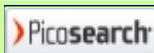


East Anglian Waterways Association. P



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And now have your say in the [EAWA Forum](#)

NEW! With General Forum for you to chat!

East Anglian Waterways Association and North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust, Work Parties - 2011

Work Party at Briggate.	Work Party at Bacton Wood (upper).	Work Party at Bacton Wood.	Work Party at Honing.	Work Party at Ebridge Lock.	Work Party at Briggate.	Work Party at Honing.	Work Party at Bacton Wood Lock.	Work Party at Ebridge.	Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.	Work Party at Honing Staithe Cut and Lock.	Work Party at Bacton Wood Canal.
11 Dec. 2011.	24 Nov. 2011.	13 Nov. 2011.	30 Oct. 2011.	16 Oct. 2011.	2 Oct. 2011.	18 Sept. 2011.	4 Sept. 2011.	21 Aug. 2011.	7 Aug. 2011.	24 July. 2011.	10 Jul. 2011.

Work Party at Bacton Wood Canal.	Work Party at Bacton Wood Canal.	Work Party at Honing.	Work Party at Ebridge.	Work Party at Briggate Millpond.	Work Party at Honing Staithe.	Work Party at Bacton Wood.	Work Party at Briggate Millpond.	Work Party at Bacton Wood Canal.	Work Party at Honing Staithe.	Work Party at Briggate Lock & Millpond.	Work Party at Briggate Lock & Millpond.	Work Party at Briggate Lock & Millpond.	Work Parties Current
26 Jun. 2011.	12 Jun. 2011.	22 May. 2011.		8 May 2011.	3 April 2011.	27 March 2011.	12-13 March. 2011.	27 February. 2011.	13 February. 2011.	8-10 February. 2011.	30 January. 2011.	16 January. 2011.	

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Briggate.

Sunday 11 December, 2011

Pictures after the start of work at Briggate, a day of maintenance of the site.

The report from David may be delayed until he has resolved his internet access problems.



[TOP](#)

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Bacton Wood (upper).

Sunday 24 November, 2011

THE PLAN. To continue clearance of the canal bed and banks from the **Bacton Road bridge** upstream.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather for the day was ideal for that which we wished to achieve - clearing and burning trees, bush and brash - in that the sun shone with a very stiff wind!

After the usual briefings, we all set to! Since the last work party here two weeks ago, the canal bed and banks had been 'mown' and looked very tidy. The basic idea was to clear further away from the bridge end of the canal but as this task was completed earlier than expected, we moved up to the site of the breach and carried on there, removing one large tree from the canal bed and one alder from the watered canal bank.

With the wind as it was, we managed to set four bonfires and this did effectively clear the whole of the timber and brash as planned. There is now a clear view from the Royston Bridge right through to the flowing canal at a bend near to the Pygneys Wood. A tremendous effort by all sixteen (16) volunteers who attended. I shall not attempt to describe the day further, but show a couple of photos below taken during the afternoon by our

resident photo-man, Alan B!

P1



P2



The left hand picture was taken from the bridge over the initial breach (1912) looking towards Royston Bridge and the right hand picture taken from Royston Bridge. The public footpath on the left (P1) is now clear for pedestrian use with all the blackthorn and other obstructions removed from the canal side of the bank. Note on P1, Royston Bridge with the canal culvert running through it and Wherry House (formerly the pub) to the right of the bridge.

We shall be returning to this area for the work parties on January 8th and 22nd, 2012. I am so, so proud of being a part of such a wonderful Team, which can achieve such results! YOU are getting there to make one of the greatest changes to the landscape in this area for some time - and for the best of reasons!

When North Walsham has no more substantial flooding, you can relax and wear your haloes with pride!

David Revill, EAWA
Work Party Organiser

[TOP](#)

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Bacton Wood.

Sunday 13 November, 2011

[TOP](#)

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Honing.

Sunday 30 October, 2011

Report from: **David Reville, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. Honing Staithe Cut. To check on the access and the walk for any overgrowth and cut grass.

Honing Lock. To check on overgrowth on the access, remove fallen tree from across canal; to clear back-soke and to cut grass.



some pictures of general maintenance around Honing Staithe Cut, which took up only the first part of the morning.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Eight of the volunteers met at the **Honing Triangles** and proceeded to the **Cut**. The grassed area looked pretty good but nevertheless it was given what is hoped will be the last cut of the year. Several pieces of trees were dragged from the Cut itself and other fallen pieces were removed.

As it is a safe time of the year, the edges of the **Cut** were strimmed. A tour was made of the **Walk** and any small incursions were cut back and the whole left tidy and usable.

Later in the morning we all moved on down to the **Lock** area, where we promptly set about the removal of a fallen tree, lying across the canal. This was found to be a 'mere' branch which we had noted some weeks ago, but it stretched from bank to bank! Some passing vessel had cut off the far 10 feet at some time and left the heavier piece in situ.

Whilst in this region, we took the opportunity to remove several other saplings which would eventually have become 60 foot trees. Other items such as bramble and nettles were cut back and disposed. In the meantime, others had moved on to the back soke, adjacent to the winding hole, leading up to the launching place for canoes near to the access bridge. The back soke had become blocked by plants and silt and these were removed providing room once more for canoes to manoeuvre.



Work was started clearing trees from across the backsoke just upstream of the footbridge to the lock, a very congested area.

Following the arrival of three other happy volunteers, we partook of a pleasant lunch beside the redundant water measuring cabin. Conscious of the fact that the number of daylight hours are now not quite so many as in previous months, we hurried on to the next task of attempting to clear the growth in the back soke above the little access bridge.

As we settled into this task, our **Kevin**, manfully cutting the grass between the two bridges, set off en route back to his car. Whether he thought that he was on 'Strictly' or on the 'high diving' competition, we could not know. But the display which he put on was truly magnificent!

Nearing the land side of the access bridge, he carried out a splendid twirl, skip, little pirouette and jump from the woodwork into the water! All the observers held up ten fingers, confirming that it was a good performance!

Back at the work face, the space which had been cleared last year and this had been covered again by foliage - but on this occasion part of it was brought about by two large trees collapsing, on to bushes, across the water. Just a part of the back soke was eventually cleared and the path blocked once more, to prevent any unauthorised access, by leaving the cut off trunk of the second tree across it.

There is a lot to do at this point to clear the blockage and help in preventing any flooding further upstream in the event of very heavy rainfalls and this will be carried out next year.

After an enjoyable and fruitful day, the last of us left site at 15.45. *Our regulars had also been in action at Briggate, too.* Thank you to all who attended and to the Briggate Two!

The next work party will be at the Bacton Wood area, meeting up at the old pill box near to the former Wherry Pub on Sunday 13th November.

Yes! I do know that it is Remembrance Day but be assured that a 2 minutes silence will be observed. We owe it to our fallen pals and to those we did not know. Thank you.

[TOP](#)

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Ebridge.

Sunday 16 October, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN: To assist in clearing the felled trees and bushes; remove any debris consequent from work near to the '*big hole*'; endeavour to clear blockage in the westerly paddle chamber and clear up the weir.

For those not familiar with this site, the 'big hole' was the result of a collapse of some bricks forming the culvert running under the embankment of the easterly lock chamber wall to below the bottom lock gates and carrying land drain water and water overspill at the weir.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: The weather was forecast to be fair for the whole day and so it turned out to be with glorious sunshine all the time accompanied by a light breeze and medium temperature. A total of 19 (nineteen) volunteers saw the action!

The first thing to be done was spread some piles of stripped timber particles into the adjacent hedge to provide winter living quarters for the small creatures. Whilst this was being carried out, **Laurie** climbed aboard the cherry picker and took out the top of the hawthorn tree, growing adjacent to the 'big hole', so that the telephone cables would be freed from the growth.



This done, **Jeremy** removed the tree with the JCB and cleared the sides of the hole. A 'new' view now presents itself to folk driving to this area from the Honing road junction! During this operation, the fence surrounding the hole was damaged some-what, but this was later replaced to

protect the area.

Further upstream on the east bank, some five bonfires were started in an effort to clear the area of brash and cut, green growth. We eagerly awaited the arrival of our diving team! The pair, **Martin** and **Sandra**, duly came and surveyed the situation and having donned their dry suits prepared to enter the water to clear the paddle chamber. The access ladder was duly tied back in a secure manner; the life ropes deployed and action commenced.



