

2016 Work News Archive.

As always the general path, canal profile and invasive growth control takes up most of the time and effort donated to the maintenance of the five & half miles of the canal. However during the twelve months of 2016 there are some highlighted projects that have been organised for completion by the volunteers, assisted by grants from Torridge, Pancrasweek and Holsworthy Councils for outside contractors.

Back to work after the Christmas break, the weather was dry but some trees had suffered wind damage which required tidying up along the Vealand section and the line of the original towpath was opened up along the right hand side of the canal (the canal profile had been used for many years previously and still offers the opportunity of a route to the picnic table and seats overlooking the filter beds). (right)



Three of the accommodation bridges Gadlock, Wooda and Broomhill had been designated for urgent pointing repairs to the stonework directly under the concrete pad and rebuilding of the lead-in walls, Gadlock Bridge being the first. (below)



Gadlock Bridge before repairs



And afterwards



Wooda Bridge before repairs



And afterwards



Broomhill Bridge before repairs



And afterwards



In Feb/March we were invited by the Bude Canal and Harbour Society to participate in a joint exhibition in the Castle to display photos and information leaflets for visitors, both local and further afield. (left)

It proved to be very popular with many interested people discussing and learning from our supporting members. New membership was taken up by some.

In March, a section of the canal profile was fenced off approaching the last piece of the Canal Trusts footpath and canal profile ownership. (right) This included a formal pedestrian gate for improved stock control which allowed for the removal of a previously locked gate and barbed wire topped sheep netting. Assistance from the farmers involved is very much appreciated and walkers visiting this last section are reminded to keep to the line of the towpath and that there is no access to the road system other than by making a return walk to Vealand Bridge and car park.



Following a walking survey of the footpath two large trees at the northern end of Dunsdon Nature Reserve were discovered to be leaning further over the footpath, both having developed vertical splits in the main trunks and larger limbs. These were removed in the interest of the safety of walkers. (right)



Following problems of livestock getting onto the footpath, the stile at Virworthy becoming unsafe and horses being ridden illegally on the footpath, an ongoing program of replacing broken, old and seemingly inefficient gates was started this year, commencing with the ones previously highlighted as being susceptible. (Virworthy Wharf – left, plus Gadlock and Wooda)

Into April and May called on clearing some fallen trees at Burmsdon before work being concentrated in the Virworthy area, wood treating the finger posts and bridge support picnic table and seat, removing excess vegetation from the fence line both to the north and south of the Wharf. A channel was cut through the accumulated silt and vegetation to improve the drainage from north of the bridge through to the spillway and removal of heavy weed growth in the unloading pool. (right) The canal profile immediately either side of Dexbeer Bridge was also cleared of excess vegetation and cutting the filter bed grass was completed.



June and July continued with the weed clearing, a temporary alteration to the boardwalk approaching Burmsdon, clearing a proposed area at the Holsworthy junction for a small footbridge to span the canal, removal of the intrusive Himalayan Balsam spreading down the stream from Sutcombe and general maintenance throughout. Work again continued on the leak at Virworthy sluice and to repair Broomhill Bridge stonework.



Holsworthy Hamlets organised a walk for a group of ten of their walkers in August to complete an end to end casual and enjoyable walk, making use of the picnic table at Moreton Bridge on the way. (left)

A permanent extension to the boardwalk put in place by contractors for DCC and P3 partnership has solved the problem of the continually very wet section (below left) The new footbridge was put in place at Lishaperhill – Holsworthy Junction. (below right). This is currently onto private land but hopefully, if there is no abuse by walkers, access will be made in the

future through to the road.



New Boardwalk Burmsdon section



New Footbridge Holsworthy Junction

Two new information display boards (below) were placed on the Incline Plane in September giving information relating to both the original use of the canal and the later conversion to supply the first piped water to Bude and Stratton.



Information board – Vealand



Information board – Incline Plane

Major digging out and insertion of piling boards to solve the leak at Virworthy also carried on into October alongside making a new picnic table. (below)



“Getting there” Wharf Spillway



Finished and tested – Virworthy Wharf

A further survey in November disclosed yet another split trunk tree at Puckland starting to lean across the footpath which was safely removed, brash being collected for burning later and clearing some small saplings damaged with the start of Brendon Wood deforestation.