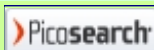


# East Anglian Waterways Association.



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## East Anglian Waterways Association and North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust, Work Parties - 2009

<a href="#">Work Party at Honing Staithe Cut.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at The Old Wherry PH.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Ebridge.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Ebridge.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Honing Lock.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Bacton Wood.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Bacton Wood Lock.</a>
13th December 2009	29th November 2009	15th November 2009	25 October 2009	11 October 2009	September 13 2009	August 16th 2009	July 26th 2009	June 14th 2009	May 31st 2009
<a href="#">Work Party at Honing Cut and Walk.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Honing Lock.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Bacton Wood Lock.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Honing Staithe Cut and Canal.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Canal at Ebridge Lock.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Ebridge Lock and Canal.</a>	<a href="#">Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.</a>	<a href="#">Work Parties Current</a>		
May 10th 2009	April 26th 2009	April 5th 2009	March 29th 2009	8th March 2009	22nd February 2009	8th February 2009			

### Work Party at Honing Staithe Cut.

Sunday 13th December 2009.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To remove the fallen tree at bridge end of cut; to reduce the overgrowth where possible; to further back-fill the walk through the wood with brash; generally tidy up; identify trees which might present a hazard.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** The day started off with a rain-shower and this state of affairs continued with intermittent sunshine.

We began by welcoming a young man, **Tim**, who is carrying out a part of the **Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme** and who is using this type of operation as a section of his endeavours. The health and safety briefing was carried out at the Triangles together with the plan for the day.

The first item on the agenda was to remove the fallen tree which was understood to be from 'land owned by others' and the brash etc replaced onto that land. Other fallen branches etc were also removed.

At the bridge end of the staithe again, some of the weeds on the land had grown quite extensively

and these were cut back with the brush strimmer. Brambles were cut back/removed from the walk near to the bridge. It was noted that work had taken place on the structure of the bridge and it now looked in a pretty good visual state. The grass has not grown appreciably since the last cut and the whole area seemed immense and open with a good deal of water in the arm! The surrounding trees are now looking decidedly bare having lost their cladding of leaves for the winter.

The walk on the north side of the arm was widened a little with the use of strimmers. I set off with **Tim** to walk the Walk and identify possible hazardous trees. This was done and seven (7) trees identified which will be reported to the land agent for further inspection. **Roger** and **Peter**, meantime, were filling in more brash to the walk through the woods. This walk is certainly quite 'damp' in places but the brash is making it a little more bearable.

When **Tim and I** arrived at the far end of the Walk and adjacent to the Weavers Way, we heard a car alarm sounding followed by shouts from the direction of the Triangles. We hurried along in that direction and back up to the parked vehicles to find that **Caroles'** passenger door glass and my cars' rear window had been smashed. Luckily it seemed that nothing had been taken! **Carole** telephoned the police and after some confusion with a couple of office operators, two police officers arrived within 23 minutes and surveyed the scene and took details.

A Scene of Crime officer later arrived and carried out a forensic check of the scenes. Before the two officers departed, a call came in saying that a similar attack was reported on the coast, not too far from our location!

**I was advised by the police to remind all our volunteers not to leave anything on display in vehicles which could be seen to be of value.** This is particularly pertinent to us. **BEWARE!**

Not being able to leave the vehicles parked there without attendance it was decided to call it a day, well, after the much looked forward to piece of cake and we left just after 14.00.

**Ivan** and **Darren** did remain however to check over the area for any other minor things to do and to make a further check for tools.

My thanks go to all who took part in the morning and you DID make a really beneficial difference to the scene.

Please note the changed plan for the beginning of 2010 and the next party will be at **Bacton Wood Lock** on Sunday 10th January 2010.

**I sent you all my additional thanks for the work carried out through the year and wish everyone a special Happy Christmas and a safe, contented and healthy New Year..**

# Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond

**Sunday 29th November 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**The Plan.** Within this and the next two work parties at this site and before the beginning of April next, to complete the clearance of the mill pond site; outline the banking to the pre-laid out marker posts; to clear the roadside pond wall in order to ascertain the extent of repair/rebuild work required; to reduce vegetation growth on the chamber island; to remove old tree roots from the pond base; to check for clay puddling in pond basin; ascertain and complete work of clearance at western end as far as possible.

**Work Achievement.** The weather started with high cloud but as soon as the party was on site the rain started and developed into a stair-rod 'drizzle'. Notwithstanding this the party carried on and after about an hour of water-cooled working, the precipitation ceased and before lunch-break, the sun broke out and continued until close of play. With a total of thirteen (13) folk on site at various times it showed the keenness to complete this project.

After H&S and task briefing, we rapidly set to! **Tom and Digger** were present and launched themselves at clearing the old tree roots, deeply embedded in the base, which was successfully carried out to over 70% of the area, the worst parts.

Work commenced in the north-west corner to outline the northern bank along to the canal. Fallen trees and brash were used to accomplish this task, which did eventually reach as far as the near-side canal marker post and even started the northward bound line alongside the programmed edge of the canal. Apart from banking, no further work is anticipated along this line.

In the main area of the mill pond, there is only one small tree left to be removed - apart from the large trees growing under the roadway and in the western end area. Strimmers were used to start the clearance on the chamber island and in particular to reveal the locations of major obstructions e.g. metal posts retaining the chains used to secure one of the lower lock gates in a vertical position. **Marc** used the Big Machine to clear the rest of the island in short time. Strimmers and a reed cutter were employed near to the wall and spill basin to great effect.

