

## Editorial

It's good to see that our Mid Week Working Party has a leader once again - Margaret Darvill, whose organisational skills have been well proven on the Poddle, has agreed to take over. Welcome Margaret, and thanks to David Daniels for filling in.

We can also report that the contractors are now at work at both Gennets Bridge Lock (see Eric's report below) and on the new bridge at Compasses, near Alfold.

*Bill*

## Mid Week Working Party

This last month we have been clearing the canal and reeds down near Drungewick. The opposite side from the towpath had many trees and branches overhanging the canal and they were very successfully cleared.

At the same time many of the party cleared patches of reeds so the boat trip passengers can see beyond the canal. The canal now has a wider channel to navigate and the view is better.

The group now has a new leader in the name of Margaret Darvill and if anyone wishes to contact me, please do.

*Margaret Darvill*

## Thursday and Sunday Group

Gennets Bridge Lock (GBL) has seen a lot of recent effort involving the Natural England licensed search for protected species, which has been closely supervised by our accredited ecological consultant. This has allowed subsequent removal of all the sludge from the area where the lock is to be built and a pump to be installed to keep the water level down.

The contractor's piling team started mobilisation onto the site on 26 June and began work on 29 June. With all the preparation work already done, their job was expected to be relatively straightforward. Well it would have been, if it was not for a 225mm (10in) layer of stone about a metre below the ground. The 166 reinforced concrete piles were 6m (19 ft) long. Having completed their work after two weeks, the pile layers went off to another site. The excavation team started on 27 July and their work should be completed in early August ready for the concreting team.

Meanwhile the TSG has started towpath surfacing in the first 100m from GBL towards the south. That stopped to allow the landowner to put cattle in that part of the farm, and the action

moved to Brewhurst Lane on the towpath south from the lane. This work was originally started late last year but was put off due to bad weather, as is customary in winter, to be resumed this year. The work will continue until either the budget runs out or volunteer construction at GBL can get under way - this could be only a few weeks away.

The Thursday and Sunday Group meets at 09:30. The TSG has a work briefing form emailed out before the working day. Please email Eric Walker if you want to get on that circulation list.

*Eric Walker*

## Hunt Park Visiting Groups

WRG BITM came to Sidney Wood on 18/19 July. This report is compiled from talking to Rachel Banyard at the WACT summer camp and is therefore slightly second hand.

Organised by Brian King, who is taking the lead on the Sidney Wood section, BITM spent the weekend moving the causeway to the north of the spill weir to a new position at the head of Lock 16 with the aim of re-watering this very attractive length of the summit. The group also investigated the work needed to prevent leakage - particularly around the spill weir - and carried out towpath improvements.

There is more work to do here, including possibly uncovering a culvert across the canal and re-sealing it. Plus, of course, the ubiquitous towpath improvement work - see my comments in the Camp report below.

BITM seems to specialise in the one-off tasks and we welcome them back in October to Whitley Manor Railway Bridge for some further exciting exploratory work.

*Bill Nicholson*

## The Mrs Bucket Group (keeping up appearances on Mondays)

Early July saw us working at the winding hole above lock 16 in Sidney Wood in preparation for the visit of WRG (BITM) for the work they were to undertake later in the month to move the bund 200 yards south to block off the lock and to repair the towpath. This was to allow the winter rains to fill the winding hole with water.

We had a good turnout for our second meeting with the result that we were able to bring our regular sites up to scratch; the hedge between the 90 degree turn in the canal north of Haybarn was cut all the way back to the swing bridge. A major task; so now the towpath is clear for the walkers.

## Mrs Bucket at the Canal Centre



**Above left:**  
*'I think it goes like this'*  
**Left:** *'This ground is hard'*  
**Above right:** *'Almost there'*  
**Right:** *'Job done'*  
*Pictures by Dave Verrall*



We also had time to install the new orientation board by the canal centre in Loxwood, despite the unyielding ground, at the request of Chairman Sally (see pictures).

Our leader has a few extra jobs lined up for August when we shall meet on the 3rd and 17th.

