



# Quagmire

The Newsletter of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust

Autumn 2015

Contact: [mdablack@btinternet.com](mailto:mdablack@btinternet.com)

## Recent Events

### *St Nicholas Room, North Walsham 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015*

The Trust held a coffee morning and information event for the second time at this venue. Visitors enjoyed home-made cakes and scones whilst helping to raise funds for the Trust. We plan to hold another of these popular coffee mornings in October – see the ‘Dates for your Diary’ item below.

### *Information Centre, North Walsham 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> August*

The Trust stand was manned by various Trustees and they have reported that there was a lot of genuine interest shown in the canal. It is surprising that some residents of North Walsham still do not know that there is a canal in their vicinity! Several signatures were added to our petition.

### *Market Place North Walsham 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> September*

The Trust was represented during the Heritage Open Days and again lots of interest was shown with several books about the canal purchased.

In 2016 we hope to hold our regular open weekend to coincide with the Heritage Open Days, thereby taking advantage of free publicity.

### *Honing Village Hall 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015*

The North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust AGM was held in this very well appointed and comfortable Hall. After the business of the meeting, members chatted with the Trustees and Officers and enjoyed tea, coffee and cakes. Thanks go to everyone who brought items for the raffle and to those who gave a donation for the refreshments.

The Chairman’s report is included here:

#### **Chairman’s Report 2015**

Firstly, I thank you all once again for attending and for giving your time to support the Trust. I also welcome for the first time our new Secretary, Helen Drury. Excellent work is still on-going by our work parties. Their efforts are being recognised by the members of the public, visitors and walkers, especially at Ebridge Mill. Once again my thanks must go to David Revill, Chris Black and their team of volunteers for their efforts and successes in bringing the Canal back into use for the enjoyment of many.

The increase in the flora and fauna at the various sites on the Canal is evidence that we have the balance right and with the help of our supporters we can only go forward. Swans have again nested at Ebridge, and reports of sightings of water voles, otters, egrets, kingfishers are being reported. For the anglers amongst you, there are quality fish at Ebridge including Rudd,

Roach and Pike. Fishing is by the kind permission of Laurie Ashton. An E.A Fishing Licence is required and the Close Season does apply to the Canal, exactly the same as for rivers. We now have a new Wildlife Officer, Perry Hampson and I am pleased to welcome him here today. My thanks go to Brian Wexler, our former Wildlife Officer who has stepped down after many years to younger blood.

Once again we held an "Information Day" at Ebridge over the weekend of 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> June which was again a great success, with much interest shown from visitors from all around, with many positive comments and reminiscences of times past on the Canal.

The Trust has also been present at many other venues during the year.

As many of you may now be aware, we now have our own Web Site and are also on Facebook. For this my thanks go to Julie Kelleher and Sue Boulton for setting this up and running it.

Membership continues to be steady and is in the capable hands of our Membership Secretary Sue Boulton.

My thanks also go to our Treasurer who sees that we are kept solvent.

Once again, many thanks for your attendance here this evening and trust you enjoy the rest of the meeting.

Roy Medcalf  
(Chairman)

### ***From Trustees and Officers:***

***David Revill – Work Party Organiser & Press Officer***

***01603 738648***

The Stop Notice applied by the EA in 2012 to the owner of this part of the canal, is still in place. The reasons for issuing this notice have been shown now to be unproven as far as 'destroying nature' is concerned. Our new Wildlife Officer for the Trust has already counted up to 65 types of birds in the areas above Ebridge Lock and Millpond together with a large number of butterflies and moths. The vole population is also growing, he states. The fact that a large number of fish are being seen and caught in the Ebridge pound shows that the bed of the canal must be supporting invertebrates to feed the fish.

However, talks are continuously being held with the EA and we have now lodged a 'plan' with them, at their request, which is now being considered. There are, of course, some points which 'need' to be explained and expanded upon to prove that we have considered all facets of the plan and adjusted to suit the EA's whims.

Work on the ground continues and is progressing well. Some of the banks upstream of the Bacton Wood Lock and Mill are now rebuilt up to the required height whilst others are being working upon. It is hoped to allow water to return to this stretch in phases – up to the first bund to check on the suitability of the structures and the integrity of them, and so on.

