

19th February, 2018

I had been hoping to cover both Lancaster and Uttoxeter in this newsletter as I am likely to be away when it is time for the next one. Unfortunately, the Uttoxeter information is yet to arrive and this is now a bit late for the Lancaster.

LAST BUT ONE TIME OUT – 13/14 January – HOLLINWOOD

This was yet another attack on the many stumps left after our last big cutting session, some 5 years ago, On Saturday a group of about a dozen split roughly equally between Tirforing old stumps and cutting back willows nearer to Valley Aqueduct, stopping short of fully cutting them down. Numbers were lower on Sunday but work continued. Overall a satisfactory weekend though there is still plenty left to do.

LAST TIME OUT – 03/04 February – GRANTHAM

Our weekend on the Grantham went very well, although I have to say a lot of that was because of the accommodation, more of which later.

The task was to clear some of the branches overhanging the canal between Locks 15 and 16 near Woolsthorpe, as well as some of the larger trees blocking the path on the offside. The GCS locals had done a good job of clearing the scrub to give us access which made our own work much easier. Dave J., Nigel, Stephen and I set to work with the chainsaws while the others built fires to burn some of the existing scrub and set up the Tirfor. The branches that went into, or were already in, the canal were winched onto the tow-path, where the GCS guys disposed of them. They were also useful in working from their boat to help reduce the size of the trees.



On Sunday, our numbers were slightly reduced, although by now we could pull the limbs on to the offside, so could all work together. The end result was, as usual, a big difference to the area.



What about the accommodation, I hear you ask. Well, we stayed in the recently refurbished function room of the Dirty Duck, next to lock 16 and the GCS storage area. Also very conveniently close to the work site. As the Swiss landlord, JF (not John Foley!), didn't know if the new cooker would be delivered in time, C&RT had kindly offered to pay for our meals in the pub. Barbara made lunches for us but we had our breakfasts and Saturday evening meal in the pub. The quality of the food was excellent which just added to the whole experience. I think we'd be happy to go there again.

Thanks to all who turned up, to C&RT for the food and to JF and his staff for looking after us so well.

(Report: Paul Shaw; photos: John Foley)

NEXT TIME OUT – 10/11 March – LANCASTER

Having just had a gourmet weekend on the Grantham courtesy of C&RT we have the possibility of luxurious accommodation as well as pub food on the Lancaster. The work will mostly be scrub-bashing around Hincaster Tunnel, though there will also be some preparatory work for the Easter Camp going on at Stainton (removal of old lining material and profiling of the canal bank for re-lining). Adrian Sturgess will be there and doing some training on large 360° machines and tele-handlers if time permits. Anyone interested may be able to plug into that. The accommodation will be in a hostel in Kendal and, as we won't have a cook, breakfast will be taken there. We will have to make our own lunches but the Canal Trust will treat us to dinner in a local pub. In theory you may already be too late to book as the hostel wanted numbers a couple of days ago but if you want to go but haven't booked yet please contact Ju asap to see if you can be squeezed in.

AND A SPARE – 03 March – STOCKPORT BRANCH

On Saturday 3rd March, the Manchester and Stockport Canal Society will be assisting at a Keep Britain Tidy litter pick on the canal line through Gorton, Openshaw and Clayton. This is a follow up to the successful event held in October which several WRG Northwest and Manchester IWA members attended. Starts 11am, runs till 4pm. It is officially suggested that helpers sign in at Gorton Community Centre, Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton, Manchester M18 8PE to pick up bags and equipment, but you may find it simpler to make your way to the M&SCS section running south from the Ashton Canal junction at Clayton where there will also be a supply of bags and other equipment. For more information contact John Foley.

ADVANCE NOTICES - The MONTGOMERY

As those who have received – and read – their *Navvies* will know, there is a Mont camp scheduled for the week commencing Easter Saturday, 31st March. The site is between Redwith and Pryces bridges - close to Crickheath, where we have worked in the past. This section was prettified but not sealed by contractors after the rewatering as far as Redwith bridge and SUCS, working to plans provided by BW, then attempted (unsuccessfully) to waterproof it. This will be the first of 3 weeks of camps (4 if you include our mini-camp) this Summer to try to seal this section. The work will involve peeling back the lining that SUCS put in, laying foundations for a new towpath wall and then extending the original lining over the foundations and up to towpath level. The later camps (July) will complete this work and build a new, protective wall. A leader, assistant and cook are in place for the Easter camp and accommodation will be at the excellent Porthywaen Silver Band Hall. All that is missing now are the volunteers so if anyone has a few days to spare please book through Head Office (CBW) or the WRG Website.

Our mini-camp (2-9 June) will be working on the offside of the same length of canal, clearing permeable infill from behind the wash wall and replacing it with impermeable clay. We are aiming for a rolling camp of 6-8 people, at least half of whom will need some machine skills (small 360° and/or dumper). Accommodation will be Llanymynech Church Hall. Contact Ju.

SALES

Nothing new to report.

BOOK STUFF

Nothing new to report.

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- The next Paper Chases: 24<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> April
- The next Ad Hoc – Wednesday 07 March 2018, at Mike and Liz's - 7 Windsor Ave, Failsworth M35 9LW

***DIARY 2018***

|               |               |                                         |     |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| February 24   | Paper         | Cleveland Hotel, Crumpsall              | BMc |
| March 03      | Info          | Litter pick on Stockport Branch         | JF  |
| March 07      | <i>ad hoc</i> | Mike & Liz Chase's                      | All |
| March 10/11   | Dig           | Lancaster                               | JD  |
| Mar 31/Apr 07 | Info          | Montgomery Camp (may extend beyond 7th) | CBW |
| April 07      | Paper         | Cleveland Hotel, Crumpsall              | BMc |
| April 21/22   | Dig           | Uttoxeter                               | JD  |
| May 05/07     | Info          | Canal Cavalcade                         | CBW |
| May 12        | Paper         | Cleveland Hotel, Crumpsall              | BMc |
| June 02/09    | Dig           | Montgomery Mini-camp                    | JD  |
| June 23/24    | Paper         | Cleveland Hotel, Crumpsall              | BMc |

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***Change of Addresses etc.***

The electronic circulation list for this newsletter (and other communications) is handled by IWA Head Office so if you want to change your e-mail address or drop off the circulation altogether you need to contact Jenny Morris (above under CBW as jenny.black). Snail mail recipients need to tell me (Malcolm).