We ceased labours at about 15.00 and left the site in a much changed state. A few robins were noted as we worked, very grateful for overturned earth and exposed worms. **One gentleman**, who stopped by, expressed his great pleasure at the thought of the restoration of the pond as he had learned to swim there as a lad!

A tremendous effort was made by all and that shows in the results. I am confident that the other two work-parties here will finish the planned task and leave the site a pleasure for both local folk and visitors alike. We plan also to return during the summer months to cut the grass (?) on an (ir)-regular basis to keep it looking decent and tidy.

My thanks go to everyone who attended with such enthusiasm! The further **two visits** here were **planned for March** 2010 but this may have to be changed to **February** - watch this space for confirmation.

*The next work-party will be at Honing Staithe Cut on December 13th - the last outing of 2009.*

# Work Party at The Old Wherry PH , Royston (Austin) Bridge

**Sunday 15th November 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

Here follows the report as sent to me by Chris Black, Leader on the day.

"The day started badly at home! Because the weather had been so poor on Saturday with strong winds and heavy rains my usual job of loading the car with tools, mowers and all the other requisites for a work party was postponed until Sunday morning. Our weather forecasters with their £30m computer had promised a fine start but it was raining solidly. I got wet but as we set off the sun duly appeared and it remained fine and warm for the rest of the day.

We arrived at the agreed meeting point on the field track near the pill box and were soon joined by more of the volunteers. We walked to the **Old Wherry PH** expecting to be met by **Mrs. Harvey** (the owner of redundant pub) but the curtains were drawn and no sign of life so we assumed she was still in bed and carried on with my Health and Safety briefing and instructions to the work party as to our tasks. **Carole and I** carried out the little domestic chores we had been asked to do, the grape vine was clipped back to the wall and I cut the grass outside the back door.

"We then concentrated on clearing the canal bank on the west (house side). **Matt** cleared much of the sedge growth with the large strimmer and we soon had all the bushes and old tree stumps removed. The bank slopes at about 45 deg and efforts to find a retaining wall failed. An old picture of the moorings confirming that it was likely to be a wooden structure.

"We gradually worked our way north to the bridge. Trees were removed from the east bank and stacked there. Brash and bushes were cut down together with brambles and sedge making the whole area look very tidy. It would seem that the brash above the bridge had been cut down by Highways and we cleared up their mess! As pointed out by **David R** we did not cut down the bushes between the house and the bridge for security reasons and having cut back bushes below these installed a temporary chain link fence to deny unauthorized access to the house. This arrangement will need to be altered at a future visit.

"We had a visit from **Laurie Ashton** and his mate to see how things were progressing. He was very pleased with our activities. We discussed the removal of the remaining larger trees which he agreed would have to be taken out to gain access for any dredging / re-profiling. The banks have dropped in places and require building up again.

"We were visited by friends of **Mrs. Harvey**, the first two thought we were going to be there last week and seemed concerned that we were upsetting the wildlife which I hope I managed to convince them otherwise. The other two people came to feed the cat and were very interested in our canal restoration. They knew **Roger H**. We were shown a large cast iron plate about 2' round which had written on it - **North Walsham Canal Co Bridge, 5 Ton axle weight limit**. It would make a fine addition to our finds collection!

With two stroke petrol getting low we decided to call it a day at about 16.15."

*My grateful thanks go to Chris for sending me this report after a hard days' slog and also, of course, to the many members of The 'A' Team for applying themselves once more to the effort. The next meeting will be at Briggate on Sunday 29th November 2009 when a fuller explanation of the works to be completed there in the short term., will be given.*

## Work Party at Ebridge

**Sunday 25 October 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To continue removing trees and other bush growth from the canal bed and lower bank on the eastern side of the canal upstream of the lock. To reach the 'target', which is the point where no more trees have fallen into or are blocking the canal or lower parts of the bank.

Two members to cut the grass at Honing Staithe Cut and Walk area.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** The weather was mainly clear with blue skies and a little breeze at times, sometimes a bit stronger from generally the south west. No rain at all.

At the H&S briefing, two new members, **Kevin and Andrew**, were welcomed to the Team and then presented with their very own H&S booklets! The plan for the day was explained and we all set about the trek to the work-face. It is surprising just how far it is from the bridge!

When the first members arrived there, it was to find that an enormous number of trees and saplings had been brought down since our last work party here. We had expected some work to have been done, but this was just amazing! My thanks go to whom so-ever co-operated in this manner. 'All' it needed now was for the debris to be cleared away to a safe and tidy location - and this was done to a large area during the day.

Whilst this was going on, I continued with **Andrew** along the top of the bank, clearing a pathway through the fallen and growing trees and arrived at the target before lunch. One can now walk the whole way without having to bend or climb over any large obstacles.

The target, incidentally, is a patch of grassed land on the bank between the canal and the backslope which is not overshadowed by any trees.

On arriving back at the main party, I stated that the target had been reached and asked casually if anyone could guess how far that would be from where we stood? **Chris** correctly guessed the answer to be 100yards (what else?) and as a reward, and also to ease the many aching backs, I blew the whistle for the lunch break.

On the return walk to the mill site, I noticed a lady walking a dog on the marsh land below the canal and exchanged a few pleasantries with her - it turned out to be **Mrs Manning**.

At the lunch, Carole produced her usual delicious culinary cake art piece, which really capitalised in its' excellence!

After the cake the Team staggered once more onto aching legs and set off back to the work face, with Carole in charge. **Chris** and I set off for Honing and found a very pleasant sight awaiting us. The water level was fairly high for this area and the canal fully covered its allotted space between the banks. Even the **Staithe Cut** was replete with water and no land protruding from it. We duly cut the grass, which was not a hard task, and strimmed the sides of the walk as far as the new bridge, which tested to be really firm in its' location. It is noted that a tree, near to the road bridge, has collapsed onto the walk way and will need to be removed. It was not ascertained as to the ownership of said tree, but it could be from the land under the control of the County Highways Department.

