coffee & Mints**

**December floods on the Arun**



**Pictures of the Arun valley flooding taken by Roger Wilson, a member of the Monday Group. They show, variously: Harsfold, taken from what will be the position of the new bridge; the flood lock and picnic table; the river, the level of which had risen up to the recently rebuilt stile; and the last field before Lordings, where the working parties usually park, having crossed the plank bridge in the foreground.**

**Working Party Diary**

Every Sunday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Contact Eric Walker for details
Every Monday	'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
Various Tuesdays (not in summer)	Hedge Laying	Contact Keith Nichols
Third Saturday of the month	Summit level	Contact Dave Evans