Despite their valiant efforts, the action was only partially successful as the blockage remained in place, albeit some water did start to flow through the chamber. Maybe it will clear itself with a larger head of water during the winter? Or maybe by a more determined effort, which has already been offered! Whilst the safety observers stood in the sunshine, we were told that the water (in the shade) was not of the most comfortable temperature.

During the day, the old weir was again cleared of growth and brushed clean. The date of the concrete covering, 1941, can once more be clearly seen. 'Our' resident photographer, **John**, took movie pictures of this action as well as other happenings during the day, for presentation in a full DVD of the complete canal at a later date.

Lunch was taken on the sunny lock chamber island and afterwards works on dry land continued until about 16.00 when the last of us departed for home.

Several visitors came by and took a great interest in all that we are doing on the canal in general and at **Ebridge** in particular. A wild life photographer also came along and explained how, since the de-silting of the pond area and opening up of the canal here, he had seen an ever increasing number of both animals and birds availing themselves of the renewed facilities. When the water levels have been restored, controlled and stabilised, we can then look forward to kingfishers and voles being able to live safely in the canal banks again! Wonderful!

My thanks again to all who came and worked so hard to make another great improvement to this area.

Our next work party will be at Ebridge on Sunday 30th October when we will meet up at the Honing Triangles.

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Briggate.

Sunday 2 October, 2011

Our next work party will be at Ebridge on Sunday 16 October, 2011.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Honing.

Sunday 18 September, 2011

Our next work party will be at Briggate on Sunday 2 October

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Bacton Wood Lock.

Sunday 4 September , 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To carry on with the cleaning/clearing of the north-eastern chamber wall in preparation for the new bricks to be built in.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was forecast to be fine for most of the day with the chance of showers later. As it turned out, the sun shone with some cloud but the waterworks held off until after we had left at about 16.00. A total of nine volunteers arrived including two new recruits from Aylsham, **David and Beverly**, who were made welcome.

After the usual H&S brief, we set to clearing out any remaining tree, bush and weed roots which were still present in the mortar. This 'removing roots' was really a cover for 'clearing out the loose and redundant mortar' from between the bricks which were to stay on the chamber wall and providing a key for the new lime mortar! Whatever, the work went on quite steadily and lunch break was called a little early at 12.32!

I gave a little briefing as to what the future work parties would encounter on the next few occasions and took my leave at 13.00 to go on the Honing church open day to meet several folk there in connection with the canal. **Chris** took over from me and said that by the end of the day the whole of the chamber wall had been well cleared out and also air blasted to remove any remaining dust from the joints! There's dedication from **Kevin!**

To complete the task, and also thinking of health and safety, the top of the chamber wall was

cleared of any loose earth, bricks and rubble. At the start of the day, it was very pleasing to see that the tail wall on this side had been completed (the whole wall on the south-west side had already been totally finished).

On another site completely, **Andrea and Brian** cut the grass and weeds at **Briggate** and beside the pond wall. Thanks for that too! Thanks to all who came and took part in this effort - it will surely look a different picture when we return to this area now that **John** can get to work with his bricks and trowel!

*The next work party will be on **Sunday 18th September** at Honing - meet up at the **Honing Grass Triangles**, please, at 09.30*

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Ebridge & upstream canal.

Sunday 21 August, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

As I could not be in attendance on this occasion, Mr Chris Black kindly took over and here is his report:-

THE PLAN. To assist the **Old Canal Company Ltd** in their task of removing the obstructing trees growing in the east bank by clearance of the undergrowth and old brash piles from around the trunks of the trees to enable the safe access and an escape route for their chainsaw operator.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was warm and sunny with a few drops of rain early on. The usual H&S observance was important because of the nature of the task being performed and I was particularly vigilant at all times concerning the large plant being used and the timber felling.

The OCC wanted to start work from the upstream end of the belt of trees on the bank as the idea was to fell the trees either into the canal or across the east soke dyke and pull them back to be stacked on the west bank thus maintaining vehicular access up the west bank. The trees were large and some had broken or split boughs so a safe distance for the work party volunteers was maintained at all times during felling and dragging operations.

The open water of the mill pond and beautifully profiled west bank some way north, now reveals the canal as it must have looked following construction in 1825. Access to the east bank site was via temporary bridges from the west as the OCC did not wish to use the footpath on the east bank of the lock.

In order to give the work party access to the tree bases a path was strimmed southwards through some very heavy vegetation. The brash which had been stacked under the trees a couple of years ago was removed, with some difficulty, and will be chipped at a future date.

Lunch was taken at 13.00 and by that time some 8 volunteers had signed in! No further volunteers arrived on site but a couple of visitors walked down to the area and were very interested and supportive of the maintenance work being carried out on this section. During the day approximately 5 to 6 trees were cut down and removed to the west bank.

During the latter part of the operation, the owner of the land to the east of the canal, *Mrs D Manning*, arrived and had quite a useful conversation with *Mr L Ashton*, owner of the canal. Mrs Manning gave her verbal permission to drop the trees, if necessary, onto her land prior to removal to the west bank.

We left site around 16.00 however there are still a lot of trees to remove from the east bank and a further visit is likely to be required soon. It was a very tiring day due to the heat and humidity but we all agreed that it was well worth the effort!

Chris Black

Deputy Work Party Organiser.

Many thanks for that **Chris** and to all who turned out to help. The next work party will be on **Sunday 4th September at Bacton Wood Mill Lock**. Hope to see you there.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Briggate Mill Pond.

Sunday 7 August, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA**. Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To inspect the site and generally clear away any brash found or created; to cut grass as far as possible clear as much weed and reed as is feasible from the pond.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was fine all day and the forecast rain did not arrive until the evening of ten (10) volunteers comprised the happy work-force for the day, and very enjoyable it was too!

Andrea and **Brian** of *Briggate* had cut the grass/weeds on the chamber island during our previous work-party that made the task easier on this occasion. In fact, during the two weeks of sun and rainfall, the growth was not great. Surprising?



Leaving the small strip of taller weeds and reeds at the waterways' edge to protect the little beings, the chamber was made to look really presentable again, together with the strip of grass alongside the public roadway. The leaning wall was stripped of grass and earth for most of its' extent, from west to east, in order to make it visible. The coping bricks did indeed fall off, under pressure, reminding us of the frailty of this wall.



Alan ventured into the pond after our lunch break and managed, with great fortitude and determination, to clear the flowering weeds and some of the less resistant reeds from the visible pond site. The remaining reeds are of robust type and will need other means to remove them. But the pond does really look very much better and more favourable comments are now being received from the inhabitants of **Briggate**.



One local lady said that although she had been against restoring the pond in the first instance, is now very much in favour of the programme, seeing that the pond is coming back to life again and is a pretty site! At the northern end of the site, at the edge of the privately owned little island, a fence has been erected to, I understand, contain sheep north of it. I noticed that the end support post had been erected adjacent to the marker post, which I had placed to mark the boundary of the island and canal. Quite pleasing!

Some of the taller growth was removed from alongside the canal and the inlet to the pond, which makes the pond far more visible from the public road areas. Some fish fry was seen in the pond, so there is hope in that direction. The edge of the road was once more cut and cleared so that the white safety posts and rail are now clearly visible. The area is now very tidy.

Our next work party on **Sunday 21st August** will be at **Ebridge** for some quite interesting tasks to improve the area. Look out there for some rare birds, which may just be visiting? Nature is coming back all over.



The finished area at the end of the day transformed as usual by the members of the work party.

Thank you to all who took part in this enjoyable day at Briggate. Enjoyable? Should work be enjoyable? You can!

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Honing Staithe Cut and Lock.

Sunday 24 July, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To inspect both the sites at **Honing Staithe** Cut and the **Lock** area; to trim grass etc at both sites; trim back plant encroachments to **The Walk**.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was forecast to be fairly pleasant with the odd chance of a light shower - in the event we missed the shower! A total of ten (10) happy faces comprised the work party - but these changed somewhat upon the discovery that the replacement direction sign at **Honing Staithe Cut** had also been stolen! **Ivan and Darren** had erected the new sign on

Sunday 26th June 2011 with some additional cross pieces fixed to the underground end of the post - and then fixed it in place with rubble and concrete mix. But still it was removed! A full report has already been sent to the police with the added comment that this is considered to be not just simple vandalism but a more determined effort by person(s) to destroy that which we are attempting to carry out for the benefit of both man and nature.

