

Quagmire

The Newsletter of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Spring 2015

Contact: mdablack@btinternet.com

Apology.

This edition of your newsletter is late and contains some rather old 'news'. We are sorry that we have been out of touch with members but hope you will understand the difficulties of running what has become a complex organisation with just a few dedicated volunteers. Don't forget that you can keep up to date with upcoming events by using our **website** at www.nwdct.org

Julie Kelleher has dedicated many hours to administering our Facebook and website pages, constantly keeping them refreshed with news and photos which has meant that she has little time now to prepare the Quagmire. With a new Quagmire editor in place we intend that in future you will receive issues in spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Thank you!

Our open weekend on 6th & 7th June 2015 was a great success and we want to thank all the **members** who came along to support the event. We don't always recognise members so do make yourselves known when you see us at our events. We need members to support us and to spread the word about our efforts to restore the canal and, of course, for the financial contribution that you make which enables us to buy tools and equipment.

While on the subject of the weekend event, it was clear that there were many visitors who had never visited us before but had read newspaper articles and seen interviews on local television. We are getting more valuable **media interest*** simply because so much has already been achieved on the canal.

At the weekend 184 signatures were added to our petition meaning the total now stands at 2,586 and 29 new members joined us!

Thanks also to John & Norma for donating another large tent to the Trust. Along with the large tent and two smaller ones that were used this time, in future we will have ample room for our needs.

*We have asked for **corrections** to appear in newspapers that incorrectly stated the canal is the canalised River Ant. It may seem a small point but in fact it is extremely important that we are recognised as a canal. Take a look at a map and you will see that the river and the canal follow very different courses. www.nwdct.org/maps.html

News...

We are very excited to report that Tom Moore has agreed to take on the complex task of applying for Lottery funding. Before his recent retirement Tom was a GP who also worked as a Doctor on cruise ships and gave many hours of his time serving with the Air Ambulance. He has been invaluable to us already by bringing his mini-digger to work parties, especially at Briggate, which saves the work party many hours of digging by hand! We wish him lots of luck with the Lottery application and send him our grateful thanks.



At last the work party volunteers will soon have somewhere to store **tools**. Up to now volunteers have crammed tools into their cars to take to the various sites which has not been entirely satisfactory. There have been occasions when a volunteer has been unable to attend and there have not been enough tools to equip everyone adequately. Ivan Cane researched possibilities which resulted in the Trust agreeing to an offer made by Anglo Scottish. The offer was for a 15 year old 20ft trailer, dry inside, but not repainted. Delivery included for £1000 plus VAT. Usually these come in at around £1300 (plus VAT) plus delivery. As well as tools it will hold countless items which at present are held in various homes across the region. Many garages and spare rooms will now be de-cluttered much to everyone's relief. We even have a volunteer to act as store keeper and maintenance engineer so thanks must go to Roger Hopkinson for agreeing to take on this valuable task.

The Trustees are very sorry to report that Carole Bullinger has resigned as **secretary** to the Trust. Carole started as a very useful work-party member in 2007, proving as strong as some of the men! Some of us bemoaned the fact that Carole would bring along not only her chainsaw but also her famous cakes, undoing all the good our workout was doing!

Carole has been secretary since the formation of the Trust in 2008 and has worked tirelessly behind the scenes. She will be sorely missed as secretary and for her enthusiasm for the canal project and we look forward to seeing her when she visits us at our various events – or maybe at work-parties eh Carole?

The Trust is seeking to appoint a new Secretary to take minutes at monthly meetings, prepare agendas and write letters as and when required. If you know of anyone who may be interested in this role please contact us via email secretary@nwdct.org or any of the telephone numbers in this newsletter.



A pair of substantial **pontoons** have been donated to aid the restoration, one for The OCC Ltd and one for the Trust. Two work-parties have already been spent repairing and repainting ours and soon we will be able to finish it by affixing the non-slip decking. The pontoon will have a 5hp outboard motor and will have the facility to fix safety rails when required.

Reports...

