

## NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Work-party at Purdy's reed bed.

Date: Sunday 10th July 2016.

From: Chris Black, NW&DCT.

### THE PLAN:

- To clear the brush, roots and small tree branches blocking the flow of the east back-soke.
- To retrieve any useful timber and burn the remainder.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: The weather was warm and overcast with a light wind and the sun eventually won through resulting in a very reasonable day. 11 volunteers turned out to this new work area on the canal, to which we have had no access until today.

The aim was to clear the back-soke of detritus and to create a 2-3 metre wide strip beside the SW side of the back-soke to allow access for maintenance. This section of back-soke had not been cleared of detritus for a long time causing the flow to be compromised. We were not sure how wet the reed bed was, so we approached the SW bank of the back-soke very carefully through the reed bed however it proved to be quite solid making it reasonably easy to access the edge of the back-soke. A fire was lit on the hard standing area to burn the brush so we set about the task of selective clearance. There was a considerable quantity of in stream detritus ranging from large logs to small twigs and branches and it took all morning to clear it from the water and to haul it on to the SW bank. Our efforts resulting in only a few yards of downstream soke being cleared! The lower overhanging boughs were removed but the upper boughs were left overhanging the water for shade. A semi mature oak tree and a couple of willow trees on the SW bank were left in situ.

Further downstream there are several small willows growing in the reeds adjacent to the back-soke which will have to be removed as we progress further. There is however one unwanted plant growing in some parts of the reed-bed – Himalayan Balsam! Some of this was removed and burned but a further work-party will be required to hand pull the invasive plant before it seeds.

Lunch was taken at approx. 12.30.

I left site at 13.30 as I couldn't stay all day. Darren was left in charge of the work-party for the afternoon session.

After lunch Darren and the team managed to clear several more yards downstream, making it possible to cut an access path on the canal side of the soke. There is a lot more work to do to clear the entire length of bank however the good news is that there is a good growth of reed this year, probably due to the heavy rainfall in spring and summer. Good for reeds, bad for holidaymakers!!

Work ceased at approx. 15.00

Chris Black, work-party leader, Darren Cooke, deputy work-party leader.