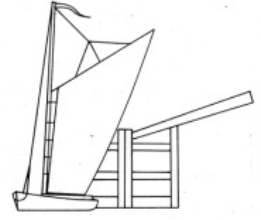


Quagmire

The Winter 2018/19 newsletter of
The North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust
Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation No 1180474

Working to secure Norfolk's Canal Heritage



Membership@nwdct.org

Workparty@nwdct.org

Secretary@nwdct.org

News...

The exciting news that the Trust has gained **CIO status** arrived just days before the AGM. Ivan Cane, Chairman, expressed the hope that the next ten years as a CIO will be as successful as those of the Trust since its inauguration on 30th January 2008. He thanked everyone, past and present who has worked and supported the Trust during those ten years, adding 'may their aspirations be the foundations for the next ten'. (See Nigel Lloyd's item on CIO status elsewhere in this newsletter.)

The Trust welcomes two new members to the Trust team, **Suki Pryce** as a **volunteer plant surveyor** and **Sue Kirrage**, **Education Officer**.



Suki has a background in horticulture and landscape management, but is now mainly interested in wild plants. She is a keen member of the Norfolk Flora Group, and a volunteer plant and habitat surveyor with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and is now pleased to help the Canal Trust identify and manage the flora along the Canal.

Sue Kirrage's career as a teacher and head teacher has been dedicated to specialist education for some of the more vulnerable pupils in Norfolk. Sue has a wide range of interests and hobbies and also volunteers with Friends of Horsey Seals and values our local wildlife and environment. She aims to help promote opportunities for engagement and learning for young people around the activities of restoring, appreciating, maintaining, enjoying and securing the future of the Canal.



Recent Events

Tuesday 27th November 2018 - The North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust **AGM**. This proved a very good opportunity for members to learn what has been happening during the last year and also hear of future intentions. There was an enthusiastic buzz in the hall with members mingling with Trustees and Officers, asking questions, looking at photos and displays, eating cake and, in the case of two kind souls, helping with the washing-up! **Ivan Cane - Chair** presented his report in a visual format which was well received. Some of his remarks are included here:

...the Trust's work volunteer force is becoming overstretched as there is so much to do, physically, along the whole Canal. **We need more volunteers at the canal face**, such as **Work Party Leaders** to take responsibility for specific areas, e.g. completion of Bacton Wood Lock, Purdy's Marsh, Honing Staithe maintenance parties, aquatic weed management and restoration of Ebridge/Briggate locks. And we need a **Work Party Co-ordinator** to bring the various aspects together into a "plan". Chris Heath did sterling work during his tenure as temporary WPO to bring paper order to the process – and it's all ready and in good order for a WP Co-ordinator to take over. Volunteers Welcome

We have still not found a **Wildlife Officer** to replace Perry who was such an asset to the Trust but sadly could not continue in the role owing to medical reasons. I would like someone to volunteer to be a **Ranger** to represent users of the towpaths and canal walks. We will miss our **Events co-ordinator**, Jane, for her tireless efforts supporting the various activities over the past 15 months and we still someone to take on the role.

On the more mundane side of the Trust's work, but equally important, there are often working **meetings held at houses, on site, by telephone or email**. Many hours have been spent pouring over the CIO application, grant applications, policies, mitigation and management plans, financial recording, plans, maps and the computer. My thanks to our Vice Chair and Administrator for achieving our CIO conversion; to them and Mark for the grant applications from the local Council and Hike Norfolk to the Big Society and EU LEADER.

Our "Land Agent" has spent hours researching boundaries, water abstractions, land ownerships and other official papers. Tom C and I spent a very worthwhile day at the National Records Office, at Kew, searching tithe records. This led to the discovery of Board of Trade papers on the Canal at the time of the Press sales – which I will need to return to, in my Archivist role at a later date. On the Archive side we were able to purchase the 65+ documents from 1811/2 and 1825/6 at a Cheffins Auction (with EAWA funding) earlier in the year.