Chris Black – Vice Chairman

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EA) CONSULTATION

There is a good chance that many of you will not have seen or read an EU document called The Water Framework Directive (WFD). This Directive governs how all water-bodies in Europe, including the UK are managed. It is a very detailed document and it sets out certain objectives which must be carried out, in the case of the UK, by the Environment Agency. Basically it requires all water-bodies to be classified by their ecological state and the production of a plan for each River Basin. This plan is known as River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and the first of these was issued in 2009. The WFD states that the RBMP must be reviewed every six years; therefore December 2015 is the publishing date for the second RBMP.

The WFD also states that the public and all interested parties must be consulted on water-bodies. This is where the NW&D canal comes into play. As you know, the canal restoration requires de-silting of the Canal channel, re-profiling of the banks, work on the locks and other structures etc. The problem the Trust and The Old Canal Co. Ltd has is that an incorrect baseline was imposed on the canal above Ebridge lock. It was incorrectly called the River Ant and it was this mistake which lead to the EA imposed 'stop notice'.

Discussions with the EA plus a great deal of meticulous research shows that the designation applied to the canal was caused by serious omissions in the original designation process, including failure to consult with the canal owner! In the run-up to the 2015 RBMP both the Trust and the Canal Company **have** been consulted. The consultation lasted six months and our response was submitted by the Trust in March 2015.

It is available to read on the EA's website under the Draft 2015 River Basin Management Plan. There are many responses not identified by the submitting consultees, but ours is identified as the NW&DC Trust.

David Revill – Work Party Organiser & Press Officer

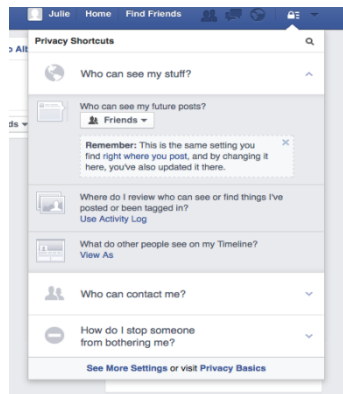
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*The **work parties** of late have been a little varied and physically spread apart! The number of volunteers has remained encouragingly high in the region of 12/13 per attendance. Maybe not surprisingly the variety of work has changed to include such things as painting, welding and decking apart from the usual tree and shrub clearance. It will all carry on into the Autumn and Winter months of course and here are the dates which are planned for the work parties:- June 21st; July 5th and 19th; August 2nd, 16th and 30th; September 13th and 27th; October 11th and 25th; November 8th and 22nd and December 6th. The first time that we go out on 21st June is once more to Bacton Wood lock to continue with the restoration and refurbishing of the pontoon there and the clearance of a few more trees from Laurie's garden. It is too difficult to attempt to say where we will be further than that but there is a lot of work to be completed upstream of Bacton Wood and that we shall attend to as soon as is practical.*

Sue Boulton – Membership Secretary

Quagmire newsletters are now e-mailed to our members and this cuts down the cost of postage greatly as well as helping the environment! However, if you do change your e-mail address (or any other contact details) please let me know the changes as soon as possible by contacting me via our website.

Also, don't forget that a Trust membership is a nice present to give someone. Annually it's £10 for a single person or £15 for a family membership. It helps to save you thinking of what you can buy someone! If you know of someone who may benefit from a gift of membership, a membership form and a bank Standing Order Form are both available from the 'Membership' page of our website www.nwdct.org/membership.html



Have you ever wanted to 'follow' the Nth Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust on **Facebook** but have been cautious of social media? Our Facebook account uses social media to publish event photos adding a little more information than what's published to our website. Some Facebook supporters have posted their flora and fauna photos, some their canal travel photos of days gone by. We even take the odd FB enquiry to our Trustee meetings hopefully getting an answer from those that can provide the answer.

You may be wary of having a Facebook account but if you wish to take the bull by the horns and register *you can set* your 'Privacy Settings' to those in the image on the left confirming that you don't have to let the whole world read your posts! You can set your 'security settings' so that only your Facebook 'friends' can see your future posts.

The above image confirms that there are many ways of tightening down your security and privacy. If you like what the NWDC Trust is trying to achieve and don't wish to rely solely on the website for information please consider creating a Facebook account.