*Nick Wood*

## Tickner's Heath Depot

High summer? Well here at the depot things are a trifle slack, but we have still managed to do a few things. As it is supposed to be summer, and the plants around the depot are growing, we have taken advantage of the spare time on our hands to clear at least some of the vegetation. But even with all hands to the pump we still made little impact.

As reported last month the team has been working on a donated hydraulic capstan. At last we managed to get the beastie started and on coupling the capstan to the engine away she went and managed to pull the Landrover with ease.

Mike Davison has once again delivered some work for the team - in this case an outboard.

Unfortunately it had no fuel tank, so the team had to manufacture one. Once the fuel was switched on away she went and looks like another good addition to the Trust's equipment.

The large unbraked trailer has suffered a problem in that the jockey wheel has collapsed, leaving a heavy object with no visible means of support' It looks like yours truly is going to have research the internet for more parts.

Our resident painter and decorator Ken Bacon has turned his attention to the Canal Centre, tidying up the décor so that Joe Public gets a decent impression of the Trust. Bookings for his talents are accepted at a reasonable price, once agreed please make the cheque payable to 'JF Smith'.

The Northern Office has once again set the team the problem of finding equipment for the proposed measuring of Cranleigh Waters. Lengths of rope and measuring tape were no problem, but something to measure the depth had the team scratching its collective heads. After a rummage in the various sheds something light and 3m-plus in length was found. After another rummage our

## 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
13 August	Trust Annual Meeting	See June <i>Wey-South</i>

policy of rarely throwing anything away came up trumps - the steel innards of an old steel tape were found and once pop rivetted to the pole a useable depth measurer was produced.

Well, that's about it for this month, keep smiling.

*John Smith*

## Summit (Northern) Working Party

This time we were back at Hunt Park finishing (almost) the viewing platform. Our small but skilled team of five installed the remaining deck planks leading up to the cycle way; sanded down the timber side and top rails and glued rubber strips onto the projecting steel bases that sit on top of the screw piles.

One job left is to fit the central hard wood hexagon. Roger has a mate who has a large stock of hardwood so we look forward to completing this in August. Pictures of the finished item are on the front page of the WACT web-site currently. It is an impressive structure which has taken about 95 man days of volunteer time to build which we roughly calculated at a value of c.£20,000. Plus of course the contractors time to put in the piles and erect the steel frame. We rounded off the day splitting logs.

*Bill Nicholson*

## WACT Summer Camp

Our 2015 Summer Camp took place on the summit level at Compasses Bridge, from 25 to 29 July, led by George Whitehead. I may be treading on George's toes by reporting this - he may however be grateful for saving him a job.

The camp has a history of deviating from planned tasks and this year was no exception - work on the slipway being postponed. The list of outstanding jobs on the summit meant that there was plenty of work to do plus the possibility of overflow work in Sidney Wood. The two main tasks were to build the western entrance to the new

road drain culvert at a point about half way between the Three Compasses and Compasses Bridge. This involved casting a thick concrete slab onto which our brick expert Phil Cardy spent three days building a 9in brick wall around the plastic drain culvert. The eastern culvert portal is currently under the road and will be built next spring.

The other main task was to improve the towpath surface from Farnhurst Bridge back to Compasses. Here I must mention three days put in by Dave Evans and Pete Bunker in constructing a temporary road access from the security cabin down to the towpath and back past the landing stage back to the causeway. This served as access for the towpath improvement material and will provide the route for the removal of the causeway material next summer. The towpath works were completed by Tuesday pm after which the team re-tracked to the Wey South Path through the caravan park where some boggy sections were cleared out and re-surfaced. The purpose of this work is to provide a smooth high quality pedestrian access for visitors to Wings & Wheels at the end of August. Both paths are much improved and a credit to the team who laboured on them.

Apart from Sunday, the weather was good but because of this and plenty of work to do at Dunsfold, the Sidney Wood work is a job for another day. The team did think the towpath laying might be an excellent job for MWWP to do during their fallow summer months? Now they have dumper drivers all is needed is for a digger driver to be trained up and the towpath from Loxwood to Southlands is there for the laying.

The camp was excellently led as usual by George. We welcomed a number of past and new volunteers - many of whom are local and who we hope to see back on our regular Northern Working Parties - thanks to them all.

*Bill Nicholson*

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