

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Work party on pound north of Ebridge Lock No.3

Date: Sunday 6th April 2014

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

THE PLAN: At the request of the OCC Ltd. we aimed to cut back the willows growing in the west side bed of the canal, stretching to the east side and obstructing navigation for some 300m of the top third of the pound. The brush would be placed on the west bank of the canal to provide cover for nesting birds.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: The weather started overcast but warm. 8 volunteers arrived and Laurie lashed the weed cutter to the pontoon while we loaded our kit on board and at 10am cast off and headed upstream. The two safety throwing lines were taken with us as a precaution against someone falling overboard, however the pontoon is very large and the volunteers kept well away from the edges. Being heavy the pontoon is extremely stable. A short discussion regarding the work planned was held on board at the work site. The work attendance sheet was signed by all eight volunteers.

Ever mindful of the bird breeding season all the volunteers took great care to examine the trees, brash and reeds for any nesting activity before any work was performed. Again, only trees and brash growing in the canal bed were removed leaving the trees on the west canal bank untouched. We discovered that many of the willows were growing about a foot below the water and extended well towards the east bank causing a hazard to navigation. These were removed.

Lunch was called at 12.30 and was eaten on the pontoon in warm sunshine. A brief chat about the ongoing talks with the EA was given to update the volunteers who take a great interest in the problems which are delaying the full restoration of the canal.

We were unaware of the extent of the in-channel willows, however by the end of the day we had reached the last blockage. Mindful of the time I called a halt and agreed with Laurie that we would return to this section of canal to finish the work. The removal of the remaining willow blocking the channel will allow the canal pound to be navigated in safety for the time being however the full legitimate width of this canal pound will require more work. Late in the afternoon we were pleased to see a canoe heading towards us from Ebridge. Three youngsters were on board thoroughly enjoying the re-opened pound. We moved the pontoon to let them pass and they set off upstream to Bacton Wood Lock – a positive example of the resulting restoration.

We ceased work at approx 16.30.

Chris Black,
Work Party supervisor