Alan, one of our 'men-who-knows' about such things, revealed the locations of more *Himalayan Balsam* and proceeded to remove as much as possible of the offending plant - some along the canal bank. I introduced a, new, **Peter** to the Lock area and later accompanied Kevin with his mower to clean up that same area. Since these grassed areas had been cut only some two weeks ago as part of our long term maintenance scheme, these operations are now quite easy and relatively quick to carry out.



Several canoes came upstream and one or two proceeded further northwards towards the Cut region. It is good to see the canal being used again; albeit with some great difficulties in the lower, below Honing Lock, pound and also just above the lock. It is planned to work in the canal above the lock during the cooler Autumnal/Winter months. The general area of The Cut was left in a very tidy looking condition and worthy of partaking of a rest with the afternoon sunshine bouncing off the water.

More saplings were removed from the canal bank alongside the Walk, thus providing a better view of the well running water and pretty, though obstructive, reed beds and water lilies against the far bank. Oh! For a de-silting operation period and lock gates to raise the water level to a sustainable level for the ultimate benefit of both flora and fauna!

Our intrepid **Roger**, suitably attired and restrained, ventured below 'D' bridge in the canal and removed several obstructions which were either growing in the canal or objects lying under it. It all helps!

We finally left site just after 16.00 and wended our weary ways in the direction of home, another good and productive day behind us. Thank you to all who came and enjoyed the day.

Our next meeting will be at Briggate Mill Pond on Sunday 7th August 2011, and I look forward to seeing you there.

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Bacton Wood Canal Weir area.

Sunday 10 July, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To continue our regular maintenance of natural growth at each site; to attend the **weir site at Bacton Wood** and continue to clear back felled trees and brash; to clear further brash from the dry canal bed in order to permit cutting of grass and weeds; to remove the small, temporary bridges, which were erected near to the lower breach in order to gain access to the upper stretch of the dry canal bed.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was forecast to be sunny, with some cloud and the risk of the odd shower. In the event we received the first two but missed out on the shower! After the H&S and normal briefing for the day, two new volunteers, a **Geoff** and a **Peter** were welcomed and introduced to the regulars. It was quite warm again but nevertheless our Firemaster did light a fire, again on the concrete area of the weir to prevent unintentional damage to wild-life and plants, in order to process the enormous amount of brash still remaining. As most of the brash had been there several months since the winter, the grass had grown quite intensively into the twigs, making their removal the more difficult.

At the start of the day, **Chris** had collected the large mower and visited **Briggate Mill Pond** to get the weeds and grass down to a reasonable level on the chamber island and adjacent areas. This was achieved with considerable fortitude as the machine is quite heavy to manoeuvre - and the land is not totally flat, either. It is hoped to properly landscape this area in the winter months. As at **Honing** (both sites), an area of growth was left adjacent to the waters' edge to provide protection to 'the little beings' and also butterflies, which were in high abundance. It was also noted at **Briggate** that a heron makes a very regular visit to the pond and also a kingfisher is often seen flying in. At least one pair of mallard ducks has taken up residence there. Nature is coming back for the benefit of all! Thank you **Chris** and **Andrea**.

Meanwhile, back at the weir, the land to the left of the backsoke was totally cleared of remaining brash and timber. **Darren** and **Geoff** had gone downstream a way and removed the small, redundant bridges at the earlier request of the landowner.

Following the lunch-break, taken in the shade of the trees, **Chris** arrived with his chainsaw and made the removal of the brash in the canal bed a lot easier and before we left site at about 16.00, a clear run now presents itself to the operator of the mowing/cutting machine.

There are still a couple of dead trees to be removed from the north-eastern bank, but they are on the outside of the bank.

My thanks again to all who attended and made another stride forward! The next meeting will be at **Honing** where we will meet at the **Honing triangles** as usual.

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Bacton Wood Canal Weir.

Sunday 26 June, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To continue to clear the brash and other timber from the weir site and elsewhere should time/volunteers permit.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. A sunny day was forecast with the possibility of thunder storms later. It certainly was sunny to the extent that I believe it was the hottest day around here so far this year. The eight volunteers should at least have slimmed down several sizes! Of course the bonfire to clear the brash, managed as at the last reported work party here, could also have helped a little?

The day started with **Chris & Mary** attending to the grass cutting at **Honing Lock** and at **Honing Staithe Cut**. The grass/weed was cut, but not right up to the waters' edge due to so many frogs etc. being present.

Whilst they were at **Honing Staithe Cut**, **Ivan & Darren** arrived to replace the stolen sign post near to the Weavers Way, indicating the way to the Canal Walk and the Staithe Cut. Thank you all for that!



Meanwhile back at the weir, the other four members of **The Team** were 'hard' at work starting to clear the remains of the two fallen trees on to the weir side of the backslope. Later on, with the eight folk present, and a chain saw, we made short work of dismantling the massive heap of timber.

Lunch was a very welcome break from the heat and following this the remainder of the brash was piled and burned, leaving a few lengths of timber sitting near to the weir. I am looking forward to maintenance work being able to be started on the weir in the not too distant future.

The next work party on Sunday 10th July will again be at this site. My thanks go to all who joined

me in this 'slimming party' and again, a lot of progress can be seen to have been achieved - not only here but at the other two sites as well. Generally speaking, a good days work!

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Bacton Wood Canal.

Sunday 12 June, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To check on growth and to clear as much dead wood as possible from around the weir area.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather forecast to be sunny with showers from about 14.00 and rain later. This encouraged me greatly and after getting together, and the usual briefings, we moved en-masse to the weir area.

Total of volunteers on the day was eight (8) and we enjoyed the most splendid sunshine during the morning. We built a fire to remove the brash and other disposables on the brick and concrete weir, so that the ground would not be damaged by the heat. Most of the brash from the two trees, felled in the winter months, was dragged across the weir to the fire pile as individual pieces - this to prevent any bird or animal being caught and burned or injured.

As I had to leave early for family reasons, we broke early for a cup of drink and a chat on proceedings on the canal. As I left, **Darren Cooke** took over from me and reported later that the bulk of the tree debris had been cleared and burned and only the major parts of the boles were left to move.

The showers duly started to arrive at about 15.30 when, as they say, rain stopped play. Another job, nearly out of the way, which now lets us able to move on to taking the tree stumps out of the weir proper. My thanks to all who came along this day and who really made a difference to the scenery.

Our next work party will again be at Bacton Wood Lock/Canal on Sunday 26th June and I look forward to seeing a happy group there once more.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work Party at Honing.

Sunday 22 May, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To check the sites at the **Honing Lock and Staithe Cut** for any work required.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. **Chris and Mary** had met up with two new comers to the work party by the names of **Bill and Sarah**, and had gone on with them from the Tri-angles to check at the lock. Once there, the growth was mown to a reasonable level once more, but due to the large number of small frogs/toads on the edge of the backsake, the mowing ceased some ten feet from the waters' edge.

The four returned to the Staithe site and joined the remainder of the party. There, there were two new members joining **The Team**, a **Martin and Sandra** who had come along on their first visit to carry out some water work. Suitably attired and roped for security, they entered the water and removed a large amount of reeds. Such reeds, growing in and obstructing the flow of the water, cause additional silting and thereby further plant growth. They also moved into the Cut and removed the remaining reeds from the centre and some more from the side at the entrance. A truly impressive feat for a first visit!

The growth along the south side of the Cut was mowed completely, apart from an area covered with flowers (weeds, but useful for the bees!) and the area left looking pristine once more. **Kevin** also let the mower take him on a stroll along the **Walk** on the North side, to make that look a little more cared for! Others walked the entire length of the Walk and tidied the sides so that users would not be stung or in other ways interfered with by walk-side growth.

One of the first things to be noticed just off **Weavers Way** at the end of the Cut, was that our newly erected, 3rd April 2011, finger post indicating 'Canal Walk' and 'Staithe Cut', had been removed/stolen! Several of us searched the close area but were unable to locate the missing object. This will be reported to the police, bearing in mind that a previously erected sign had been ripped from a tree in the same area at an earlier time.

Other members of the Team were busy tidying up the north side of the Cut and burned the brash. As we were taking an early lunch break, it was noted that a tree near to the 'D' Bridge was swaying in the breeze - from its' roots! Quite dangerous, if left. This was the last of the three boles growing from the same rootstock - the other two had been blown down in a gale in late winter and we had cleared them at an earlier work party.

It was removed and the brash burned on a bare piece of land nearby. Albeit today seemed initially to be a little on the uncoordinated side, a good deal was achieved and the site looks set to grow with nature and the Cut now looks to be in fine fettle, albeit no fish were seen in it! Several folk visited and were most impressed by what we had achieved, remarking on its' beauty and peacefulness. Long may that continue.