On returning to Ebridge we found that the Team had ceased work (it was getting on) and we



departed at about 16.15 following what can only be described as a very good and successful day. Some of the brash was left in piles on the dry canal bed for future disposal. My grateful thanks to all who came and worked so very hard in making a big impression.

*The next outing is to the **Bacton Wood area** and following talking with the lovely lady owner of the **Wherry Inn, Royston Bridge** on the Bacton Road, B1150 we shall be at the Wherry Inn site to work on the canal in front of the Inn on Sunday 15th November 09. Therefore please go directly to the site and **not** to Bacton Wood Lock.*

Note: for the teetotallers there is not a problem as the Inn closed down some decades ago!



"Rescueing Damsel in Distress!"



"Before."





"The Task."







"After."

[TOP](#)

## Work Party at Ebridge

**Sunday 11 October 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To continue to clear trees and bushes from the canal bed and bank on the north-eastern side upstream of the lock. Two people to cut the grass at *Honing Staithe Cut*.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** The weather was forecast to be generally good with maybe the odd shower - it turned out to be generally fine! With a total of seven members of The Team on site, plus guard dog, we attempted the impossible - to clear the final, now famous 'one hundred yards' to the end of the tree line.

At the start, our new member, **Matt**, wielded the strimmer through the overgrown weeds and grass on the chamber island with deadly accuracy and finished off the beheading with the mower! Not the entire island, you understand, as that was not a major requirement for this day. Sufficient to be able to park one vehicle and trailer - and a place to enjoy our lunch break.

Whilst this work was taking place, others moved up to the work-face - or as near as could be reached due to the greatly overgrown way alongside the canal. It is surprising just how far we had progressed on previous occasions, especially hacking our way through the undergrowth now. Once at the work-face, things all swung into motion and it was not long before we broke for lunch after seeing several more metres cleared and stacked at the top of the bank.

**Carol** apologised for not making a cake but had made a large Norfolk Scone instead. How nice and thoughtful! One person who shall be nameless, and probably outcast? said, on seeing the scone that it made him think of coping stones! How cruel?



During my little 'talk' I mentioned that whilst all the work carried out by **The Team** was very important indeed, there was a great deal to be done behind the scenes.

We, **Carol and I** or **Chris and I**, have had meetings with **Natural England** and also the **Broads Authority** in different locations. We were well received by both organisations and came away with a lot of valuable information, something which is not normally readily available without a lot of 'digging'. We are most grateful to those we met at both **Natural England** and the **Broads Authority** and I am sure that we will be returning for further assistance, now that things are progressing along the canal.

After the scone and that 'loaded down feeling' we all returned to the task on hand and continued until about 15.15. **Mr Laurie Ashton** paid a visit and discussed various ways of moving forward, including making the banks watertight. The result of the outlet of the culvert from **Mr Paul Gibbons' farm dyke**, which runs under the canal, could be seen in the backsoke, which is now fairly heavily restricted with weeds again.



Clearances achieved this day.

Owing to running out of time, the planned grass cutting at Honing Staithe Cut did not take place and will now be done during our next meeting. My thanks again go to The Team for another excellent days work with the resultant new views of the mill from a distance!



David Revill, work party organiser,  
walking back from exploring the next length to be cleared on October 25th 2009.

***Our next meeting is again at Ebridge on 25th October 09.***

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## **Work Party at Honing Lock.**

**Sunday September 13 2009**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** General clearance around the lock and to investigate the use of the backsoke as a way to a portage point; clear this if possible

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** *As I could not have been present due to vacation, I had left Carole B in charge and this is her report:-*

The weather was overcast and very windy with a little rain in the afternoon - but insufficient to require a cessation of work! Two areas were tackled

- 1. with two of us investigating the backsoke and pathway up to the lock and
- 2. at the downstream possible canoe portage point and uphill to the lock.

Both areas were so overgrown that it appeared as if we had never been there before! Considering that there were only four of us volunteers present, plus guard-dog, the amount of work achieved was superb.

During the time spent there, at least eight (8) couples (plus children and dogs!) visited the lock en-route to the circular walk across the field adjacent to the Broad Cottage. Two canoes also came but turned, at the downstream end of the lock, and headed off in the direction of Wayford Bridge. There were also a couple of fishermen, who had at sometime got over/around the fence (!) and sat



along the coping stones (!) and caught some really lovely perch. One visitor said that they had seen an otter at Sutton Staithe recently - and we saw quite a few kingfishers during the day.

It was also nice to see **Laurie Ashton**, who came and had a chat. He is looking forward to meeting with the next work party at Bacton Wood at the end of the month.

The H&S was carried out at the beginning of the day and the attendance form was duly signed by the four people present. Rock cakes were distributed among the needy (i.e. 'the workers') at the lunch break. We called it a day at about 15.30 and departed feeling quite pleased with the days' endeavours.

An idea was put forward by **Graham**, that a little **sign post** giving the details of the Trust could be erected near to Honing Lock in order to inform the many people who wander in this region, and who may yet even wish to become members of the Trust.

**My thanks go to Carole** for taking on this days' burdens and for the above report! I shall report the idea of an **information post** back to the Trust and thank **Graham** for the thought. My grateful thanks also go to the three stalwarts who assisted in the work party.

*The next meeting will be at Bacton Wood Lock on Sunday 27th September 09.*

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## Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.