To date (02/07/2015) we're up to nearly 565 'likes' from people and groups from all around the world, this despite our Facebook account being only 24 months old.

Any enquiries please send an email to secretary@nwdct.org

Julie Kelleher – ICT Administrator & Sue Boulton – Membership Secretary

The Trust's website administrators would very much like to send a HUGE and grateful thank you to Darren at Broadland Computers for hosting our website www.nwdct.org and for his continued support.

Please see his website for other generous and discounted computer products www.broadlandcomputers.co.uk

2014 news and events in brief– complete reports are available on request

Since the last Quagmire Trustees have been very busy organising **events** including the open weekends, talks given to groups such as WI, coffee mornings, stands at organised events such as at Fairhaven Water Gardens and North Walsham Fun Day. Don't forget to make yourselves known to those of us manning stalls as we don't recognise all members by sight. Members are so valuable to the Trust and we love chatting to all of you about our common interest – **restoring our canal!**

Reports about these events usually appear on the website, often with accompanying photos so don't forget to keep checking on www.nwdct.org.

North Norfolk Classic Vehicle Club Canalside Walk

In April 2014 Ivan Cane, the EAWA Archivist led a walk along the Upper Canal for the North Norfolk Classic Vehicle Club, helped by members of the Trust. Around 20 people set off from Pigneys Wood car park in a sudden squall - but from then on the weather improved. The Group inspected the archaeological explorations at the two Swafield Locks, and then made their way down to Swafield skew bridge, admiring the recent work parties efforts on the uncovering of the Swafield Canal. Next they walked down to the Wherry Inn, noticing the various works on the way. Finally Bacton Wood Lock was thoroughly inspected. Returning to Pigneys Wood car park via Spa Common Bridge and the Bacton Wood millpond. An enjoyable morning's walk - which has opened the eyes of many to the Canal's potential as an important industrial archaeological asset to the County of Norfolk. As a result of the walk an article, by one of the participants, is to appear in the EDP Weekend supplement.

Footfall and User Survey

A survey was carried out at Ebridge Millpond on Sunday 31st August 2014

The results, which were interesting and at times surprising, are available in booklet form from Trust Officers.

Walking for the wounded

On 25th September 2014 Doug Hamilton Cox, a 70 year old ex sapper walked our canal as part of his challenge to walk all 2,500 miles of canals in the UK. He aims to raise £100,000 for wounded troops via Help for Heroes.

A full report is available on our website. www.nwdct.org/events.html for reports of year 2014

Canal Information Day 6th November 2014

An information day was held for the landowners, farmers and others adjacent to the upper third of the canal. Also invited were representatives of Parish Councils, NNDC, NCC, Environment Agency and other groups having a pertinent interest in the canal restoration. The day started with coffee and biscuits followed by a Power Point presentation given by Ivan Cane, EAWA archivist.

After the presentation guests were taken to various places along the canal from Swafeld locks nos.5&6 down to Briggate lock no.2. This was to show them what work has already been done to restore the canal, for example at Ebridge, and other work in progress to restore the bank heights. The almost completely restored lock at Bacton Wood (Spa Common) was visited to demonstrate the meticulous attention to detail, using correct materials such as lime mortar.

During a hot lunch provided by volunteers, guests chatted between themselves about what they had seen and heard in the morning which led to an informative question and answer session.

The day was viewed as a complete success and we will hold a similar event during 2015 for the lower sections of the canal, focusing on the tidal section below Honing lock no.1 and the canal up to Ebridge. Invitations will be sent in the near future.



Presentation and Information Evening

On November 20th 2014 we enjoyed another of Ivan Cane's superb Power Point presentations. Ivan always manages to make his presentations fresh and interesting and on the evening many people let us know how enjoyable and informative the presentation was. If you have been unable to come to one of Ivan's presentations we urge you to try and catch one in the future. Ivan has a very clear and often amusing way of telling us about the history of the canal, fading old pictures into new to graphically demonstrate the hard work that goes into

transforming overgrown areas into cleared places ready for restoration.