My thanks go to all who attended and helped in bringing about this very useful result. Our next meeting is on Sunday 12th June 2011

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

2 photos of the Wood Sandpiper you might have seen when visiting the Ebridge Lock area on the 8th May, also attached are 2 photos of the male and female Grey Wagtail which are nesting in the lock wall.



GREY WAGTAIL, EBRIDGE, N.WALSHAM



GREY WAGTAIL



WOOD SANDPIPER



WOOD SANDPIPER

Photos - ROBERT COBBOLD

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Briggate Millpond.

Sunday 8 May, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To tidy the vegetation around the mill pond and on the western chamber island; to carry on with the digging out of the final, narrow west end stretch of the pond; cut vegetation alongside the pond on the roadside; remove and burn brash from alongside the mill race; to clear, if possible, growth from the mill & wheel race.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The forecast for the day was not good and it did indeed produce a few drops of rain as I arrived on site. As I was to be at the EAWA AGM, I was very grateful to Darren for taking over as Work Party Leader for the day and I copy, basically, his report below:-

David yet again organised the weather well which turned out to be fine and very warm all day and against earlier forecasts. He and **Tom** were already on site when I turned up at 09.30 and **Tom** was proceeding with his extension to the west end of the pond. **David** outlined the tasks for the day before heading off to the AGM.



Despite the lack of some tools and all those otherwise engaged at the **AGM**, we had a good turnout of fifteen volunteers. Luckily **Alan** had brought his cutting gear and **Kevin**, by arrangement, brought his mower and strimmers and they both spent the day taming the undergrowth around the site.

The rest of **The Team** started by conveying all the remains of previous clearances from over the road at the side of the mill wheel race and **Phil**, who had brought his fire

starting kit, lit a small fire on the lock chamber island to get rid of the very dry wood and ivy.

As all the planned tasks were being achieved, a small group also had a go at clearing some large debris and most of the ivy from the walls around the wheel chamber race.



After **Tom** had finished with his work in the west end, the last corner of the mill pond, he spent the rest of the day landscaping the sides of the pond and levelling the spoil, now dried out somewhat, between the pond and the lock chamber. He had just finished and loaded **Digger** when the members of the **EAWA** arrived from their **AGM** to visit this site on their way from **Honing Staithe Cut** to **Ebridge** and **Bacton Wood Lock**.

My thanks go to you Darren for taking on this task for me and looking after The Team! The results of the days' labours are quite noticeable and the return of natural wild life is also quite evident. At Ebridge we came upon some "birders" with long range lenses looking at a pair of quite rare water birds, Wood Sandpipers, I am reliably informed. Could this be the same pair, which we had seen at Briggate earlier in the day? With 15 volunteers on site and a further 6 at the AGM it would have been the largest turnout ever! Well done to all of you, and thank you so much. On Sunday 22nd May, we meet at the Honing grass triangles at 09.30 as usual

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Honing Staithe.

3 April

Report from: **David Revill**, **EAWA**. Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To investigate the tree which had been blown down, resting on the parapet of the '**D**' **Bridge**; cut the 'grass' and weeds along the staithe banks; clear further brash from along and on

the walk; to remove any other dubious trees along the way; to burn resultant and existing brash.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather was forecast to be fine with maybe the chance of a shower or so later in the afternoon. As it turned out, it was a truly beautiful day and really quite warm, for the time of year. It was a real pleasure working in such a peaceful and quieting site.

Following the **H&S** and briefing on the **Honing Tri-angles**, we moved onto the site and considered the situation. **Ivan** had brought the two sign posts along, which he had designed, and we determined their future locations. They were installed by **Ivan and Geoff**, one at the near end, off **Weavers Way** of course, and the other at the far end of the Walk. Very well designed posts with clear lettering carved into the wood announcing "**Canal Walk**" on one finger and "**Staithe Cut**" on the other. Thank you **Ivan!** The existing explanatory sign at the far end was re-adjusted on its' post for more security.

The main body of **The Team** set about clearing the north side of the Cut along the **Walk**, where the burning was commenced.

The whole canal side walk was checked for any obstructions growing out of the sides. The main Cut side was mown with two machines and really now looks a picture. Unfortunately, or not, depending on what is being attempted, the water level was fairly low. This did not, however, deter several families arriving in the sunshine with their children for 'pond dipping', a splendid childhood educational activity.

The activities were further enhanced by a couple launching their canoe and sailing away! We wondered....but they did return saying what a wonderful, pretty and peaceful area this is and of course well away from the crowds. It will be better, naturally, when the water levels are raised somewhat.

Walkers were in abundance during the whole period that we were there. After cutting the 'grass', and it is now becoming more covered in natural grass as the weeds are being overcome, **Chris** and I paid attention to the bank and the tree on the bridge. Who-ever had worked on clearing other tree debris from the roadside, had thrown the brash quite over the **NCC land** and onto the **Staithe Cut** land.

This was all put back to where it belongs and the tree was considered at close quarters. Little by little the tree was removed without occasioning any further damage, neither to the bridge structure nor to the canal proper. The bases of the two trunks were cut so as to provide two improvised seats for casual observers of the canal and surroundings! These were tested and they do indeed work very well!

Our Water Man **Alan**, suitably clad entered the canal near to the bridge to clear away two plastic rubbish bags, a plastic plant pot 15" octagonal and what turned out to be a motor-bike frame! No engine, though, so no fear of pollution. Whilst in his watery position, **Alan** continued to remove a further amount of growing reeds from the centre, which will increase the state of water flow.

Another rather wonderful day was spent by our **twelve volunteers** who all, severally, commented on the beauty and peacefulness of the **Honing Staithe Cut** in the sunshine.

My thanks go to them all and wish to say that our next work-party will be at Bacton Wood on 17th April 2011. After that we can all have a holiday until Sunday 8th May when we meet at Briggate

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Bacton Wood.

Sunday 27 March, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To work with **Mr L Ashton** for the betterment of his scheme at the lock and the water mill areas.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather for the day was forecast to be sometime overcast with the odd light shower. This did not really happen and we all enjoyed a fairly pleasant and warm day.

Under the direction of **Laurie**, we started by organizing ourselves into a very efficient production line to dry-mix a light concrete concoction which was filled into sand bags for later use in connection with the operation of the mill. This done, we moved up to the upper stretch of the dry canal bed.

After very careful inspection of the two trees still standing in the weir structure, they were cleared away. Another clump of small trees and bushes on the opposite bank were also cleared to prevent further damage being caused to the bank. There were several large clumps of brash, which had been collected from former work parties along this stretch and these were either brought together or burned individually, resulting in a now fairly clear stretch of cleared banks on either side of the canal.

At the lunch break taken at 12.45, **Carole** produced some rather wonderful 'rock' scones/cakes! Yes! The great thing about them, apart from the taste of course, was that they did not lie on the lower regions during the afternoon session!

We welcomed two new members to **The Team** - one **David** and **Craig**. We hope that you both enjoyed yourselves and that you will return to us on other occasions.

The total number of volunteers this day was **thirteen (13)**. Is it not a lot better than working out in a hot, sticky gymnasium? The **Team** think that it is and with the great results making it even more pleasing.

The next meet will be this coming Sunday 3rd April at Honing Staithe Cut.

Thank you all for your assistance again and look forward to seeing you at Honing.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Briggate Millpond.

Saturday & Sunday 12,13 March, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. As another double day opportunity arose, to use the two diggers to clear the balance of the mill pond; to create a bank upstream of the entrance to the mill pond on the west side (along the privately owned island only); to tidy the dead tree wood adjacent to the pill box; to

assist the Briggate folk with the clearing of ivy etc from former mill building and if time permits to clear the west end of the pond.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT.

Saturday 12th, saw the two diggers on site with the support boards provided by **LA** lying on the pretty wet promontory of the chamber island. Without them, no digger could possibly have returned from its' task!

The weather was indeed as good as many a summer day with 9/8th blue and but slight air movement. All went well with **Tom** sticking to the main pond area and **LA** moving around to the north side and up the canal edge. On his return from building the replacement bank, he took more off the corner of the inlet and then continued around into the pond site proper, clearing the remaining reeds from the inlet as he moved. The bank is now virtually completed to the north side of the pond.

On the main chamber island, in the meantime, **Tom** had created enormous mounds of spoil!