**Sunday 16th August 2009**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** This is a changed venue with the additional task of **visiting Bacton Wood Mill Lock**. Basic plan at **Briggate** is to clear as much as possible of the brash previously stacked and to continue clearance of pond area.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather good for the duration of the work on both sites with a slightly cooling breeze, which also helped immensely with the burning of the brash.

Following the H&S and plan briefings, **Graham** took **Darren** and me to **Bacton Wood Lock** at the request of **Mr L Ashton**. At the lock we found that a considerable amount of brick-laying had been carried out to the western mouth wall to include the slide mounting for the paddle. This is most impressive and looks superb!





*Bacton Wood.*

On the east side, brick work could not continue until the condition of the paddle chamber had been established. We found that there was a considerable amount of rubble blocking the chamber and culvert and this was removed - amounting to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a dumper truck full! This done and the state of the chamber and culvert confirmed to be sound, we took tea and returned to Briggate.

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Here we were amazed to find that the whole of the major bank of brash had gone and the other three smaller piles consigned to the fire. This is truly a great achievement, carried out with only five members of the Team and under the existing conditions. Now that all the brash is away, the further bank of the pond is once more visible, although the other bank marker posts, which were erected some months ago, are now completely covered by plant growth.



*Briggate.*

Of the total of eight on site, I had left **Jane, The Administrator**, with two impressions made by an artist, of the Mill Pond as it is hoped to appear when completed. One local lady came to the site and asked to speak with me but **Roger**, in my absence, helped her with her enquiries.

There was also present, a chart asking anyone in general, who stopped to ask about our works, to record any sightings which they may have made of bird or animal life in the Mill Pond area. So far, we have noted only the odd frog and a few birds. We did, however, see a kingfisher again in the Bacton Wood Lock area. What do they find to eat, up there?

My thanks go to the whole of the Team present, for achieving such a great step forward at **Briggate**, without which, the next step would have been delayed.

*As previously stated the work party originally planned for Sunday 30 August is cancelled. This means that the next site work will take place on Sunday 13 September at Honing Lock (NOT Staithe Cut!). The work party at the end of September will also be at Honing Lock, on the 27th. Many thanks again and I wish you all a good Bank Holiday weekend.*

# Work Party at Bacton Wood.

**Sunday 26th July 2009**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To discuss with **Mr L Ashton** the best way forward in clearance of bricks, rubble, timber and plant growth at the lock; to inspect the breach up-canal of the lock.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather was overcast all day with some sunshine - quite pleasant working conditions!

Once all assembled H&S and the developed plan was outlined to **The Team**. Without going into individual tasks, the summary is that an inspection was made of the two paddle chambers and **Laurie and others** cleared all the rubble from one, leaving a totally clear and unobstructed run for the water when required.

The condition of the chambers is still very good and does not require any further work doing to them. Most of the rubble was cleared from the other but there still remains a little, mainly in the form of bricks, which should be easily removed at a later date. An inspection was also carried out to the main upstream cill wall and this also appeared to be in good condition.

In the meantime, more capping bricks, and others were removed from one of the chamber walls and cleaned. Some more raking out was done on the cheek walls and also a large area of pointing carried out. At the tail end of the lock, work carried on with clearing the weed and other growth from the walls and it is left with both ends of the tail walls now exposed. A couple of trees were removed from this area, one from each side and the view from downstream is now very favourable - with a clear sight now of what is to be done and a dream of what it should eventually look like!

Meantime, I walked up-canal with **Graham** to inspect the site of the breach and talk about what could be done at this point to restore the water to the canal and leave the flow of the present water along the backslope unimpeded. With the use of the grab machinery, more silt and rubbish were removed from the chamber of the lock. The floor of the chamber is reputedly covered with brickwork, but this could not be verified at this stage.

Included with the silt was a vehicle wheel, complete with 19" tyre which is marked "India - nonslip" Quite remarkable really as the tread is completely non-existent and the cords are visible! But in its' day, things would have been different. The wheel is constructed of cast metal with 5 or 6? integral cast spokes. Three holes are provided in the hub for attachment of wheel to the vehicle. Interesting as to the age and type of vehicle to which it could at one time have been affixed?

Now that all these tasks have been completed, it is down to the construction folk to carry on with their work to make the mouth of the lock watertight once more. We will be required on site again, by which time, scaffolding will have been erected and we can commence on the removal of the outer skin of the chamber walls, brick by brick, prior to reconstruction of the remainder of the structure. Of interest, the now dried out pieces of the old gates and structures were viewed, showing the methodology of construction from nearly two hundred years ago.

*My thanks go to The Team for another wonderful day of progress towards the ultimate goal. As previously mentioned, there will only be one work-party in the coming month and that will be at Briggate Mill Pond on Sunday 16th August - the work-party for 30th August is hereby cancelled (Bank Holiday weekend). The remainder of the programme as published still stands - subject, as always, to change of course.*



## Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.

**Sunday 14th June 2009**

Report from: **David Reville, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To work westwards from the centre, on the road side of the pond. To clear 'base camps' on FP19 upstream of **Bacton Wood Lock**

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather was as planned to be fine all day and so it was, with working conditions very pleasant.

After the H&S and plan briefings, which included the fact that this is a very difficult time of year on the nature front because of birds nesting etc, **Marc** and **Graham** left to deal with the work at the **Bacton Wood** site. The remainder of the party then started to clear the fallen trees and other debris to the left of our already cleared area on the pond bed - now completely dry.

It should be noted here that there was a lot of rubbish, which people (local/visitors?) had dumped into the pond site including fencing panel, electrical fittings, bottles (whiskey, milk, wine etc), plastic containers (broken) and also a quantity of broken glass which is dangerous to human and wild life alike. The metal parts and the glass elements were removed and disposed of in the proper manner.