We have been so busy on this upper stretch of the canal that no further work has been possible on the areas around Briggate and Honing Locks. Apart from the one-time access to the pound between Honing Lock and Honing Staithe Cut, we have not had permission to operate on the canal sections between Ebridge Lock and the southern end of the canal. Public interest in the canal is still growing and talks and demonstrations are being held in most months of the year.

The Trust also thanks the EAWA for its continued support both financially and in print.

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*Perry Hampson – Wildlife Officer*

## National Moth Night 2015

Amongst my widely-varied wildlife interests, Moths feature pretty highly on the list. I have been recording moths since 1997, and have so far personally amassed about 25,000 records.

In 1999, an annual scheme was set up, organised by Atropos and Butterfly Conservation in association with the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology.

Moth Night is the annual celebration of moth recording throughout Britain and Ireland by enthusiasts with local events aimed at raising awareness of moths among the general public.

I quote from the Moth Night website with the kind permission of Les Hill:

**"Every year Moth Night has a theme, although recorders are always welcome and encouraged to do their own thing. The main theme for 2015 is Migration. Also for this year we have an additional theme, sugaring, which can be either using traditional 'sugar' or the more recent alternative of 'wine roping'. Details of which may be found on the Recording Techniques page.**

**Events are confined to the warmest months and each event will last for three consecutive nights (Thursday – Saturday) and the event will take place on different date periods every year. Recording can take place on any one or more of these days or nights."**

National Moth Night 2015 was spread over three nights; 10th, 11th and 12th September. As I only took post a few short weeks ago, and the fact that I had a holiday abroad 'getting in the way', I was not able to arrange a Moth Night Event which other members and guests could have attended.

The following is a brief summary of my 2015 National Moth Night trap results:

### **Thursday 10th September 2015:**

A single 125 watt Mercury Vapour Skinner Trap was run on the western side of the section of canal about half way between Bacton Wood Mill Lock and the Bacton Road Bridge between 20:00 hrs and 00:25 hrs. The weather was fine with clear skies and a fresh easterly breeze. The temperature did not drop any lower than 12.3 degrees C, although a heavy dew formed as the night wore on. There was no mist. Apart from distant passing traffic, no other artificial lights were visible at the chosen site.

This 'dry' section of the canal is bordered by marshy ground, reedbeds and woodland. During the session, a loud buzzing was heard emanating from the trap. On investigation, I found one large and rather angry Hornet, *Vespa crabro*, which was potentially bad news as often they will come to a trap in numbers if it's anywhere near their nest. Fortunately, this one turned out to be a loner, and although I released it, (three times), it simply did a U-turn and dived straight back into the trap! In the end, I had to catch it and keep it in a small container so that I could release it after the trap light was turned off.



The highlight of the night for me was the logging of a moth called a **Vestal**.

It is a migrant and comes to this country in varying numbers most years. I have been moth trapping for quite a few years and have never logged one before - anywhere - so to get one at the Canal was a real treat. It has no real significance for the canal wildlife list as such, because being a migrant, it can turn up literally anywhere, but it's a lovely record to have.

A few of the other more spectacular-looking moths were:



**Burnished Brass**



**Centre-barred Sallow**



**Frosted Orange**



**Red Underwing**

**The final tally for the night was 170 moths of 38 species**

### **Friday 11th September 2015:**

The same trap as was used the previous night was run on the western side of the section of canal about 300 metres north of Ebridge Mill. This watered section of the canal has produced some of the Broads specialist species in the past, such as The Crescent. I set up and had the trap operating just before 20:00 hrs. I planned to stay until about 01:30 hrs. The night started well. The cool breeze had dropped and the temperature was in the mid-teens C. Unfortunately this didn't last. By 21:48 hrs, the temperature was down to 8.4 degrees C and almost all the moths had ceased flying. Nothing is usually difficult once the temperature gets down into single figures. With the cooler temperatures came the very heavy dew. I was soaked and all my kit was running with water. Not fun when you are operating a trap from a 240 volt AC supply.

