

## NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Bacton Wood Lock area, Purdy's Marsh and Lower Canal visit.  
Date: 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017  
From: Chris Black

### THE PLAN:

- To remove all unwanted metalwork from Elsa's upper hull.
- To place Elsa in the water to check for leaks, especially around recently welded patch.
- To start cutting second third of Purdy's Marsh.

### WORK ACHIEVEMENT:

12 volunteers turned out on a cold damp morning. Traditionally this last work-party of the year is marked by hot mulled wine and mince pies.

On arrival the water level in the canal was so low that the SueB pontoon was grounded. It was needed for a trip in the afternoon so Ivan went down to Ebridge to check on the sluice. It had been opened by 6". At 11.00 Mary dispensed the wine and pies and despite one of our flasks of mulled wine breaking, (the contents now in my car rear seat) there was just about enough to go round. Two of the volunteers had gone to Purdy's Marsh so Mary walked upstream to give them their mulled wine while the remainder set about removing the metalwork from Elsa's upper part of the hull using spanners and an angle grinder. (Safety goggles worn) The bolt holes will be welded up.

The ugly rubber fixed over the top edge of the hull was removed, though not easily! This will be replaced by a timber rail after the hull has been cleaned and painted.

A test to check that the hull is watertight was proposed so Laurie removed silt from the edge of the canal to get sufficient depth of water. (Siltation caused by road run-off into west back-soke)

Meanwhile we found the missing hull drain plug. Bolt minus nut! A new nut was found but a missing spacer meant the hole ended up plugged with a wooden dowel. The boat was lowered into the canal and did not reveal any leaks. It seems to be quite stable and sits quite nicely in the water.

Lunch taken at approx. 13.00 but by then it was raining and the Purdy's Marsh team had returned.

Ivan wanted to investigate his discovery of some Public Access Land near the Canal at Meeting House Hill so the work-party was abandoned due to the weather and Ivan, me, Mary, Jonathan and Darren set off to see this land and a section of the Canal not seen before. A rough track led us to the area and using Ivan's maps we found a marked path into the woods. It was very damp and boggy but we followed it to reach the Canal. It was well defined, devoid of reed growth and quite full of water. The back-soke running beside the Canal was also well defined. It was well worth the visit.

We then drove to Honing Lock to see the state of the area and some temporary canoe portages placed on the Canal by Luke Paterson. These appear to be mown grass areas. The state of the lock area has deteriorated greatly since the Trust was stopped from maintaining it. The spillway which had led from Dilham Lake was cleared by the Trust but is now heavily overgrown – a sad reflection on the thousands of volunteer man-hours put into the restoration of the lower Canal.

Work ceased at approx 14.30

Chris Black, work-party leader