

## NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Work party at Swafield Lock No.6

Date: Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2014

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

### THE PLAN:

- To continue the clearance of the brash and small trees from the lock walls, to clear the ivy from the lock walls leaving the ivy on the top of the walls for frost protection.
- With the aid of a mini-digger, to investigate carefully the upper area of the lock as the work-party on the 28<sup>th</sup> Sept had partly uncovered lock gate metalwork buried beneath the tonnes of spoil dumped in the lock.
- To continue the investigation of the inter-lock spillway.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: With the weather dry and mild the work-party volunteers assembled at the lower end of the field adjacent to the canal and lock no.5. Mickey Starling arrived with tools etc. and we discussed what he wanted the volunteers to achieve in the upper lock area. He had arranged for a mini-digger to be on site to remove the compacted soil from the top gates area.

16 volunteers were on site – an extremely good turnout!

The majority of the volunteers walked up to the top lock, Ivan and others stopped at the spillway to resume their investigation. One of the first tasks was to reveal the north side wing wall so that the mini-digger could clear back approx. 30cm of the soil infill. Most of the team then set about cutting up small tree branches from the felled small trees which had been growing on the lock sides. Two fires were started to burn the brash.

Darren and I worked with the digger driver to ensure that whatever was left of the upper gates was removed without too much damage as we wanted to find out how these upper lock gates related to those seen at Bacton Wood. It was a 'Time Team' moment. A considerable quantity of soil had to be removed but eventually we reached the cill and clay base of the upper canal pound (millpond). At 11.30 Ann Starling arrived with cheese straws and sausage rolls – a welcome break.

Work resumed until lunch was taken at approx. 12.45.

Lunch taken our digger driver levelled out the removed soil. No more investigation work was carried out in the 'gate' area as it would have been difficult for the digger to exit the lock. Some of the stumps were pulled out by the digger and put on the fire. A large dangerous hanging branch was lassoed and pulled down by hand.

We ceased work at approx 15.30 and left the site.

Chris Black, Work Party leader.