In order to carry out a check on the difference in the wild life numbers/types between the extensive survey carried out in the mid 90s' and today, I had prepared a survey sheet, which was to be put to any people who cared to stop and talk with us, indicating what had been seen and when. We have certainly not observed any wildlife, nor trace of, other than birds and the odd frog, in the area on any of our visits to this site. Shortly after the lunch break, our two members returned from a very successful visit to Bacton Wood and joined us in our chores.

Whilst a goodly amount of timber was removed to storage piles, which is a ponderous job, there is still a great amount of fallen timber to be removed from the corner of the pond site. The standing trees in the pond containment wall will present quite a problem. The roots of all such trees can be seen to be growing under the roadway and apparently none going into the pond bed. Should a tree fall over due to storm (or other) reasons, it is likely to rip the roadway apart. However, the question arises as to who holds the responsibility for such trees? Before the wall can be pulled apart and afterwards rebuilt, the trees will certainly need to be removed. As it is considered that the sad condition of the wall is largely, if not wholly, due to the Norfolk County Highways Authority, (viz my survey and report dated 27th July 2008), there will most certainly be a long wait for any answers!

As the weeds and some grass growing on the chamber island were left standing, it was not possible to take better measurements to ascertain the quantity of rebuilding material required to re-instate the former natural and level areas of the island. The piles of brash, which we had created earlier, were left untouched due to possible bird habitation at this time of the year. All in all, a successful day for what could be done and my thanks go to all the nine of you who attended and as usual applied yourselves to the tasks in hand. We are winning, for the benefit of nature, local people and visitors alike.

**NOTE.** *Roger Hopkinson, Chairman of the Canal Trust, has managed to arrange for the site at Honing Staithe Cut to be inspected for a possible award in July.*

*Therefore, the next work party will be at Honing Staithe Cut on Sunday 28th June and the visit to Ebridge will be on Sunday 12 July instead.*

[TOP](#)

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## **Work Party at Bacton Wood Mill Lock.**

**Sunday 31st May 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To liaise with **Mr Laurie Ashton** and make on-site decision as to work to be carried out - probably removing bricks from lock walls, as I had made a site visit two days before.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** The weather forecast was for wall-to-wall sunshine and so it turned out to be!

During the briefing, our new attendee **Jane**, was welcomed and introduced to the remainder of the group. Jane later said that she had enjoyed the day and would like to attend another meeting. Very good and thank you Jane, we look forward to your further company and input.

During the H&S bit, the requirement was issued that hard hats would be worn when working at low levels beside the walls. We split into two groups and launched ourselves at both the cheek walls at the mouth to the lock, which is of course, still dry. The cheek wall, nearer to the mill, had already recently been rebuilt from the upstream end to as far as the paddle chamber reveal, and a start had been made on its' partner opposite.



The task today, was to remove bricks from the surface and behind, back as far as solid foundations. Full clean bricks only were to be saved for further use, with halves etc put into the dumper truck and removed. The Team on the mill side wall removed a great deal and exposed the paddle chamber, which discovered that there is a lot of metal strips, bricks and concrete (and probably other rubble) in the base of the chamber - this to be investigated at a later date.

Discussion took place as to whether the paddle chambers should be re-used or if paddles should be inserted into the new lock gates? The panel is still out on this but it would be preferable to re-use the renovated chambers due to safety reasons for vessels in the lock (Oh! We do want to see it!). The gate hinge is still in location on this side whereas its' opposite member is removed.

After lunch taken in the very welcome shade of some nearby trees - and a cup of tea offered in the mill by **Julie** and **Laurie**, we continued the task. The paddle winding gear on the opposite side was removed by mechanical means and cemented-on bricks cleared from it.

In both walls and in the cill, a blue, hard cement like material was found, which looked in some cases as if it had been floated into location. No-one could offer any ideas as to what it is. On further investigation into the upper cill, several peculiar findings were made.

The original oak cill beam is still in place but of no further use due to rot, but its' two tie bars are also there with some dwarf walls constructed between and outside of the tie bars. A timber post (rotted) was located at about the point where the two gates would have met, but this was below the level of the concrete plinth. It would also appear that the paddle chamber entrances had been moved outwards by some 6 inches from the original positions. Some interesting points were



discovered where cement had been used for repairs instead of lime mortar, and this has caused many problems with the structure, which will need to be overcome during rebuilding. As this is a dry site, well away from any currently running water it will make for easier reconstruction.

The work carried out today is the first we have done with a direct and almost immediate result in the line of reconstruction. We have left the site with probably some three to four weeks work to be done by the **bricklayer, John**. All together, a very pleasant day with very encouraging results - a real booster for The Team and I thank all of you who attended for your joint efforts.

*The next meeting will be at Briggate Mill Pond site on Sunday 14th June 09 and at Ebridge on Sunday 28th June 09. The programme for the rest of the year will be published shortly.*

I have contacted the **Norfolk Industrial Archaeological Society** for assistance in answers to some of the questions above.

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## Work Party at Honing Cut and Walk.

**Sunday May 10th 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To tidy any growth around the **Staithe Cut** and to prepare the **walk path** through the wood for elevating above the boggy level of the terrain. As I was not to be there, Mr **Chris Black** would be Leader.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** The following report is as sent to me by **Chris**:-

### **Report on activities at Honing Staithe Cut on 10th May 2009.**

The weather was perfect with warm sunshine and light winds. I was first to arrive at 09.00 shortly followed by **Marc**. We had both brought wheelbarrows as we knew there would be a fair quantity of soil to shift when working on the woodland walk.

