

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd.

Subject: Work-party at Ebridge Lock and mill-pond area.

Date: Sunday 15th February 2015

From: C.J.B. Black, NW&DCT and EAWA

THE PLAN:- To clear the heaps of Canadian pond-weed, located on both sides of the upper gates of the lock, and remove it to the dry dock area.

- To remove as much floating weed remaining in the mill-pond and in the upper mouth of the lock.
- To spread the smaller heaps of weed along the bank to dry out.
- To cut down the brash/ivy/bramble on the SE bank of the canal south of the road bridge.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: The early morning was overcast but dry resulting in a pleasant mid-winter canal work day. Two safety throwing lines were placed beside the lock area before the volunteers arrived, as the heaps of weeds to be removed were adjacent to the lock's upper mouth.

18 volunteers turned out to help with the day's tasks and we were pleased to have with us today Sharon and Adrian Jones who are the owners of Ebridge Mill. They are very keen to see the canal restored as much as we are pleased to see the old mill being sensitively restored for dwellings. This mill is one of only two left on the canal, the other being Bacton Wood Mill at Spa Common, so it will remain as an historic landmark.

The usual health and safety concerns were addressed before work commenced. The work-party was split into two groups, with some tackling the thicket on the south side of the bridge, whilst the rest were set to work on the rather exhausting task of loading and unloading 1 tonne bags with the damp pond-weed. The heaps did not look very large but took most of the day to clear. The filling of the bags was relatively easy but emptying them was very hard work.

A couple of the work-party had grappling hooks which enabled them to clear the pond-weed from well out into the pond. A small group of saplings growing in the roadside bank were removed but the mill-pond and canal margins were left untouched for the benefit of the wildlife. Our pair of swans and their almost adult plumed cygnets (total of 8) joined us – the youngsters perfecting landing and take-off, eventually to leave and find partners on waters new.

The bridge-side thicket was cut down but could not be burnt as it was too close to the road and the wind was not in a favourable direction. It was stacked ready to be disposed of at a later date.

Our final task was to remove some of the dog faeces left by irresponsible owners. The mill-pond area, the 'island' and the canal side walk are available for the public to enjoy on a permissive basis and many people enjoy picnics or just sitting beside the water. I removed some twenty or more piles of dog mess around the mill-pond area as it spoils the responsible visitor's enjoyment and is a health hazard. Not a pleasant job and wouldn't be necessary if the irresponsible took it home!

Work ceased at approx 16.00.

Chris Black, Work Party Leader