North Norfolk District Council – Corporate Peer Challenge

The North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust received an invitation from Sheila Oxtoby, Chief Executive of NNDC, to attend a meeting at their Cromer HQ on the 10th December 2014. The Trust was chosen to join a Focus Group which would meet with members of the Local Government Peer Challenge Team. The Peer Challenge Team had been invited by NNDC to spend three days with the council to assist them in developing capacity to deliver on their future priorities.

*The Focus Group comprised local business people and the Canal Trust, presumably as we represent a project which will enhance North Norfolk's tourism. The thrust of the meeting was aimed at discovering how well the NNDC was working to assist local businesses, promoting North Norfolk as a place to visit, and what could be done in the future to improve the experience of interaction with the council. The members of the focus group were made very welcome and as the meeting was independent of NNDC officers we were free to give our views. It was most positive and the inclusion of the Trust was seen as a useful addition. It was interesting that after the meeting was closed I was approached by the Peer Challenge members for a chat and then had a very positive conversation with one of the focus group, who had noticed a picture of Bacton Wood Lock in my folder. Another focus group member from a major building company has since emailed me offering help with the project. All told it was well worth the evening trip to Cromer as it will consolidate our position with the NNDC and has raised the canal restoration with another section of Norfolk's influential businesses. **Chris Black, Vice Chairman, NW&DCT***

Film Evening



A special evening on 14th May **2015** was presented by John 'Jonno' Parker. John comes along to most work parties carrying all his equipment over boggy areas, round fallen trees and through thickets of brambles, catching us unaware as we work. We were shown three films that John explained were not finished films like the ones he has put on to DVDs for us to sell. These were filmed during work parties and also during the hundreds of hours of work that Laurie and Jeremy have put in building up the banks on the stretch between Bacton Lock and Royston Bridge. He apologized that some of the sequences were 'long winded' but it gave us a sense of just how many tons of soil and how many hours of work were involved in building up those banks. The shots of the noisy bustle of lorries throwing up dust and diggers belching smoke were interspersed with tranquil sequences shot from a drone overhead, travelling up the canal, at present a bright green strip edged with bare earth but one day to become a ribbon of clear water. Mentioning no names, one person said that the sequence made them feel emotional and another said they had tears in their eyes. John will soon be preparing another DVD for the Trust which will include some of the sequences we saw on the film night. Perhaps one day there will be a film from one end of the canal to the other – many miles of beautiful canal.

Saving the wildlife



The Trust is very keen to retain as much flora and fauna which has made its home in the 'dry' sections of the canal. One such natural 'pond' has appeared just above Royston Bridge. In a recent **Environment Agency Biological Survey** prompted by the Trust the EA stated that this 'pond' in the winding hole has 'created a good quality pond, possibly of Bio-diversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Status'. The EA recognises that this pond is temporary and will be lost when the canal is re-watered. The Canal Company has begun to create a new pond nearby which will provide a new home for the creatures at present in the 'temporary pond'.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 30th July 2015 - **Coffee morning**: St Nicholas Room, Vicarage Street, Nth Walsham NR28 9DQ. 9am - midday. You're invited to our coffee morning enjoying home-made cake and helping to raise funds for the Trust. We'll hold a raffle and trustees will be available to answer any questions.

Tuesday 25th August 2015 – **Annual General Meeting** to be held at Honing Village Hall, NR28 9AB – 19:00 for a 19:30 start

Thursday 29th October 2015 - **Coffee morning**, St Nicholas Room, Vicarage St, North Walsham, NR28 9DQ. 9am – midday – another chance to enjoy coffee and cake whilst helping us raise funds.

Articles of interest to members:

Extract from "The Easterling", Volume 3, Number 3, Spring 1981

Letter from the Inland Waterways Association.

TONNAGE BRIDGE:

The County and District Councils are paying for the cost of a low-level plank footbridge to replace Tonnage Bridge. The Broads Authority are paying to have the above footbridge raised to full navigable height. The Countryside Commission are paying to have the above full height footbridge built as a full width accommodation bridge in the original style with period bricks, on condition that the footpaths on both banks are cleared and linked with the "Weavers Way". The Broads Authority have agreed verbally to put in a concealed reinforced deck to Tonnage Bridge to prevent any further possible collapse. The total funds available from all the above sources is £11,000.