Whilst this was going on, the remainder of the seven members of **The Team** were busy tidying up and creating new barriers at the side of the roadway to replace those removed recently. On this occasion **Chris** carved into the wood "*DO NOT REMOVE*" using his chainsaw. Think he is suffering 'lusions of grandeur in being a chainsaw artist! Well done **Chris**, though, brilliant job well done - not to mention the wood/metal/concrete joints which were all tied together with strong marine cord or thick wire.

SUNDAY 13TH. Weather this day was overcast with a bit of a breeze but not unpleasant.

Showers appeared after our lunch-break when **Carole** cajoled us into partaking of 'Roses' from a large tin! Not conducive to slimming I'm told?

With a total of 15 souls on board, plus a guard dog, we were split into several parties. One paying particular attention to the old machine building; one clearing dead wood about the pill box (I've heard that the pill box was built inside the old coal shed?) and the other creating an access stretch to the 'island'. All of the time, of course, the diggers were carrying out their own work. **LA** made a good impression of re-digging the entrance to the original course of the River Ant to the north of the pond! This small contribution to the cause, about 8 metres, will be labelled, in due course "*ENTRANCE TO THE RIVER ANT*" just to show folk where the parish boundary lies still.

Most of the ivy and other growth has been removed from the machine building and safely burnt, making the building looking a lot neater. **Ivan** painted the remains of the concrete posts, some of which are still tentatively clinging to their rusting rails and now, to pieces of timber. The line-up clearly shows the edge of the mill pond now.

Tom made a really good job of edging the chamber island and together with **LA** reduced the mounds of spoil to a fairly level, large area. It is planned to bring in some building rubble from **Toms' house** to strengthen the area just off the road. The spoil could not be properly levelled yet as it is still too wet. The digging out of the west end spur will have to wait for another, probable, mid-week event.

During the time on site, a pair of ducks were seen paddling along on the pond, a kingfisher streaked past and a moor hen was seen further upstream. Things are beginning to move! My thanks to all who came and took part in these two days and made the site look more and more like it should do. The greenery will appear again very, very soon with the warming weather and we shall then be able to consider the planting of a few trees on the northern bank. I have spoken with **Mr Chris Debbage** of the property to the north of the site, who recommended a couple of types of trees for consideration. Any replanting would naturally be subject to further discussions with the owners and at the appropriate time of year.

PLEASE NOTE! The work party scheduled for Ebridge on the 27th MARCH is now re-

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Bacton Wood Canal.

Sunday 27 February, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To liaise with the owner, **Mr Laurie Ashton** as to the area in which he would like us to work; to assist him in his work on repairing the lower breach in the canal; to clear and possibly burn brash and other products of clearance.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was forecast to be clear with maybe the occasional shower? In the event, it was a clear day with a slight breeze which was quite cold, but warm out of the breeze and in the sunshine.

A total of 17 volunteers turned out including one new helper in the form of Mr **Andrew Fryer**; a return visit by photographer **John Parker and his good lady** and one **John Worrall, journalist** who is currently writing an article on the whole canal for submission to magazines such as "Anglia Afloat".

The mechanical day for **Laurie** did not start off well! Things were just not working according to plan and delays were experienced all along. But the sun was shining and eventually things did get going and the culverts were tidied up to carry the water in the original backsoke, which eventually joins the canal below the **Bacton Wood lock**.

This achieved, earth was moved onto the top of the culvert pipes to commence the base for the renewed canal over this previous breach. Plant can now move upstream along the dried up canal bed to carry on whatever works are required – the first time in decades!

Following the supply of a replacement generator (the first one refused to play ball), **Matt** got to work with a kango and reduced a piece of the original culvert to rubble so that it could be spread about. In the meantime, the rest of **The Team** had set about the clearance of the backsoke between the weir and this breach. A number of trees had fallen into this stretch and others were growing on top of the bank, together with copious quantities of reed, brambles and other grasses.

The weir could not be seen from the breach when we started but it is now in clear sight. There are, however, still two trees to be removed from the weir itself before rebuilding can commence. The base of the weir appears to be quite sound but the upper surfaces and some of the brickwork will need a lot of attention.

Lunch was taken at the earlier time of 12.10 to fit in with mechanical necessities and requirements. **Carol** brightened up the proceedings with a supply of 'rock cakes'. Thank you again Carol, very tasty. And we were supposed to work after them?

An attempt was made to fire a large pile of cleared brash and timber from the area but our ex boy-scout could not quite get it going! Said he had run out of flints! Unbelievable.

It was a most enjoyable day and, despite the hold-ups, the end of the period saw a complete change of scenery at the breach and upstream thereof. We had all left site by 16.20 – and the sun was still shining. The water is running quite freely through the culvert pipes at probably up to

20% capacity only. When the original canal water is taken away from this flow, it will leave plenty of space for any eventual heavy rainfall further upstream.

Thank you to all who came and enjoyed the day – Folk pay fortunes for exercising in gymnasiums and we get it all for free – and fresh air thrown in as a bonus!!

The next meeting is on Sunday 13th March and is at Briggate.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Honing Staithe.

Sunday 13 February, 2011

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To carry out an update to the walkway through the wooded area; to check on a reported fallen tree near to the canal bridge and to check and clear any intrusions onto the walkway.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather forecast for the day was not good, with showers developing into rain after noon with high wind speeds. The truth was a little different in that the first light shower occurred at lunch break and there was no rain. The wind did pick up however but not so as to interfere with our tasks.

A total ten members of **The Team** turned up. This number is quite remarkable, considering that this is the fourth Work Party in the week! We all proceeded to the distant **Weavers Way** end of the walk and from there worked our way along the walk towards the canal. We re-enforced the walk with sticks and some logs before covering this with wood chippings. The distance at first with the wheelbarrows was quite short but by the time we reached to within about 30 metres of the canal, it seemed like a marathon! Well done to the loaders and pushers.

By the time that this was completed, it was time to sit down to our usual lunch break just as a shower arrived. People taking a walk along **Weavers Way** must have entertained some funny thoughts, seeing a group of people sitting about on the **Staithe bank** eating and drinking coffee in a shower? But that's us!

After lunch we went to inspect the fallen tree near to the bridge. It is a tree which does not belong to highways, but to our side of the fence. We took several pieces of ivy from the wreckage to ascertain the best way to get the tree to ground level. We found that it is lodged against the canal road bridge in three places and, in its' current state is thought to be quite stable. With the personnel and equipment present I deemed it unsafe to attempt to move it in any direction.

It appeared that several other trees, on highways land, had suffered along this line and these had been removed by a person or persons unknown. The time was running along by now and as I considered that little could be achieved with the remaining task, I decided to end the day's operations with the thought that a good deal had already been achieved. There is further work to be done on the walkway through the wooded area, but it is most certainly a lot better and drier than it was.

*The next work party will be as planned at **Bacton Wood Lock** site on **Sunday 27th February** and the meeting place there will be by the **sheds at Spa Common**. Thank you to all who helped out today and I wish **Laurie** good luck with his two broken fingers! NOT as a result of work at our Work Party, I hasten to add!*

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Briggate Lock & Millpond.

tues/thur 8-10 February, 2011.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. In this our very first attempt at midweek work parties, the plan was quite simple! To remove the fallen bole at the west end of the pond and clear as much as possible of the silted pond site! In addition, time and volunteer numbers permitting, to tackle any other bank side task.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather on the **Tuesday** was as I usually try to provide i.e. wall-to-wall sunshine all day (frost to start with though), and most unlike February;

Wednesday was cloudy but with a very lazy wind (bitter) and on **Thursday** it was light rain all day after about 10.00.

Volunteers on Tuesday totalled 9: Wednesday and Thursday 7 on each day - although not all the same people each day.

We welcomed another **Roger** as a new member of **The Team**. The two towering stars of the week were naturally **Tom Moore** with his twins, **Digger and Dumper**, plus **Laurie Ashton** with **Bigger Digger** - without these our work could not have been successfully carried out.

The **Dumper** was navigated by **Ivan** on Tuesday, by **David** from afar on Wednesday and on Thursday suffered a fit of pique until it realised, at the end of the day, that the game was over and suddenly started and was driven onto its' trailer for home!

I shall not carry out a blow-by-blow report as I would run out of paper recounting the number of blows it took to remove the bole! The best part of two days including it having been severed into two parts. Whilst there were no main tap roots, there must have been thousands of smaller fibrous roots fanning out in all directions. Remember that this fallen bole had once supported 5 sixty foot trees so something had to be underground to keep them all upright! Both diggers were kept fully occupied, apart from the occasional malfunction and the result is that there is now less than 20% of the area to be cleared - Thursday was just too wet to venture out onto the remaining promontory.