As there was nothing flying, I decided to cut my losses. It wasn't worth using the fuel for the generator. So at 23:40 hrs I opened the trap to identify and count the catch. It didn't take long!



There was a small selection of nice species though, with **Brindled Green**, **Rosy Rustic**, Bulrush Wainscot, Setaceous Hebrew Character, Beautiful China-mark and Snout all represented.

**Brindled Green**



**Rosy Rustic**

**The final tally for the night was 43 moths of 20 species.**

That's only about 25% of the catch the previous night, and about 50% of the number of species. Pretty poor, but still an enjoyable evening. There's nothing quite like sitting on one's own in the middle of a field getting soaking wet, staring at a lightbulb for hours at a time!

A full list of the moths caught is available should anyone want it. You can contact me on [perryhampson@gmail.com](mailto:perryhampson@gmail.com).



Trapping at Ebridge



The kit

## National Moth Night 2016

### A Date For Your Diary?

Next year the event will take place over the **9th, 10th and 11th June 2016**. The theme for 2016 is **Hawk-moths**. For those of you that are unaware, the Hawk-moths are some of our largest and most colourful moths. Some are absolutely spectacular. Being large, comparatively heavy moths, they are not too skittish and are easily handled. I have been at several moth evenings where children have walked proudly around with hawk-moths sitting on their fingers like tame budgies, or wearing them on the front of their jackets like brooches! The moths do eventually depart when they've had enough of being the centre of attention though.

All being well, and providing a safe location that can accommodate sufficient numbers of people can be found close to the canal, I intend to run a Moth Night event over the above mentioned week-end in June 2016. Further details will be provided closer to the date.

The area surrounding the canal is very interesting from a wildlife point of view because it is made up of so many different habitats. For example, we have reed bed, marsh, woodland, open grassland and the margins of the canal itself, so there will be a good variety of moths living there at different times of the year.

If you have been to a moth night event before, I'm sure you will want to go to another one. If you haven't, then I hope you will take the opportunity to attend to see some of the wonderful species of moths that we have in this area. Just one warning though; it can become expensive! Try it once and you'll want your own moth trap, field guide books and all the other paraphernalia that goes with it. You'll then find yourself sitting alone out in the middle of a field or piece of woodland for more than half the night..... Don't say you haven't been warned. It can become highly addictive. Of course, you can always run a trap in your garden. That way you get to stay indoors and even go to bed before checking the trap in the morning!

For more information, please visit the following links:

[www.mothnight.info](http://www.mothnight.info) [www.atropos.info](http://www.atropos.info) [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)

*The information about Perry's planned Moth Night 2016 will appear again in the spring Quagmire*



## **Your Wildlife Officer needs your help!**

Are you knowledgeable when it comes to identifying our native plants?

I'm ashamed to say that I struggle to get much further than Stinging Nettle and Silver Birch - and I'm not too sure of the latter!

Now that might be a slight exaggeration, but it's not far off the mark.

As some of you might be aware, in my role as Wildlife Officer for the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust, I have undertaken the huge task of trying to find and identify as much of the wildlife in the vicinity of the canal as I can. This will provide the Trust with good information to use against those who say that wildlife is being adversely affected by the work that is being carried out along the canal. Information is power.

Whilst I am happy to try to identify most things myself - sometimes with a little help from my various on-line wildlife friends - I'm really stuck on plants.

I know I could spend hours along the canal with a field guide trying to identify plants, but as I don't know the terminology used to identify the various features, it would take me far more time than I have available to identify a plant and I may then still not be correct.

Incorrect identification is worse than no identification at all. Ask me where I can find trichobothria on a spider's leg or a hoverfly's wing, and I'm perfectly happy to tell you, but ask me what a bract is (I had to look that plant-related term up!) and I wouldn't have a clue. So, what I'm looking for is the assistance of someone who is able to wander along the canal with me occasionally, ideally during the spring, summer and autumn, to point out the species that they can reliably identify so that I can record them on my database.

As plants are food sources for many insects, it will be useful to know where various plants grow, to assist in finding, for example, moth caterpillars, at the appropriate time of year.

