

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Work-party at the Paston pound length of the canal.
Date: Sunday 20th Dec 2015
From: C.J.B. Black, NW&DCT and EAWA

THE PLAN:

- To clear the large area of bamboo from the SW bank of the canal below Swafield bridge.
- To ensure that all of the cut bamboo was burned.
- To remove and burn the ivy from the NE face of the old railway bridge.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: The weather was fine and sunny and the wind was light and in a good direction for fires. Laurie had asked us to cut down the large area of bamboo growing beside the SW side of the canal and adjacent to the cottage there.

A remarkably good turnout of 15 volunteers so close to Christmas meant that the work-party could be split into two groups – one party to tackle the ivy on the old railway bridge and the others to start a fire and cut down the bamboo from the SW bank.

The water here but is shallow, but deep enough to float the smaller pontoon which Laurie had brought in to allow easy access to the SW bank. As we were working off the pontoon a safety throwing line was placed on board. The party working at the bridge were reminded to be aware of the adjacent canal water as the bank is relatively narrow beside the SW side of the bridge.

The 'bridge party' started a fire to burn the large quantity of ivy removed from the bridge. Not all of the ivy could be reached without a ladder but most was cut away, making the canal banks much easier to traverse. The narrower SW bank was levelled after removing a large heap of spoil adjacent to the bridge abutment.

The 'bamboo party' toiled to remove the dense growth of bamboo which is notorious for spreading if uncontrolled. Despite various attempts to use saws and a brush cutter hand cutting with pruners, although tedious, was found to be the most effective. The long cut lengths of bamboo were transferred to the opposite bank and burned. Cutting and moving it was very hard work and everyone earned a welcome break.

Lunch was taken at approx. 12.30.

After lunch we ceased cutting the bridge ivy as we need of a long ladder to reach the remaining higher growth. We concentrated on the bamboo removal which was made a bit easier by the extra bodies. Not all the bamboo was cut down, leaving enough to form a screen for the cottage garden. We had an amicable conversation with the Fosters who own the cottage especially as we revealed what appeared to be a lost mooring with a brick walled cut adjacent to the cottage on the SW bank.

Work ceased at approx. 15.30 and we will return to the Paston pound next year.

Chris Black, Work Party Leader.