These were loaded with the tools etc. and we set off with the rotary mower and one of **Roger's** newly purchased line trimmers. The **information boards** were placed beside the **Weavers Way** track together with some leaflets to advertise the Bank Holiday History Fair at Gressenhall at which the Trust will have a stand. **Carole** duly arrived and I explained our tasks for the day together with the usual health and safety talk.

We mowed and trimmed the area to the road side of the staithe which has started to grow quite profusely then moved our kit to the far end of the walk.

The track was in good condition where we had previously worked on it but beyond the end of this it was extremely boggy right down to the new footbridge. We set about cutting lengths of small tree limbs to form a 'floating' base. These were covered with as much brash as could be found. Our main problem was to find enough dry soil with which to cover the brash to form a dry walkable track.

This time we had two wheelbarrows but it was difficult to find the dry soil so we didn't progress very quickly at first however a chance bit of deeper digging near the large tree at the top part of the track revealed sand and gravel which I think is natural! We need to explore this at a later date as it would be very useful on other parts of the track. The 'hump' near the top of the track was removed which turned out to be dumped sandy soil.

With this improved supply of material we made good progress. A tall but hazardous tree limb was removed from the track edge and was used together with other lengths of larger timber to form solid edges. It was impossible to cover the whole width of the track with only three of us there so we concentrated on a width of approx. 0.75 metre to gain as much length as possible. About 25 metres were completed in all before we became exhausted. We ended the work party at approx. 15.30. I walked the whole length of it to check the bridge and look for any safety hazards before I left at 16.30.

Chris Black

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Many thanks for that report, Chris and to Marc and Carole for also being there.

***The next work party will be at Bacton Wood Lock on Sunday 31st May 09. THIS is a CHANGE of plan due to unforeseen circumstances!***

Please note this change and hope to see as many there as possible - things are now beginning to move along in the right direction - actual work on the reconstruction of the canal!

*The work party at Briggate for the 14th June is still as planned, but there may be another change for the end of June.* Thanks to you all and watch this space.

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## Work Party at Honing Lock

**Sunday April 26th 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To check on the state of growth of the natural habitants at the site and trim if possible; to ascertain the extent of the fencing, which had been erected by the **Canal Company** since our last visit here; to check on the viability of portage points at both ends of the lock.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather was booked to be first class all day and so it was with just a few clouds making a passing appearance at odd times; quite warm and very pleasant. With the H&S pleasantries behind us, the plan was explained and we took off to our various tasks.

The grass besides the new fencing alongside the Public Footpath was trimmed to look very neat and tidy and then a concrete obstruction was stumbled over near to the mouth of the lock on the western side. This obstruction was covered in bramble and had a sapling growing out through it, albeit the top has been lopped some time ago.

Upon investigation, this proved to be the return wall, which would presumably have lead into the **mill pond**. With most hands on deck, the concrete coping 'stone' was repositioned and the top of the wall was revealed and cleaned down to solid brickwork. It had been considered to set up a portage point to the north of a tree growing adjacent to this wall end, but found that the pull of the water there might just be a little too unsafe. This to be further considered in consultation with **Mr A Paterson**.

We made welcome to a new attendee, friend of **Graham** by the name of **John** - again welcome John and thanks for your enthusiastic efforts at this visit - look forward to meeting you again soon.

Both of these worthies worked their way further upstream where several more trees had fallen into

the canal, virtually blocking it yet again!

A pair of canoes arrived at the tail of the lock during the morning in spite of a fallen tree across the canal downstream near to the first bend. The occupants declined the offer made by **Chris** to continue their journey upstream of the lock. We had luck later however, when a family arrived in two canoes and I encouraged them to try the newly cleared (?) canal to **Honing Staithe Cut**

We took lunch on the freshly cleared return wall and watched as the two canoes were transported past us and re-launched. The party later said that the canal was a pleasure and that they had even seen tadpoles and fish fry in the **Staithe Cut**! The approach bridge over the back soke between **Honing Lock Road** and the **lock** has suffered two broken pieces of wood on the decking and the main handrail (upstream) support post on the far side of the bridge of the mouth of the lock is badly rotten - these two points will be reported to the proper authority.

For safety, now that canoes can access and traverse the upper part of the canal, it will be suggested that a further rail/chain be connected to the bridge to prevent inadvertent departures of persons or canoes under the bridge and over the cill.

Once again, Team, thank you for attending and providing such a good result with the added benefit of once more seeing the canal used again after many years. I am sure that now that the trail is open, we shall see more use of this lovely piece of natures' beauty.

One small piece of admin! You may recall that when I took over as Leader, **Roger Hopkinson** and **Marc Lines** were also appointed to assist me. Well, owing to the added pressures of subsequently being elected as chairman of the Canal Trust, **Roger** has stepped down as my assistant and **Chris Black** has taken his place.

My thanks go to you **Roger** for your help and support during those years and also to **Chris** for taken the post.

*The next work party will be at Honing Staithe Cut on Sunday 10th May 09 when Chris will be your host as I shall be away.*

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## Work Party at Bacton Wood Lock.

**Sunday April 5th 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To liaise with **Mr L Ashton** and discuss requirements for the day.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather sunny and warm. This is the second work party in seven days, which is very unusual of course, and six members of the Team turned out. Apologies had been received from four regulars. The basic project was to clear as much of the natural overgrowth as we could from the lock structure. With this greenery removed it will be easier for the mechanical components of the Team to demolish those parts that need to be removed prior to rebuilding of the total structure.





