



Wendover Arm Trust

15th December 2019



Operations Report November 2019

Volunteer safety

Yes, it has been wet and muddy again! Slips and slides aplenty, including me landing on my “derriere”, with no reported injuries.

It has been cold, windy and wet enough for some volunteers to suffer the effects and if it is wet and cold next month we will have to continue to watch out for the onset of Hypothermia.

One of our Volunteers (Peter Bird) has been working on the problem of Emergency Services access to our remote work site. Peter has contacted the various services to enquire how we can best help them to arrive on site and recover any potential patients (WAT or the Public). The main outcomes from this exercise, and a subsequent site survey, are that there were several towpath features that would obstruct access. We have worked on the problem areas this month and access is much improved. We now know what information the Emergency services would need to find the canal access points and a new Emergency Information card has been drawn up. Peter has been able to get some cards printed and laminated for all Volunteers who need one. The information card is also on the WAT website. We are grateful to Peter for doing this.

All volunteers (except one) receive a word document with the work schedule each month. On the document there is a statement about promising to abide by the WAT working rules and a section on health and safety. I was curious to know how many people read this information because it doesn't change very much from month to month. I added a last line in the “red” section: - **4/ If you have read this far you can claim a special gift from Tony!** Suffice it to say that nobody made a claim. (and the time limit has expired!). Need a re-think on this.

We have introduced a whistle system for warning all volunteers on site that there has been an incident and to safely stop work and assemble at the Team Leader Designated place. All Team Leaders now always carry a whistle with them.

We have overhauled and re-written the Volunteer handbook (thanks to Mike Wright, H & S) and it is now version 4. The handbook is accessible on the WAT website and for those folks who don't have access to the internet we will supply a printed version on request. Please **read** the new handbook!

The website will also have a Banksman guide for use when directing an Excavator. Please also read that so we all use the same signals. The driver will also be thankful that he won't have to guess what all the arm waving is about!

The week's events

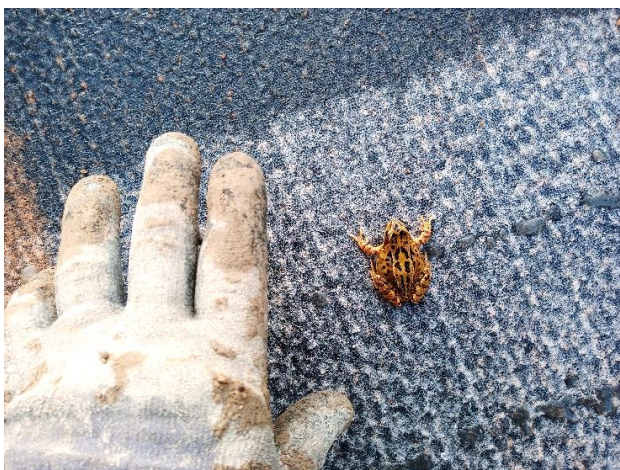
I am about to describe mud again; did I mention it was Wet Cold and Windy?

The activity started with pumping out the work area and some of the section on the other side of bridge 4. We also pumped out the water being held back by the Concrete policemen to stop it leaking through.



After the pumping out it rained straight away! This gave wet and cold working conditions.

Clive has spotted something "this long"!



This wasn't what Clive saw! There were many of these which seem to like the mud and cold water.

I think it is a toad, but I am sure an expert will tell us for sure.

The main activity was centred on finishing the block work at the Mooring wall and the last piece on the towpath side. The last reinforced concrete sleeping policeman was cast in place, bringing the total to 7.



Here we have an “Inspector of Policemen” making sure number 7 is in the correct position.



The ends of the mooring wall blocks and the Towpath bank.

Following on from this the bed mat was rolled out, the main roll cut off and lifted away and the remaining “spare” bed mat carefully folded back for future use.

Work now turned to excavating through the Bridge 4 abutments. This was a more intense operation due to the possibility of the excavator striking the bridge, and a lot of the work had to be done by hand. Where the spoil had been compacted by passing traffic for some years the bed and sides were very hard packed despite all the rain.



The staff man looks happy!

The work continued over a couple of days to get this result: -



In the last picture you may be able to see that the old Swing Bridge wall foundations have been uncovered. This is in preparation for future excavation and bed concreting for the wall and stop plank channel foundations.

On the last day an Excavator decided to throw off one of it's tracks for no apparent reason, near to the bridge workings. The repair team from SRBE (our plant hire company) came out and rolled around in the mud to get the track back on.

It was getting dark as the team made their way back to the car park.



The team have
“that glow”
arising from a job
well one!

Photo Tony Borrill

Other Activities of note

We had a delivery of the special bricks to be used on Whitehouses and the Swing Bridge walls, another delivery of Diesel and two special memorial benches.

The benches will be mounted on concrete slabs next month, some preparatory work has been done.



A while ago we discovered a large block laying in the bushes next to the footpath leading to the Swing Bridge walls. The block resembled those used on the swing bridge walls. It was pulled from bushes and put in a safe position. It may be an old railway “sleeper” from a very early railway as per the other blocks at the location.

Tidy Friday



40 more trees
and 1000
bulbs were
planted!

More brush
wood was
rounded up
for a bonfire.

Photo Chris Sargeant

The Tidy Friday team also cleaned the plant machines because there had not been time to clean them the previous day due to the excavator track coming off. Many thanks to them!

Tony Bardwell