The Broads Authority are undertaking full responsibility for the work. The Ramblers Association are undertaking footpath and towpath clearing. The IWA have agreed to be responsible for tree clearing and organising dredging where necessary. Work could start at the beginning of the new financial year, but in order not to disturb nesting birds work is in fact starting in early July.

The same issue also has a note about the sale of Dilham Broad and/or Broad Fen, Dilham. It is not clear if the two are the same or if they are completely different locations.

We are indebted to EAWA archivist **Ivan Cane** for once again providing us with the following two articles for this edition of the Quagmire – 'Sir William Cubitt' and 'The Bridges at Swafield'.

Sir William Cubitt

The Cubitt family name has been associated with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal throughout its history. One only has to read the maker's name on the moulded ironworks at the locks to find the first connection. It was E.G.Cubitt and G.Walker who bought the canal at the beginning of the 20th Century and established the North Walsham Canal Co. in 1921. Today, the name Sir William Cubitt, nationally, would normally be linked with his role as the Major-General commanding the Household Division, where, amongst other duties, he was the Senior Officer responsible for the Army's presence and activities in London, including the military part in State Ceremonies. More locally, we associate him as a Director, since 2004, of the North Walsham Canal Co. and one who has enabled the EAWA/NW&DCT work parties to clear Honing Staithe Cut, Briggate Millpond, and work on the two lower locks and their surroundings.



However, there is also another Sir William Cubitt who hailed from these parts. He was born at Dilham in 1785, the son of Joseph Cubitt, miller, and his wife Hannah. He went to Dilham village school, then moved to Southrepps, c1790 where he was employed at the mill from an early age. Joseph bought the Bacton Wood Mills c1801, and William joined him here in 1804 (aged 19), having spent four years apprenticed to James Lyon, a Stalham cabinet maker. Here, he constructed a machine for splitting hides, and around this time (1807) he also invented and patented a self-regulating windmill sail, charging £25 for use of the patent. This, after the expiration of the patent, became universally adopted!

He moved to Horning in 1807, setting up business as a millwright. William married Abigail Sparkhall (whose mother was a Cubitt), by whom he had a son, Joseph (who became a well-known railway engineer), and two daughters. In 1812 he entered into a contract with Ransome & Son, the principal ironfounding firm in Ipswich, becoming their chief engineer. His work here included designing and installing various iron bridges (including that at Clare in Suffolk and Witham in Essex, 1813-14) and improvements to the town docks and gas works. It was during this time that he was consulted by Norwich Merchants on ways to improve the navigation, for larger vessels of 100 tons, between Yarmouth and their city. His recommendation was to dredge a channel to the south of Breydon Water, and make other improvements. Once published in 1812, the proposals were objected to by the Yarmouth Corporation, who in turn asked John Rennie for advice. He stated that Cubitt's plans would lead to the silting of Yarmouth Harbour. Another invention of William's, at this time was the human treadmill for grinding corn, amongst other purposes. The idea was adopted by many prisons, as a way of keeping the inmates employed, with the first being built at Bury St Edmunds in 1819. However, his interest in canal engineering had not waned, and in January 1819, his report, proposing a canal from the Ipswich to Eye, was considered, with one other, at a meeting in Eye. William's plans included a tunnel through the hills at Mendlesham, but, at an estimated cost of over £100,000, it was considered too expensive. More successfully, Cubitt was responsible, at Ipswich, for the cutting of a new channel from the upper end of Lime Kiln Reach to the lower end of Hog Island Reach. It was also during this period that his friendship with Thomas Telford was formed, leading, in 1823, to William being invited to become a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, of which Telford was President.