Apart from the digger work, smaller groups wandered around to the north of the **pond site** and cleared back some saplings from the canal bank as far north as the top side of the island.

It was noted that, what appeared to be, another **marker post** had been erected somewhere along the east bank of the island between the markers which we had placed some time ago. We will keep an eye on this intrusion.

Most of the spoil so far gained is now piled on the chamber island and after a suitable time for it to dry out; it will be spread over the surface to make a level area.

Laurie had somehow managed to get his digger along the previously inaccessible south bank of the island and started to build up the bank there with the silt pulled from the entrance channel to the pond. In co-operation with the **Briggate Work force**, we cleared a lot of ivy and other growth from the walls of the **wheel chamber building** and burned the resultants. All of the passers-by who stopped to talk, were so pleasantly surprised with that which we had achieved and all looked forward to seeing the end result. So do we!

These were not days where one could just jump in and work, but a previous requirement to work out what to do and in what order! I will say my thanks again to all concerned with this project, and this is not perfunctorily but sincerely heartfelt.

Thanks to **Tom, Laurie, The Team, Dianna** and **David** for their co-operation and assistance and last, but certainly by no means least, to the **ladies** left at home waiting (patiently?) for their men to return to carry out that long list of jobs!

The **EDP** and **North Norfolk News** published articles on the **Brigate** project on **Thursday 10th February**.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Brigate Lock & Millpond.

Sunday 30th January, 2011.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To remove the remainder of the last fallen tree trunk blocking the west end of the pond; repaint the white boundary markers; further reduce the fallen tree across the mill race; burn any remaining brash and rubbish; remove final sapling from north side of inlet; trim growth from chamber island and continue to dredge the pond area - ground state permitting

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather was forecast to be cloudy with maybe the occasional shower. The day started with a shower as I left home but cleared up and, naturally the sun shone during the major part of the day with no further rain. A total of 17 (yes seventeen) volunteers turned up including a welcome back for Mary Black after her illness and also to a new man Andrew Mitchell.

We also had the pleasure of welcoming a John Parker, a film maker, who was seeking information re producing a film of the canal.

The H&S and programme briefing were completed and then we all dug in. **Tom & Digger** were soon off the mark along the access strip which **Tom** had built from the spoil parallel to the road. Very soon after this, he was digging out the continuation of the initial channel inlet from the canal proper.

Chris had set about cutting the fallen tree into pieces, which was blocking the west end of the pond, when **Laurie** appeared with his 5-ton plant. After a couple of attempts, and realising that the tree was bigger than all of them, **Laurie** suddenly moved over to the problem tree situated in the inlet water. How he got there I do not know?

As if by magic, probably his skill really, the tree was promptly lying on the bank, leaving the larger piece of roots still in the water but not attainable from that position.

Tom and Digger were moving steadily along the edge of the inlet and dredging out more and more and really building up the north bank to a goodly and stable height. In the meantime, a fire had been started to hopefully finally clear up the brash etc. but didn't manage it! **Diana** came to visit and explained that maybe something would be happening with the granary building to make it safe, so work by her team on the mill site was halted for the time being. But looking to the mill race, she asked if we could clear the willows growing out of the race onto her field? By the end of the day, that chore had been done and most of the brash taken to the fire or left nearby for next

time. There now remains 'only' the several willow roots to be removed and **David H** said that we could do just that with a digger, but not to wander about over the meadow with it.

Earlier, **Ivan** had taken his pot of white paint and visited the marker posts which we had erected a couple of years ago. Most were still there! After doing this, he went over the chamber island with the hand mower and made it look really smart for the start of the season.

Lunch was taken in sunshine around the bonfire. There is still the unanswered scientific question - why does a 'steady' breeze suddenly change to 'variable', when people sit around a fire? Smokey! After lunch, work continued all around the area and two great results happened within ten minutes of each other. Firstly, **Laurie** had nibbled away at the final piece of the last tree to be removed from the inlet water and eventually brought it ashore. Relief!

Then over to the other end of the pond to where **Tom** had worked steadily along the north bank and he cut the last piece of land out so that the inlet water could join that which was parallel to the road! The area of water in the pond is now steadily growing ready to receive water birds and other flora and fauna. The old, big tree trunk resisted all further attempts to remove it - but it is seriously reduced in size now.

The next scheduled work party will be at Honing Staithe Cut on 13th February but we shall have more time at Briggate starting on Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th and hopefully Thursday 10th Feb. Running out of space but a big thank you to all who produced such a great result at this work party and of course to **Tom and Laurie** for their mechanical help - without which we would not be up to where we are now

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Briggate Lock & Millpond.

Sunday 16th January, 2011.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. Originally to continue the dredging of the pond site but owing to high water levels, plant could not venture onto the area.

In this case the plan reverted to clearing as much as possible of the trees and other timber lying at the west end of the pond site; clear other brash and grass, reed cutting and burn where possible and practicable; to make a start on the clearance of the tree fallen across the mill race downstream of the site.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was forecast to be rain or showers clearing later in the daytime - reality was sunshine all the time that we were on site with a fresh but warmish south-westerly blowing! Not bad for the middle of winter?

With eleven (11) members of **The Team** on site, work started after the usual briefings and continued unabated until lunch was whistled at about 12.35hrs.

During this morning session, a bonfire had been successfully started and was well fed with brash from the west end of the pond site. Several of the pieces of trees lying in this area were cut with chainsaws and piled on the side. Some of the smaller branches were likewise cut and piled aside. The tops of the bank either side of the pill box were cleared and the odd tree root taken out, leaving the row of angle iron posts (boundary?) standing proud and clear. The time simply flew

by!

Mr & Mrs D Howes came to visit and we were permitted to approach the tree fallen across the mill race south of the roadway. This was systematically approached, removing the lighter sized branches by hand saw and croppers - the brash being piled beside the mill race. The area was left in readiness for chainsaws to cut the thicker pieces of the fallen tree. As the sun shone across the water at this point, illuminating the green grass on the gently sloping bank at our feet, it presented a moment of pure peace and tranquillity.

I am certain that as our work continues up and down the length of the canal, this scene will be repeated many times over for the benefit of all who observe it.

At the lunch break, I passed on the thanks of **Mr Wm Cubitt**, whom I had met on site a week before to further discuss the plans for the area, for the splendid work already carried out by **The Team** to restore the pond to something like it was some years before. **Carole** produced a piece of cake for each of us, thank you, and on this occasion it really did sustain us!

After lunch, more cutting was carried out and a second bonfire started - and the remains of another previous bonfire, nearer to the lock chamber, were cleared and either burned or the ashes spread. Surprisingly, after the sustained very cold weather of the past month, seedlings were already growing up under the remains of this bonfire!

Leaving site at about 16.00hrs the scene before us was totally different to that seen earlier in the day. The west end of the pond site is now virtually cleared with only (only?) the fallen tree stretching from the pill box to the road wall, to be removed.

The stretch of water parallel to the roadway looked really good with little wavelets on its' surface, seemingly waiting for a larger area over which to play. That time will come, little wavelets - it will come!

My thanks go to all of **The Team** who braved the winters' day (what winter?) and carried out a splendid amount of work to produce such a transformation of the west end of the pond site.

The next work party will be again at **Brigate Mill Pond** on **30th January 2011**. *Should there be another in the meantime, I will send the message out via e-mail and telephone. Thank you.*

[TOP](#)



Honing Staithe in the Snow, December 2010

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Honing Lock.

Sunday 21st November 2010.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To locate and investigate the weir; to clear the near side area back to the fence; to clear the chamber islands and to locate the site of the old rail/lock keepers cottage and to investigate the possibilities of diverting the canal into the backsoke for when maintenance work is carried out on the lock.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather was forecast to have the odd shower with the occasional spot of sunshine - there was no rain and only the odd appearance of the sun! Bit cool but this changed when working.

During the briefing and H&S period, two new volunteers, **Andrew Fryer** and **Nigel Cross**, were welcomed to the Team. We split into four groups and didn't meet up again until the lunch break. One group tackled the clearance of the near side area, in addition to that which had been cleared on an earlier occasion; the two new chaps attacked the western chamber island, one group went for the eastern chamber island and I set off with **Alan** to locate the weir.

