

Editorial

Another successful summer camp has taken place - some pictures are in this issue of *WPN*, and there will be a full report in the upcoming *Wey-South*. It's all too easy to take these camps, which can achieve so much in a short space of time, for granted. But these are manned by volunteers, often with little or no experience of canal restoration (though some have years of navvying to draw upon). They pay to come on the camps, giving up annual holiday time. We hope they thoroughly enjoyed their week in the sun, and went home having learned a lot about the canal and how it is being revived.

We have benefited too from a similar initiative, hosting corporate volunteer days for employees of various organisations. They have helped out at Loxwood and Hunt Park, resulting in a useful team-building exercise and donations to the Trust.

The current warm and dry weather makes a welcome change from the winter conditions which hampered work at several sites. But despite a few days of heavy rain at the end of July, water levels in the canal, and in particular in the rivers and streams which supply the canal, are very low, which has led to the necessity to suspend boat trips until September.

Bill

Eric Walker Group

The group has spent most of its time working on the refurbishment of Tickner's Heath Depot. We are intending to install mains electricity to the site as John and his team have for years been using generators, which have not always been reliable.

We have obtained quotations for the installation of a mains cable and the connection to the nearby electricity sub-station and the group's volunteers will do all the 'builder's work' including trench excavation and the building of the termination kiosk on the boundary of our site.

From that point we will use our volunteer force to wire out the various buildings and then we will need to have the work checked and certified by a registered/certified electrician.

We have cleared substantial amounts of old timber and scrap metal. Work has started on refurbishing the large Nissen hut, to make it structurally sound and waterproof and this will become the main mechanical equipment repair workshop.

There is asbestos cement corrugated roofing to three buildings on site, which we intend to demolish and we will, therefore, have to employ a specialist contractor to remove the sheeting prior to our demolition works. The water supply into the existing workshop (to be partially demolished) will be adapted and extended to feed the welfare cabin and the shed

that will become the future workshop. In addition to the work on Tickner's, the group completed a couple of tasks for Dave Evans, namely the preparation of the timber protection planks to the concrete walls under Loxwood crossing and a field drain in the verge at Compasses Bridge.

Dennis Gillen

Mid-Week Working Party

For some of July we have been once again split up as a group as many of the jobs we have been asked to do have not required a large number of people. The group members have worked tirelessly through the heat. Well done!

We started the month by clearing just north of Southland Lock. The newly-cleared towpath now allows people to see the canal. *May Upton* was put to good use as it was the only way to remove the brush. Other group members managed finally to remove the large tree root from the Gosden Aqueduct.

We then moved on to clear about 100 yards of the canal both in the bottom and the banks just south of Gennetts Bridge Lock. There is now a lovely view of the canal both ways from Gennetts Bridge Lock. Due to the lack of rain there are piles of brush all the way along which we will clear when we have enough rain to let us feel confident to burn without setting anything else alight.

Our last week we returned to Pallingham Bridge after two years and cleared all the new growth as well as some of the area around Pallingham Quays. Our trusty member Doug continues to tidy up around the Canal Centre.

Margaret Darvill

Mrs Bucket Group - Keeping Up Appearances on Mondays

Phew, it's hot! As anticipated, we descended on Malham Lock and Bignor Bridge for a big tidy up at the beginning of July.

We also cleared 250 yards of vegetation from the base of the hedge on the towpath between Birch Copse and just south of Brewhurst Bridge at the request of Kev Baker. Our grateful thanks are due to the engineers at Tickner's Depot who quickly repaired our member's lawnmower after it had sustained damage at Malham.

At Loxwood we cleared up after the visiting weekend working party had completed many enhancements around the lock. This included spreading a lot of topsoil to await the rain and grass. We also removed the Himalayan Balsam and Ragwort from the overflow car park, cleared around the landing stages at Baldwins Knob lock and visited the Drungewick aqueduct site for grass cutting and more HB pulling. Finally we spent two of our July outings clearing the permissive path between Drungewick

Bridge, the lock and the banks around the winding hole below the lock.

Everything was seriously overgrown including the 'intermediate' seat which had disappeared under a big bramble bush! In addition we watered the hedge plants at Gennets Bridge Lock.

Nick Wood

Northern (Summit) Working Party

The main work for the month at the slipway site was the digging out of the sludge (which in the very hot conditions was rapidly turning rock hard) behind the new wharf and slipway and its replacement with imported crushed hardcore with a final top surface of road planings. The latter were extracted and sieved out from the contents of 'Mount Dave' and therefore free to the Trust.