His first wife died young, and William remarried in 1820, Elizabeth Jane Tiley of Reading. They had a son, William. This same year, William senior, was again asked by the Norwich Merchants to look at the feasibility of an alternative exit from the Yare to the sea at Lowestoft, which included a 2½ mile canal from Reedham to Haddiscoe on the Waveney and the building of a lock at Mutford. Yarmouth again objected, whereas, both Telford and James Walker supported the idea, stating that improving the navigation to Norwich would not affect Yarmouth. A bill was presented to Parliament in 1826, but was defeated, so, a second bill was presented. The argument that pilferage at Yarmouth, during transhipment to smaller vessels, would be reduced if sea-going vessels could reach Norwich by the new navigation, helped to get the Bill passed in 1827. William was the engineer, with the navigation fully opened in 1833.

In 1826 the Cubitt family moved to London, where William established a consultancy, and became an expert witness at many parliamentary inquiries, this included being a witness for George Stephenson on the feasibility of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway line crossing Chat Moss peat bog. During the late 1820's, his professional relationship with Thomas Telford strengthened.

Telford, at this time, had been involved with the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal (now called the Shropshire Union Main Line), which was the 'motorway' of the day, and built to compete with the new-fangled railways. Cubitt's involvement came during Telford's illness, as consultant, and upon Telford's recovery worked jointly with him. As such, William would have been aware of Thomas's plans for the London & Birmingham Junction Canal, which, if built, would, in conjunction with the B&LJ and improved BCN Main line, provide a water 'motorway' from London to Manchester and Liverpool, via Birmingham. Fly boats may well have completed the journey in three days. Needless to say, other canal companies objected, fearing loss of trade. However, it also encouraged them to examine ways of improving their own routes. The Oxford Canal Company decided to modernise and straighten the Northern Oxford, reducing the distance by over 14 miles. William was a consultant for this work, which included a proposal for a new link between the Coventry and Oxford Canals.

The continuing threat of the railways meant the 1830's were a busy time for William's consultancy from the various Canal Companies. In 1833, Haddiscoe Cut was opened, this same year William took over from the ailing Telford (now 75) as the main engineer for the B&LJC, with the Shelmore embankment a particular challenge, he also drew up plans for a Central Union Canal, later superseded by the plans for the London & Birmingham Canal. Although these ideas did not come to fruition, they stimulated the Grand Junction Canal to consider modernisation projects. Meantime, in Wales, the consultancy was involved with the building of the Bute Docks in Cardiff for the Glamorgan Canal and advising the Monmouthshire Canal proprietors. Further afield Cubitt succeeded Telford in 1834, working to modify John Killaly's plans for the Ulster Canal, and aiming for a cheaper scheme. More successful was William's appointment in 1835 as one of the Shannon Commissioners, advising on navigation and land drainage issues.

Back in Suffolk, the Stour Commissioners, in 1836, were concerned by the threat of competition from the proposed Eastern Counties Railway, and approached Cubitt for advice. He replied that 'The bill on the projected Eastern Counties Railway ...is too ruinous for even the gullibility of Englishmen'. He also averred that 'he can prove that heavy goods can be taken as cheap or cheaper from the various ports on the coast... and... the Liverpool & Manchester Railway [no longer carries heavy goods] as they find they do not pay for the wear and tear' (Boyes, *The Canals of Eastern England*, 1977, p84). However, the Stour Commissioners were unconvinced, and, on the recommendations of their own surveyor, constructed the two lock Wormingford Cut to eliminate a large loop on the river.

Despite his misgivings about the railways, he was involved with the London & Croydon Railway, which was partially built on the former Croydon Canal, and later was an instigator for the use of the Clegg-Samuda Atmospheric as the method of propulsion for the Epsom Branch. In 1837, William became Engineer-in-Chief for the South Eastern Railway, where he made his reputation six years later by using a charge of 18,000lb of gunpowder to blow down the face of Round Down Cliff, between Folkestone and Dover, constructing the railway along the beach and tunnelling through Shakespeare Cliff. In the late 1830's, his Central Union Canal proposal had been supplanted by the London and Birmingham Canal plans, but this scheme also faded away, following a meeting in his office in 1838. From this time, his involvement with water transport was mainly through recommendations for modernisation, rather than original routes.