Our **David**, the long range visitor from up north, applied his undoubted skills to ridding the bank, at the tail of the lock, of all saplings and small trees and bushes. The other undergrowth did not fare well either under his onslaught. Well, he was assisted by the more muscular **Graham** for part of the time!

The dry mouth of the lock, became cleared of most of the grass, ivy and brambles that had seemingly re-grown there after our previous visits to this site. It will be the easiest of the four locks to be restored as there is no requirement to divert the natural flow of water - the upstream channel being dry for the time being. The other locks at **Ebridge**, **Briggate** and Honing (Dilham) will prove more difficult as there is only one known weir and that is at Ebridge.

How to divert the constant flow of water at **Briggate and Honing**?

I needed to leave early owing to a prior engagement and left the Team in the capable care of **Chris Black**. My thanks go to all of the Team and look forward to seeing you *at Honing Lock, after a three weeks 'holiday', on Sunday 26th April.*

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## Work Party at Honing Staithe Cut and Canal.



**Sunday March 29, 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To continue to clear canal and side, between **D Bridge and the lock**; dredge **Staithe Cut** and entrance thereto.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather forecast hoped (I seldom believe forecasters!) for wall-to-wall sunshine! Fact - on waking up it was just so but on arrival at site, the 'sunshine' was falling as hail and sleet! Never mind though, as the rest of the day was very passable.

Twelve people turned up including two new members to the Team, **Wendy and Dick**, who were made welcome and duly instructed in the ways of the world! After the usual H&S, the Team was briefed on the plans for the day.

**Tom** brought Digger to work on the **Staithe Cut** and in keeping with H&S, and agreements, **Marc** went along with him to assist.



By the end of the period, the Cut was made to look very presentable with the bank on the road side looking very pristine, although black, and with deeper water along it's' side. The deep gulley near to the canal bridge was also filled in and levelled with the spoil.

The spoil, which had been spread some while ago, had settled down and easily took the weight of Digger and **Tom** in its' now dried out state.

Whilst this was progressing, the remainder of the Team ambled over to the south side of the canal proper between the **D Bridge and the lock**. There we were greeted with a mountain range of brash left over from

the working parties last year. As the main purpose at that time was to clear the debris and trees from the canal, dispersal of the brash was not the top priority.

With the agreement of **Mr A Paterson**, with whom I had had discussions previously and to whom go my thanks and appreciation, the brash was stacked away from the water and nearer to the top of the bank. At the same time, a number of trees, some dead, were removed from near to the waters' edge and they in turn joined the brash piles. These new piles were stacked, as in other areas on the canal, to provide shelter for smaller animals and birds. The larger pieces of tree trunks and branches will be a haven for insects.

Having mentioned smaller animals, tracks were noted of deer going to, and crossing, the back-sock between the canal land and **Mr A Paterson's** fields.



Lunch was taken at the head of the **Staithe Cut** and the water looked to be in fine shape - which was better than us after **Caroles'** pieces of cake! The vista along the Cut towards the canal was truly inspiring and we all commented on how much better than this it will look when the summer growth takes place and the trees and bushes become covered in leaves once more.

With nature taking advantage of the now cleared site, it was good to see some fry in the water! How did they get there? There were also some clumps of frog spawn, but not toad spawn, floating above the fairly new green weed. A very good days work with inspiring results. But.....there will need to be a couple more visits to this site to truly get it cleared, but the canal along this straight is even now a rewarding sight being clear of overhanging trees and providing free access to canoes through from the **lock to the Staithe Cut**. My thanks go to all who came along and provided such good results on the ground.

*The next work party is at Bacton Wood Lock on Sunday 5th April 2009.*

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## Work Party at Ebridge Lock and Canal.

**Sunday 8 March 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To continue the clearance of trees and debris from the side of canal bank and the canal itself to the north of Ebridge lock.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather: a more than pleasant start to the day and really surprising for the time of year with wall-to-wall sunshine and without a cloud in sight. Clouds started to appear just after the lunch break and made themselves felt by 14.25 when they opened up with a strong downpour accompanied by a very strong wind associated with the frontal system.





After the usual start to the day of H&S, came the briefing of the plan. Ten of the dedicated Team turned up to forward the cause! And on such a splendid day it was not really surprising. In short time we all moved into our positions and the debris and fallen trees were quickly being cut, by whatever means and stacked into the extension of the eco-friendly hedge.

There is a large amount of dead and rotting wood lying around on this site and this was carefully moved into the lower areas of the hedge to provide living quarters for things like wood-lice. On the edge of the canal itself, numerous signs of deer tracks are to be found. Also of interest, there were several pieces of wood spanning the back-sock to allow access, or egress, to such deer to the canal water. Another interesting feature, which was noted on our visit to this site some two weeks ago but not reported then, was the dredging which had been carried out to the back-sock. Expertly done with the spoil levelled on the adjacent field and of even more interest to us, NOT dumped as before onto the face of the canal weir! The flow of water along the back-sock is now greatly improved as it is not so impeded by undergrowth.

The bed is apparently largely of sand. Having made a seemingly effortless advance along the side of the canal, lunch was whistled and we retired to our reed-bed area to rest awhile. The sun shone brightly and warmly down onto us in appreciation of our labours.

Roger appeared with his right hand suitably bandaged following the latest operation to that appendage. We all wished him well and a speedy recovery - not least of all so that he could return to the work party as a helper and not a spectator! So after the stagger-inducing piece of cake, we returned to the work-face.





"The end in sight."

During a tug-of-war team effort on dragging a tree out of the canal, Carole's dog got a bit uppity with me until I said to him that he should go for the guys in yellow jackets - which he promptly did, much to everyone's amusement...except those wearing yellow jackets of course.