This was all carried out by a team of four plant drivers from the NWPG/WRG week long summer camp at the beginning of July. The main part of the camp was working at Loxwood carrying out improvements to the New Lock and bridge and wharf walls. A separate report on the camp as a whole may find its way into in the next *WeySouth*.

The following third Saturday a small team of four led by Robert Nicholson shuttered up and cast the concrete walkway along the northern side of the slipway, this time including a bollard for all the future boat users to tie up to. Well done to them as the temperatures were even higher than the previous week. The team was supplemented by two press-ganged members of visiting group WRGBITM who were down at the Tickner's Depot cleaning off and painting the *John Smallpeice*. She has been rescued from the cutting torch with a planned appearance at the slipway opening on 30 September.

Dave Evans has produced a list of tasks leading up to the opening of the slipway and of course it's quite long. Consequently Dave says he will be down on site every Friday and Saturday in August and September and would welcome anyone (not just from the Northern Team) who can spare the time to help him. I suggest that you e-mail or phone him first to double check that he will be there. Generally though we would really welcome some new members in the team - it seems like quite some time since we saw a new face and that's no disrespect to the dedicated and hard working band of current regulars!

Please contact me if you feel that you could help in any way.

Bill Nicholson



Above and on page 3 - three images from the recent WACT/NWPG summer camp at Loxwood (Bill Nicholson)

Tickner's Heath Depot

Sorry I didn't make last month's edition, affairs of State and all that, you know! But I'm pleased to report that in my absence last month Mick Jones and the crew at the depot have been beavering away with increased efficiency. It seems they perform better when I'm not there.

Redundant pumps have been looked at and those that fail to pass muster have been deposited in the skip, the white container otherwise known as the 'Atlantic Conveyor' has been stripped of superfluous items, which in some cases resulted in them being deposited in the skip. All in all the place is looking a lot slimmer and more in keeping with the new streamlined image.

The gates have been painted and the Dunsfold Road entrance now sports WACT colours thanks to the efforts of Goliath Keet.

Also, during the month, the crew set about reducing the vegetation which was starting to take over the various sheds and buildings. So, I'm afraid that there will be a much reduced blackberry harvest this year.

Well that's about it for this month. All the best

John Smith

Working Party Diary

Every Wednesday and Thursday	Mainly construction work	Details from Dennis Gillen/John Reynolds
Every Monday	'Mrs Bucket' - Keeping Up Appearances	Details from John Empringham
Every Wednesday	Mid-Week Working Party	Details from Margaret Darvill
Monday to Friday (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



PEST Team

First of all let's explain the background to the Boat Group's PEST working party. PEST stands for 'Passengers' Environment Safety Team'.

Some months ago Peter Hyem, skipper with the Boat Group, set up a team of Boat Group volunteers to look at the navigable section of the canal (Southland to Drungewick) from a skipper's perspective to ensure that it is safe for our passengers, crew and boats.

We use both the *May Upton* work boat and *Josias Jessop*; *MU* for the heavier work such as lifting trees and logs out of the canal, *JJ* for lighter work such as cutting back outgrowth and for more distant work locations where her speed relative to *MU* comes in useful.

The team has been in action since December 2017 and continues to work on the first Friday of every month meeting at the Canal Centre from 09:00. To date we have concentrated on the section of canal between Devils Hole Lock and Baldwins Knob Lock (BKL).

June and July saw us working between Loxwood and Devils Hole removing obstructions from the water (small fallen trees, sundry floating logs and branches, etc.), clearing growth from around the landing stages at BKL and DHL to restore their visibility to skippers and, moving south of BKL,

clearing encroaching vegetation down to the Slipway.

Work is suspended during August due to closure of the canal to boat traffic due to low water levels.

The coming months will see a continuation of this type of work, call it 'housekeeping for the navigation' if you will, complementing the work of our colleagues who maintain the locks, trim the banks, maintain the towpath and do all the other jobs which contribute to the pleasure of our passengers and of the public more generally.

Chris Jones

Our PEST group (Passenger Environment & Safety Team), largely made up of boat crew and skippers, continues to go out on the first Friday of every month to clear up the operational section of the canal and make it as safe as possible for our passengers and crew. We have been somewhat hampered recently with the bird breeding season followed by the hot weather and low water levels. We normally have between 6 and 12 people in our team. We will have to cancel the outing on Friday 3 August as no boats will be allowed on the canal due to low water, and without a boat we cannot successfully cut overhead vegetation over the canal and off side bank vegetation potentially endangering our boats safe navigation along the canal.

Peter Hyem

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