The results of these ventures were, first of all, the near side clearance, which at the end of play presented a view of the lock chamber from the approach path before reaching the little access

bridge (which was found to be again in need of repair) and indeed is a rather large sized area in which to prepare canoes etc or even sit for picnic. Having achieved this, the group went on to investigate the location of the old cottage and the route of the backsoke.



The site of the old cottage was found and, interestingly, the former garden which had the remnants of garden flowers still growing there! Between this and the canal, runs the backsoke and it was realised that it would only require to cut a channel about 6 metres long to divert the canal. It would probably also require some bank re-enforcement to the backsoke to prevent erosion.

On the east chamber island, the growth had not been too great and this was reduced by use of the mower to a very acceptable and pleasing level. The work on the western chamber island was more onerous as it is, of course, still littered with brick-work and lumps of concrete - the former coping stones.

However **Andrew** and **Nigel** persisted with the task and at the end, the greenery had been removed and one can now see the extent of bricking that is required. The weir was located and after an extended time spent cutting away dead and living bushes, fallen trees and branches the full extent of the weir was established. There are, however, several trees still growing on the actual spillway, but the remainder of the concrete surface is in remarkable condition, as is the brickwork boundaries along each side from top to bottom.



This weir is perhaps a little unusual in that at the top cill it is about sixty feet wide whilst at the outlet end it is only about eight feet in width. The sad thing is that this weir will not be used again as the lake which used to be there, is now a field used for grazing animals!

My grateful thanks go to **The Team** for another wonderful day of progress, brought about by pure, hard labour. A day on which the results could not have been envisaged!

[TOP](#)

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Honing Lock.

Sunday 21st November 2010.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To locate and investigate the weir; to clear the near side area back to the fence; to clear the chamber islands and to locate the site of the old rail/lock keepers cottage and to investigate the possibilities of diverting the canal into the backsoke for when maintenance work is carried out on the lock.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather was forecast to have the odd shower with the occasional spot of sunshine - there was no rain and only the odd appearance of the sun! Bit cool but this changed when working.

During the briefing and H&S period, two new volunteers, **Andrew Fryer** and **Nigel Cross**, were welcomed to the Team. We split into four groups and didn't meet up again until the lunch break. One group tackled the clearance of the near side area, in addition to that which had been cleared on an earlier occasion; the two new chaps attacked the western chamber island, one group went for the eastern chamber island and I set off with **Alan** to locate the weir.

The results of these ventures were, first of all, the near side clearance, which at the end of play presented a view of the lock chamber from the approach path before reaching the little access bridge (which was found to be again in need of repair) and indeed is a rather large sized area in which to prepare canoes etc or even sit for picnic. Having achieved this, the group went on to investigate the location of the old cottage and the route of the backsoke.



The site of the old cottage was found and, interestingly, the former garden which had the remnants of garden flowers still growing there! Between this and the canal, runs the backsoke and it was realised that it would only require to cut a channel about 6 metres long to divert the canal. It would probably also require some bank re-enforcement to the backsoke to prevent erosion.

On the east chamber island, the growth had not been too great and this was reduced by use of the mower to a very acceptable and pleasing level. The work on the western chamber island was more onerous as it is, of course, still littered with brick-work and lumps of concrete - the former coping stones.

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My grateful thanks go to **The Team** for another wonderful day of progress, brought about by pure, hard labour. A day on which the results could not have been envisaged!

The next work party is at Honing Staithe Cut on Sunday 5th December 10.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Briggate.

Sunday 14th November 2010.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To co-operate with and assist **Briggate folk** in clearing part of the mill site including the wheel race building site but excluding the main, big storage building: to burn existing brash on the pond site.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather fine and dry at the start with only slight air movement: quite pleasant. **Diana Howes** arrived and we walked the site with her and discussed the situation and possibilities. Ideas were given in connection with the boundary of the 'green' site and not to be involved in any way with the big storage building!

It was agreed that the wheel-race building site will be included in the 'green' site plan. **Phil and Alan** went to ignite the brash piles and after a while, white smoke was seen to rise into the sky! Well done in a difficult circumstance, considering the rain which has fallen in the past week or so.

Whilst the **Brigate folk** were attacking the main area, starting at the road-side, **Chris and I** went for the walls of the work-shop. Several saplings and plenty of ivy, which had grown on top of two walls at the western end and, one tree inside, were removed and large numbers of loose bricks were lowered, by gravity, to ground level for safety reasons. Parts of the broken door were stored in a safe location and protruding screws taken out of some remaining doors' woodwork.

Timed by Big Ben on the wireless, the 2 Minutes silence was observed.

Late in the morning, a photographer from the **EDP** arrived and we all contrived to look busy! H & S would have had me hung, drawn and quartered - with a scythe taking a swing at the legs of the chain saw operator; the sickle man taking aim at the arm of the lady pruning roses.....! Artistic license?

Norfolk County Councillor Paul Morse arrived at the end of the photo call and went into discussions with **Diana** and later, our **Chris**.

Coffee, very kindly made by **Diana** was taken at her kitchen table at our late lunch break at 13.00hrs. Our thanks to **Diana and David** for this grateful and most welcome gesture.

Back at the workface, precipitation arrived at about 14.15 and it was decided to call it a day and we departed at 15.00hrs. Looking around the site, it could be seen that this first day of co-operation had been a great success! Co-operation it was, with 5 of **The Team** and 5 '**Brigatteers**' working together towards the common goal.

As this was an extra, out-of-programme meeting, special thanks go to all who attended and for their efforts.

*The next meeting is at **Honing Lock** on Sunday 21st November 2010.*

[TOP](#)

In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Bacton Wood Lock.

Sunday 6th November 2010.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To carry on removal of growth along the canal bed or banks upstream of the lock or to assist **Mr L Ashton** in whatever he requires. As I was to be out of the county, **Mr Chris Black** was standing in for me and his report follows below.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Awoke to rain and a keen easterly wind - not a promising start! I arrived at **Bacton Wood Lock** at approx. 09.10, **Laurie Ashton** appearing five minutes later with a selection of scrapers and screwdrivers. We were eventually joined by Graham Brown

and guessed that we were the three volunteers for the day.

Laurie wanted us help prepare the lock walls for some more bricklaying, hence the scrapers and screwdrivers. We donned hardhats as we were working in the lock and made ourselves familiar with the scaffolding layout for health and safety reasons. **Laurie** had arranged a tilt over the west lock wall which had had the first two leaves of brickwork removed however there was no need for the tilt as the sky had cleared and warm sunshine bathed the inside of the lock.

The mortar needed raking back and loose bits of brick removed together with any small roots. We made good progress and stopped for coffee at approx. 11.30 during which time **Roger Hopkinson** arrived. Then we were four! Just before lunch **Peter** appeared making our total volunteer number five for the day.

Lunch was taken at 13.00 with a welcome cup of tea provided by **Julie Ashton**. I mentioned the possibility of an extra work party at **Briggate** as mentioned by **David Revill**.

Discussions centred around the breach and the role of the weir in the water control. We decided to walk to the weir to get an idea of what was required to restore it, **Laurie** wondering if it might be a good idea to make it a shallow 'v' shape to channel the water to the centre on low flow rates.

Back to the lock to continue the brickwork preparation! **Laurie and Graham** removed some of the ivy from the east wall in readiness for the outer leaves of brickwork to be chiselled off sometime in the future and with fading light we decided to call it a day at 16.30.

Chris Black, Acting work party leader.

Many thanks again **Chris** for that! As can be seen, our work is much and varied, which makes it the more interesting I suppose?

It seems that the lock now takes on a fairly high priority at **Bacton** so that will come into the future programme. The other point is that I have accepted an invitation from **Mrs Diana Howes, of Briggate**, to attend her work party at **Briggate Mill** next Sunday, 14th November.

I know that this is **Remembrance Sunday** and I, at least, will be observing the 2 minutes silence. I hope that as many of you who are available and free would like to come along for even a short period of time in order to co-operate with their venture.

Part of this is also included in our future plans, too. I am also hoping to be able to burn some more brash on the Pond site at the same time! It all needs doing some-time.

Thanks go to those who attended the above for their dedication.