Work progressed steadily until the heavens opened! And even then we carried on with Mary saying 'keep going so that I can take a picture of this open expanse of land beside the canal'. So we kept going until those last two obstructions had been totally removed and we mostly got wet!

On returning to our vehicles, and before reaching the lock chamber, the view over our shoulders made all the hard work of the day worth-while.



This same view cannot, regrettably, be seen from the road bridge because of the height of the encroaching reeds. This is a shame as the view is not available to the general public. Does anyone

know of a friendly chap with a handy reed cutter?  
So again my thanks to the faithful members of The Team for yet another day well spent with a splendid result.

*The next work-party will be at Honing Staithe Cut for work on the canal side between D Bridge and Honing Lock by kind permission of Mr A Paterson.*

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## Work Party at Ebridge Lock and Canal.

**Sunday 22 February 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN:** To check on the growth of grass etc on the chamber island and to clear trees, debris and brush from canal, upstream of lock, and along the north east bank.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather. Generally fine but fully overcast; no precipitation but chill breeze at times.

After the H&S briefing, the plan for the day was explained. A total of 11 (eleven) members comprised The Team. **Chris** started the ball rolling by running the mower over the grassed areas of the chamber island.

This done we all moved along the bank and commenced clearing the trees and other debris. Most of this was from the dried canal bed. The actual width of 'clear' running water in this area is perhaps a mere 3feet instead of 30feet - a severe restriction! No wonder that some flooding occurs so easily.

During the morning session, we were visited by **Mr and Mrs Tom Carr**, the Hon. Surveyor to the NW&DC Trust.

Before the lunch break, considerable progress had been made along the length.

Lunch was taken in the reed-bed ('bed' being the operative word for one member!) where log seats had been arranged, at least a score of moons ago. The break was terminated by the now usual piece of the Hon. Sec's cake. The Medics say that one should eat at least 5-a-day. I did not think that the '5' could all be included in one piece of cake - but it certainly seemed that they were!

Replete and staggering back to the work-face, we all continued in a keen and expectant mood. The timber and brash, both dead and alive, seemed to fly into the continuation of the long established hedge built as a natural habitat for insects and a haven for smaller animals - and hopefully a nesting area for birds - come the time.

Just as we were considering our success at leaving a well cleared and tidy stretch, **Mr & Mrs L Ashton** appeared and were pleased with the scene.

**Before departing, The Team were informed of the forthcoming evening illustrated talk about the Dilham Canal 1825 - 2025 to be held on 17th March 2009 in the Dilham Village Hall at 19.00 for 19.30 start.**

It was good to welcome a new member today, one **Malcolm B**, and to say thank you to all others who turned up and did a great job. I must also here acknowledge the great assistance given to the cause in looking after, bringing to the work parties and in some cases providing, tools. It is not



easy to muster so many tools for each meeting but **Marc, Carole and Chris** do just that. In addition, the tools and machinery are also well maintained. **Thank you!**

*The next work party will again be at Ebridge, on Sunday 8th March 2009.*

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## **Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.**

**Sunday 8th February 2009.**

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**

**THE PLAN.** To burn brash as accumulated over last two work parties; to remove other undergrowth etc to fire; to use digger to dredge as much as possible and start to rebuilding of the banks; to use the digger to remove old tree trunks and roots from pond.

**WORK ACHIEVEMENT.** Weather: fine and sunny with some very high cloud and just a slight breeze for most of the time! (I knew I could do it again!).

The boundary marker posts, placed at the last work party were still in place and Tom and Digger started by removing some old tree trunks and roots from the main pond area, before moving round to the water inlet channel from the canal to the pond. Here, the inlet was dug down to the level of the puddling and a start was made on bringing up the height of the bank. The spoil was piled on top of the existing bank and later levelled to basically encompass the old tree standing on the end of the chamber 'island'. This will drain down and firm into a stable platform. No treasures were found in the spoil!

On attempting to reach the up-canal island, the digger decided to act like a crocodile and dug itself in to the rather soft soil! Tom, using some of his many skills and the plentiful attachments on the digger, (not to mention the help of a few of us and old pieces of tree trunk), managed to free Digger and return to the main chamber 'island'.

The first fire was set on the site of a previous one adjacent to the waters edge. A second was set in the dip and between them, they consumed all of the light brash from the mighty pile on the chamber 'island'. Not only was the result a very pleasing sight, but the potatoes baked within, were really delightful! These, followed by a piece of the inimitable cake....what more could one want? The more stable pieces of timber were taken and laid to form a raft between the two islands for later use by Digger in traversing the soft area. Other similar pieces of timber were laid to form an edge to the island on the planned side of the pond.

It was later found that the millpond water was lying at a height above that of the canal! A small channel was dug and the water started to trickle into the canal. Whilst it is the object of the exercise to eventually fill the millpond with water, it is not a welcome sight at this time as it impairs work patterns. We will however prevail and perhaps the water will drain away sufficiently to permit easier access to the other piles of brash by the other bank, on another occasion.

Of the people who stopped to speak with us, three were prospective helpers and not a single local resident made themselves known to us. A pity!

Now that the extent of the chamber island can be seen, it is apparent that a goodly amount of backfilling is required to bring the island back up to a reasonable height. This could be accomplished with rubble at the base level being blinded and topped with soil. This method of construction would provide a well drained piece of land on which grass and flowers would be

encourage to grow to present a very pleasant sight from the road, and also a natural habitat for small animals and other flora and fauna.

A very successful day spent in good company and weather, with very pleasing results. My grateful thanks go to all of the ten who attended and made this possible.

*The next work party will be at Ebridge Lock and Millpond on Sunday 22 February 2009.*

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