In 1839 he was designing inclined planes for the Chard Canal in the southwest and developing Telford's plans for making the Faversham Creek navigable in the southeast. The next year saw him advising the Grand Junction Canal on how to cure the leaks on the Wendover Arm (later, following his advice, over two miles of the canal were lined with asphalt). Around this time he was also appointed engineer to the Severn Improvement Association, a group who were combating myriad vested interests, each with their own views on how that navigation should progress.

The 1840's marked the beginning of the railway mania, peaking in 1845. Many canal companies now turned their attention to the possibility of converting their channels to railways. For example the Eastern Branch of the Montgomeryshire Canal asked for his views. However, a fortnight later, they were bought out by the Ellesmere and Chester Canal Companies, and soon ended up as part of the new conglomerate of the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company with Cubitt, Robert Stephenson and William A. Provis appointed as engineers. William, however, retained his waterways consultancy. He had completed the development of Ellesmere Port in 1843, and, with James Elliot rebuilt Scots Float Sluice on the Eastern Rother in 1844. He was also advisor to the Weaver Navigation (1842-50) and gave advice on more than fifty tidal rivers and harbours. More locally, he had been asked, around 1846, for advice on the problematic drainage of the Holland and Black Sluice Fens. This work included consideration of the rivers Glen and Welland as possible solutions, but Cubitt recommended that the Black Sluice (South Forty Foot) should become the principal drain for the area. This included the building of the Black Sluice itself, at Boston, which incorporated a navigable lock. (The same lock that was 'restored' by the Environment Agency as part of the Fens Link in 2009). He continued his work on the Severn, recommending in 1847 a new lock at Tewkesbury.

However, his work as consulting engineer to the Great Northern Railway, with his son Joseph as chief engineer for the construction of the southern section, was perhaps his key project during the late 1840's. He became involved with the Great Exhibition of 1851, supporting Paxton's design for the Crystal Palace, supervising its construction in Hyde Park, for which he was knighted. Also in 1850 he had become President of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

Sir William's interests were not confined to the United Kingdom. He was consulted by the Hanoverian Government on the docks and harbour at Harburg, works for supplying water to Berlin, and on the Paris/ Lyons and the Boulogne/Amiens railways.

In 1858 he retired from his business, dying on 13th October 1861 aged 76, at home on Clapham Common.

So, what of Cubitt and the North Walsham & Dilham Canal? His father, Joseph, was living at Bacton Wood Mill when the Canal was promoted in 1811, and became one of its initial shareholders. William, by this time, was showing prowess with waterway engineering, having been involved with Ipswich docks and soon to be asked for suggestions for the improvement to the River Yare. Yet the three plans for the North Walsham & Dilham Canal were submitted by William Youard and John Millington (2) and not Cubitt. The eventual route chosen varied from Millington's original plans, one can only wonder whether Joseph asked his son for advice on the changes. After all Millington's original plans did not include provisions for the mills. It is known that Bacton Wood Mill underwent substantial modification around 1825 in anticipation

of an increase in trade following the building of the canal, so surely William had had some say, if not directly, then through his father. We will probably never know, however, as the history of our Norfolk Canal tells us little of what happened between 1811 and 1825.

As for Sir William Cubitt, he "was among the last surviving self-made engineers, and few men laboured more honestly and uprightly to obtain well-deserved eminence" Obituary - *Institution of Civil Engineers: Obituaries* 1862.

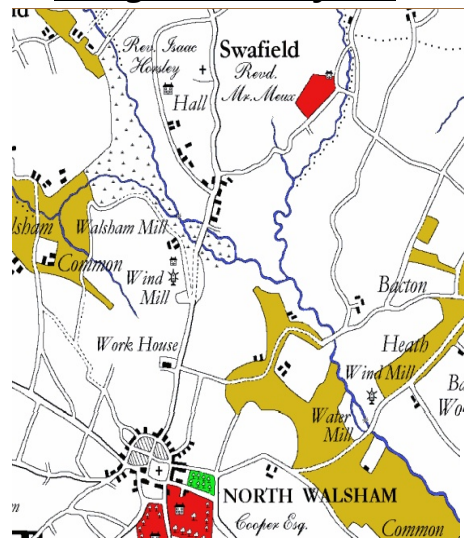
The 'other' Sir William Cubitt

The third William (1791-1863) was one of three brothers born at Buxton, all of whom became eminent engineers, mainly in the areas of construction and civil engineering. His older brother Thomas (1788-1855), developed much of Belgravia, Bloomsbury, Pimlico and Clapham Park, and built the east front of Buckingham Palace. His younger brother, Lewis (1799-1883), was the architect of King's Cross Station, whilst William's work varied from tendering for work to modernise the Grand Junction Canal, building much of the southern section of the London & Birmingham Railway, and acting as Lord Mayor of London 1860-1862.