If more than one person can help, then even better!

If you have sufficient plant knowledge and feel you could help, please let me know so that we can sort out a suitable date to make a start.

Thank you.

Perry Hampson

Wildlife Officer NW&DCT

## ***Sue Boulton – Membership Secretary***

Thank you to members who have given me email addresses so that more newsletters can be sent without paying postage. The Trust needs to save money wherever possible.

There will soon be exciting news about additions to our range of items for sale. We are using photographs taken on the canal by our wildlife officer, Perry to produce greetings cards and other gift items. Keep checking our website for details.

## Queries and Questions!

1) What is the meaning of the term **riparian ownership** and how does it apply to the canal?

The following information about **riparian ownership** is taken from the Environment Agency's publication "Living on the Edge" 5th Edition 2014.

From page 7:

- If your land boundary is next to a watercourse it is assumed you own the land up to the centre of the watercourse, **unless it is owned by someone else.**
- Occasionally a watercourse, **especially an artificial one, will be the responsibility of a third party.** This should be noted in your deeds. (Editor's emphasis.)

From page 8:

- You should keep the banks clear of anything that could cause an obstruction and increase flood risk, either on your land or downstream if it is washed away. You are responsible for maintaining the bed and banks of the watercourse and the trees and shrubs growing on the banks.

Owners of land adjacent to the banks and backsokes of the NW&D canal do not need to worry about any of the above as this canal, including the towing-paths, banks and side drains, is privately owned and the owners' duties and responsibilities are laid down in the Act of Parliament (1812). ***It is the owners of the canal who have the responsibilities of riparian ownership under common law.***

2) Who owns the banks of the canal?

According to the 1812 Act of Parliament which authorised the construction and maintenance of the NW&D canal from Antingham to near Wayford Bridge, the owners of such canal own the banks and backsokes together with the water element of the canal.

Unlike the majority of the canals in the UK, this canal was not taken into public ownership and at present is owned by two private owners and two limited companies. The upper, officially abandoned section at Swafield is privately owned. From below Swafield to below Ebridge lock is owned by the Old Canal Co. Ltd. and from there to 20m below Honing lock is owned by the North Walsham Canal Co. Ltd. Below that the canal is privately owned.  
Chris Black & David Revill.

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The Trust is frequently asked whether the NW&D canal has **towpaths**.

*There was a **towpath** the whole length of the NW&D canal which changed sides at each pound. Horses were never used on this canal so if there was insufficient wind to sail the wherries, men would hale the wherries along with ropes.*

*It should be noted there is no public right of way along the banks of the canal except where the canal owners have given permissive access or where a public footpath exists on the bank.*

Chris Black, Vice Chairman.

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### **Items of interest to members:**

David Revill sends emails to **work party volunteers** keeping them informed of forthcoming dates and venues. After work parties he sends the report about work that was undertaken.

Alan Bartrum sends **photos** of the work parties to a list of people who have requested them.

These two lists probably need up-dating so **if you would like to be added or removed** from either of these lists please let us know at [secretary@nwdct.org](mailto:secretary@nwdct.org).

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*Someone who had been researching her family found that an ancestor had owned **shares in the canal**. She asked via our Facebook page for further information and a reply was sent to her. The following extract from that reply may be of interest to members:*

In 1866, an Act was passed that enabled the proprietors to sell the canal. This power was not, in fact, exercised until 17th December 1885, when notice was given of the sale to Edward Press. The canal was sold for £600 on 16th March 1886, well below its value of £29,300 in 1824!

By this time only the ownership of only 446 shares out of the original 586 were known. The £600 should have been distributed to the known shareholders in proportion to their holdings. The job of distributing the money was given to James Turner, a solicitor and the principal clerk of Golden Square. He paid out the monies owing for 55 shares - then absconded with the rest - never to be seen again! At first the five proprietors, including Edward Press considered themselves to be morally bound to reimburse the money, but as none of the shareholders made a claim - they had second thoughts, and made no repayments. They then had a change of mind nine years later, after the canal had paid a dividend, and subscribed enough for the repayments to be completed in 1896.