Our next planned work party will be at Honing Lock on the 21st November 2011.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at at Briggate Mill Pond

Sunday 24 October, 2010

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. To progress further with the work started to clear the area; should plant be available, to cut down the remaining five trees standing in a hazardous position and to remove the one remaining sapling standing in the entrance area from the canal; to continue removing spoil from the base of the mill pond from a prescribed area and with the spoil, rebuilding the banks; to burn brash and weeds cut at last work party and that produced today.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather for the day planned to be so miserable that work could probably not progress. However, after a very wet start in some places we arrived on site to find the sun shining which it continued to do for the rest of the day apart from a few drops of rain at lunchtime! But whatever the weather did, it would not have dampened my excitement with what transpired.

Following a tactics talk with **Tom and Digger**, they set to work and by the beginning of the afternoon had dug out a long trench about six metres from the public road and with the spoil had built an access track alongside the road for future use to the far side of the pond.

My heartfelt thanks go to **Laurie Ashton** for bringing the cherry picker and getting the hazardous trees at the western end of the pond site, out of the way for us. The view of the village from the canal bridge is now completely different and I consider much better, showing houses nestling comfortably in the treed setting. A nice place to live!



They are the last standing trees planned to go as all the remainder will remain (apart from the sapling mentioned above).

Ivan, Darren and Philip started to dig down into the water spill area and discovered far more in-fill than had been thought possible - they had still not reached the grill, whether horizontal or vertical we do not yet know. We were informed though, that a water main had been laid some years ago along the length of the road on the mill side. At what depth this has been laid is not known nor if it interferes with the water flow to the previously, casually inspected wheel chamber. This culvert is oblong in form whereas the more usual shape is round, therefore there may have been some consideration given to future use of the culvert. Subsequent to the quite heavy rainfall during the last couple of days, it seemed that the idea of lighting any of the bonfires was out of the

question. Not for young Alan though, who diligently persevered and, with a lot of smoke, cleared a lot of old and new brash. Tremendous effort.



Of the seventeen, yes 18, volunteers who signed in today, the transformation of the site must have seemed incredible. Everyone applied themselves in whatever they were doing and the result is fantastic. We shall now plan to return to carry on this latest development with gusto and get the pond into some sort of working state before the beginning of the reproduction season in 2011. With much more visible water available I am sure that we shall soon see water birds returning to complement the vast increase in frogs and toads following the previous incursion of water earlier in the year.

My thanks to all who took part today - and well done! *The next work party will be at **Bacton Wood Mill** site on Sunday 7th November.*

My thanks also, as always, go to **Chris Black** for his very able support.

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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at at Briggate Mill Pond

Sunday 10 October, 2010

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

THE PLAN. Without plant, to clear the brash and other growth from the mill pond area and burn where possible; to assess the remaining standing trees to be felled; to attempt to clear the one remaining tree from the far side of the inlet; to check that the running canal is clear near to the upper lock gates (missing).

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The weather was forecast and proven to be sunny all day long! What a relief to be able to work in splendid conditions?

A total of 15 volunteers turned up during the day, which did not start too well as the Big Mowing machine had suffered a dead battery. Once this was changed, luckily **Chris** had one in his instant power appliance, things started to move in the right direction. Then one of the trimmers ran out of cord, which necessitated a run up to the local garden centre.

The growth on the chamber island had grown so much that **Chris**, taking the Big Mower out for the first time, disappeared from view in the jungle. Such was the extent of the challenge for the day. However, before lunch was taken at 12.45, much of the island had been cleared and most of the western tip of the mill pond, with fires started at both ends of the site.

It was found that the four western willow trees, to be felled on 24th?, are all growing from a fallen over tree, laying horizontal across the pond. Immediately before lunch, **Graham** and I had joined **Chris** in finalising the application form, which he was completing in connection with a lottery bid for **Honing Lock**. **Chris** has spent many hours at home on this already as it is a mammoth task!

After lunch it became apparent that we would probably not finish the task of total clearance but again before we finished and left site at about 16.25, a very different view was presented to the viewers from the roadway. **Kevin** had run his mower along a path as requested by **Mrs Diana Howes** and also along the side of the public road, making it a very presentable picture. Words cannot really describe the effect of the hard work carried out by our Team today, but in a nutshell, it was wonderful. So my thanks go to you all who were present and joined in with the labours.

The next work party is again at Briggate Mill on 24th October 2010 and hopefully, well, it is planned, some plant will turn up and the big things will get done.

No attempt was made at work in connection with any trees today. I did make an inspection of the Mill Race area and also spoke to a local house-owner in connection with the planned future work at the Mill Pond. He is happy with the plans!

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Work party at at Honing Staithe Cut.

Sunday 19 Sept, 2010.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA.** Work Party Leader.

Chris Black had once more agreed to step in as Work Party Leader on the day.

Here below is **Chris'** report:-

My alarm failed, not a good start!

After a rushed breakfast and a few chores I managed to get on site at the appropriate time. The weather was warm, fine and sunny with broken cloud. **Alan** was first to arrive with **Kevin** close behind.

Our tasks for the day were to close mow the area around the staithe, clear any fallen debris, ensure that the walk was clear of obstructions and any obvious hazards, visually inspect the footbridge, mow the walk and remove more of the reeds growing in the canal and staithe entrance.

We took the mower, brush cutter and other tools down to the the staithe to discover the water level to be at a reasonably good height. A **H&S briefing** was followed by mowing and the removal of small branches and pieces of wood which were stacked at the bottom of the road bank.

The brushcutter was used to clear the staithe and canal banks of reeds and weeds and remove small saplings and shoots from the trees. The area of canal bank at the entrance to the staithe, which had been covered by recent dredgings, was cleared of nettles and levelled making it look much tidier. We will have to close mow this patch to encourage natural grass growth which is happening over much of the mown area.

We eventually ended up with six volunteers with **Laurie Ashton** paying us a visit mid morning.

The walk was close mowed allowing walkers to avoid some of the muddier patches. The experimental 'reed' path is working very well, thanks **Ivan and Darren**. Whilst I was mowing the walk a young lad rode past on a mountain bike going round the loop, another useful way to use it for exercise. We also observed several other people using the walk and the staithe seems to be very popular with dogs taking a swim! The popularity of this open access area is very obvious and we received several plaudits during the day for our work which keeps it tidy and attractive.

Lunch was taken at 12.30 on the logs at the end of the staith and after I gave a brief resume of the ongoing bid to get **Heritage Lottery funding** for the restoration of **Honing Lock**. After lunch **Roger and Alan** embarked on some reed clearance to good effect. These were left on the bank to dry until our next visit.

We removed the growth from the Ash tree stump near the bridge to halt its re-growth and I removed the remaining bulk of the large tree stump on the road bank with the chain saw. The whole area now looks very tidy indeed.

We left site at approx. 16.30.

Chris Black, Acting Work-party Leader.



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In Co-operation with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Work party at Bacton Wood Lock area.

Sunday 5th sept., 2010.

Report from: **David Revill, EAWA. Work Party Leader.**

THE PLAN. To further investigate the newly discovered weir, to burn brash from previous work party and cut up fallen trees.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. Weather fine and warm all day with a gentle breeze which helped with burning the brash. Ten volunteers attended and it turned out to be a convivial occasion. A new attendee, **Seb**, was given his first H&S briefing together with his personal booklet on H&S matters and welcomed into **The Team**.

Ivan and **Darren** had brought some suitable timber for the construction of some simple access bridges across two of the back dykes.





One group tackled the quite large downed tree some 200 yards north of the breach and also fired the rather large pile of brash there, whilst the third group went along to the weir.

The southern end of the spill wall was confirmed by **Seb** who then exposed the end wall alongside the apron. As the overhanging branches and trees were removed, the full extent of the spill wall was revealed and eventually the northern end point was established.

The overall size of the weir is approximately 16,520 x 4130mm. The condition of the spill wall is generally fairly good but that of the lower wall, which is about 3feet high, is quite poor. It is considered that the lower wall retaining posts are probably the originals together with the bottom rail, albeit in very poor state. It also appears that the apron has collapsed in places and has become eroded underneath.



Lunch was taken in bright sunshine and smoke and provided a very pleasant break from the mornings' labours. During the afternoon the whole of the weir was exposed, the whole pile of brash burned and most of the large tree cut up. The main participants finished at about 4pm, leaving **Ivan & Darren** continuing with their bridge construction until about 5pm. Once again it was a very successful work party and a great deal achieved. The rapidly changing improvements are quite encouraging!

The next work party will be at **Honing Staithe Cut and Lock** on 19th September when **Chris Black** will be Leader as I shall be away on holiday. Please remember **Briggate** too on the 10th and 24th October 2010.

Many thanks to you all who attended and made such a difference and improvement.

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