Ivan Cane, January 2014

My thanks to Peter Brown, Alan Faulkner, Sir William Cubitt and Jonathon Neville for their help with this article.

Bridges at Swafield



A little while ago a question was posed about the Bridge over the Canal at Swafield, and why the River Ant notice on it had been moved. I promised to come back on that - so here goes.

We need to go back to the 1790's, when there was a watermill, called Walsham Mill at Swafield. This was fed by the small River Ant that flowed down from Antingham Ponds with its millstream continuing under the road and wending its way toward Bacton. A second stream also flowed through Swafield this was Bradfield Beck. From Faden's map of 1794, it looks as if the Beck joined the Ant above the Swafield Mill pond to increase the water for the mill, in which case there must have then been a weir, for the Beck then leaves the Ant, to flow through the village, under another bridge - rejoining the Ant 3 to 400 yards below the two bridges. A quarter of a mile or so further on, another stream (Please does anyone know its name?) comes to join it from the North at what is now Pigney's Wood. The stream continues under Austin (Royston) Bridge, later separating, with the northern arm going straight on to feed Bacton Wood Mill, and the southern arm, again presumably passing over a weir, following the present course of the Ant through the sewage works rejoining the mill stream at Spa Common Bridge.

When the North Walsham & Dilham Canal was built, its Act of Parliament allowed it to be fed by any waters within 1000 yards of its proposed route. This led to most of the streams being re-routed to allow the canal a water supply. From Antingham to the top of the Swafield Mill pond, the canal ran parallel to the River Ant (whose route can be traced as the old Parish Boundary). The Act also states that any junction with the River Ant has to be on the level, which it would have done at the level of Swafield Mill pond. The widened canal from the junction with the river up towards Bradfield Bridge would then have acted as an "improved" mill pond for the corn mill. The Canal then dropped by two locks, following the course of Bradfield Beck through the village, the Company building a fine skew bridge to accommodate the road. The Canal then bends ENE towards Pigney's then SE towards Austin Bridge. The Ant is still to the south and passed under the Bacton road to the South of the Wherry Inn, runs alongside the canal about 400 yards down, where the Canal Co built a spillway, then is joined by the stream from Pigney's wood - which has been diverted along the eastern soke dyke and passes under the canal in a culvert. Around here would have been the original cut for Bacton Wood Mill, which the Canal then utilised, again widening to improve the amount of water in the millpond for Bacton Wood Mill. Meanwhile the Ant continued through a lake, which had a boathouse, to rejoin the Canal on the LEVEL now above Spa Common Bridge.

So the answer to the question about the Swafeld Bridges is that the northern one was originally for Bradfield Beck, and later rebuilt for the NW&D Canal, the southern one - which seems "up the hill" is the original? bridge over the River Ant, acting here as the millstream to the Corn Mill.

This link

<http://www.fadensmapofnorfolk.co.uk/mapBrowserNew.asp?TileId=25&XCoord=457&YCoord=122&Zoom=1>

shows a brilliant digital representation of the 1790's Faden Map, whilst the Tithe and First Edition of the Ordnance Survey maps can be superimposed over the modern OS map on:

<http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk/mapexplorer/>

I hope this helps to untangle the web of Swafeld's Bridge and explain why the River Ant notice should, if not already been fixed, attached to the southern of the two Bridges.

Ivan Cane

And finally.....

The next issue of the Quagmire will be sent three weeks before the AGM, which is to be held on Tuesday 25th August starting at 7.30 in Honing Village Hall and will include the AGM agenda.