This information is sourced from Boyes & Russell's Canals of Eastern England, David & Charles 1977. And they reference Manuscript 4441 in the Norfolk & Norwich Record Office. Hopefully it survived the fire!

**Ivan Cane**

**East Anglian Waterways Association's Archivist for the North Walsham & Dilham Canal records.**

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**Ivan Cane** gives presentations about our canal to various interest groups, as demonstrated by his forthcoming programme, all entitled 'The North Walsham & Dilham Canal 1826 – 2016'.

Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	Fakenham Men's Probus
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	Norwich Engineering Society
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2016	Norfolk Industrial Archaeology Society
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	North Walsham University of the Third Age
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	Pulham Market Society
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov 2016	Briston Wives Group NW&DC

Other planned talks to interest groups include:

17<sup>th</sup> October to delegates of WEA to be given by Roger Hopkinson

21<sup>st</sup> October W.I. at Cantley Village Hall by Chris & Mary Black

16<sup>th</sup> November United Reform Church Norwich by Chris & Mary Black

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**David Revill, work party organiser:**

*We thank Tom Carr for sending the following quite explicit article about going on a work party. It should be noted that the Trust provides most of the equipment needed, but bringing your own tools of choice is also welcomed!*

**Garb and Gear by Tom Carr**

The first work party I joined was a hit and miss affair so far as knowing what to wear and what to bring. Now that I have been several times I can pass on a few tips. Bear in mind that the list of clothing and safety wear has to take account of the situation of the proposed work site, the type of work and the weather.

**Garb.**

Wearing day-glo jackets is sensible where there is a potential conflict with moving vehicles or machinery. They also help to advertise the work party's presence for late comers uncertain of the rendezvous. They can however get a bit sweaty and are more easily damaged by the sparks close to bonfires.

Donkey type jackets with waterproof shoulders/yokes are as good.

As for trousers most of gardening quality will do but they must be thick enough to deal with the brambles.

Depending on the task a pair of shin pads can be useful body armour against falling logs and tripping hazards.

Lined supple leather gloves with elasticated wrists, safety spectacles and a hat almost complete the wardrobe.

The choice of footwear is very much determined by the task in hand. Where gumboots, waders or chest waders are not required choose steel capped lace-up boots to cover the ankles. Heavy shoes are not enough to keep out the burs, teasels and thorns

and give poor support when working on sloping banks.

**Gear.**

The minimum for dry bank sites is a large bow saw, a sickle or short scythe and a panga/slasher.

Long handled pruners can be very useful when setting brash into tidy piles when following the work of the chain saws. The use of chain saws requires training and a certificate so if you own a chain saw the Trust will help with the cost of obtaining a qualification.

Garden forks or turnip forks can be useful when used like pitch forks to pile reed cuttings on the banks.

Rigid garden rakes tend to have handles that are too short but as with all hand implements the longer the handle the less wieldy the tool, but bring a garden rake if you have one.

On some days, after prior warning, the work has only required wheel barrows and shovels.

On some days most of the contents of a large garden shed is being barrowed from car park to site.

Later this list may have to include a buoyancy aid, elbow length rubber gloves bricklayers trowels and when the working in the lock chambers hard hats, provided by the Trust, will be required but are provided by the Trust.

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### **Dates for your diary**

**Thursday 29th October 2015**. Join us for a coffee morning, St Nicholas Room, Vicarage St, North Walsham, NR28 9DQ. 09:00 –12.30. Come and support us whilst enjoying coffee, scones and cake. Our impressive photo files and display banners will demonstrate the work of the volunteers and their efforts to restore this unique canal.

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*The Quagmire is a newsletter for all members of NW&DCT and members are encouraged to make suggestions for future items.*

*The deadline for items for inclusion in the Winter Quagmire (at the Trustees' discretion) is during the first week of January 2016. Contact [mdablack@btinternet.com](mailto:mdablack@btinternet.com)*



Perry managed to catch a photo of this water vole carrying a young one across the canal.  
A rather nice rebuttal to those who tell us we are destroying wildlife on the canal!