David Revill in his new role as Liaison Officer has held site meetings with IDB, NCC and others to discuss the "hole" at Ebridge; with the NCC Environment Manager to look at egress from the north end of Footpath 19 at Royston spillway, and the raising of the Paston Way footbridge plus the local canal owners. The Trustees and Officers have met, formally on seven occasions during the last year – kept to order by our Meetings Secretary, Graham E. My thanks to all these stalwarts for their hours of hidden work.

On the Canal front there have been some gains and some losses. Bindwell's investments on the **Lower Canal** have led to the successful Canal Camping venture by Dee(p) Bridge, and the opportunity for more canoeists from further afield to enjoy the Canal down to the Junction. The Honesty Toll Box has encouraged users to venture up from the River Ant and Smallburgh River and Graham Pressman and I were pleased to pull in and make our contribution as we travelled in the tug, John Henry, up to the East Ruston Junction (well almost). Sadly, Bank's Hire craft no longer use the Lower Canal. Bindwell's new Glamping Pods start life on December 1st, and we look forward to them bringing more craft to the waterway.

Following several meetings between the Trust's officers and Sir William Cubitt, on behalf of the NWCCo., **work-parties have returned, after some six years, to Honing Staithe Cut, the Honing Staithe Canal Walk and Briggate Millpond**. Nature's succession has presented the Trust's volunteers with a huge backlog of work, which is being tackled with both Sunday and weekday work parties. Briggate Millpond is also the area where our new generation of volunteers, Year 9 NW High School Duke of Edinburgh Bronze youngsters have started their Community work as part of their Award.

The Old Canal Company has faced some harsh setbacks this year with the adverse Land registry judgments over canal towpaths at Muckle Farm and the Old Dry dock at Royston Bridge. This has led to a change of emphasis on the balance of work being undertaken by the OCC and the Trust. The OCC's main concentration is on the return of waters to the section above Bacton Wood Mill, following the successful trial watering, well covered by the BBC Look East TV crew, in January 2018. Most of this work involves bank raising and levelling. The Trust has taken over much of the responsibility for the maintenance of the Ebridge Reach and locks. This work has included reed clearance on the slipway, which itself was not completed until autumn 2017, raising some of the lower bank levels, and work on the top gates at Bacton Wood Lock. The Trust is also seeking grant aid for canal and bank maintenance machinery and new top gates for Ebridge. At this point we also need to express our thanks, once again to Cliffy and his family for all the work and hours that they expend on keeping the banks, walks, towing paths and channels clear over the past year or so. We are also working with the Environment Agency, to produce a mitigation plan for the Canal that will lead to the removal of that "Stop Notice".

We must not forget that this huge community asset would not be here if it was not for the enormous financial input, dedication, and hours/days/years of physical work that the Ashtons, Laurie and Julie, have put into their stretch of Canal, since purchase in 2009/10. **There is nowhere else in the country where private individuals have invested so much in the restoration of a privately owned canal**. We are indebted to their vision and enthusiasm – despite all that is thrown at them. We mustn't forget that without their Canal, the Trust would have little to work with. *Taken from Ivan's AGM report.*

Nigel Lloyd – Trust Administrator

In October, the NWDCT was granted **Charitable Incorporated Status** by Her Majesty's Charity Commission. This news narrowly missed the editor's deadline for inclusion in the autumn edition of Quagmire. In the background and away from the cut and thrust of day to day restoration of the canal, a few members of NWDCT had been working throughout the year in front of computer screens to prepare a suite of documents to present to the Charity Commission to support our application for the NWDCT to gain



Charitable Incorporated Status (CIO). We are delighted to report that our application was successful. The Certificate is shown on the left. So, what does becoming a CIO mean for the North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust? It's not so easy to avoid legal speak but I will do my best.

Charitable Incorporated Organisations or CIO's are a relatively new legal structure available for charities or charitable groups that wish to be incorporated. This vehicle was chosen instead of registering the charity and then as a company as well (known as a limited company by guarantee with charitable purpose) CIOs have been designed specifically for charities, allowing them to register just once with the Charity Commission as an incorporated form of charity, which is not a company. Therefore cutting out the need to register with and report to Companies House.

A reduced administrative burden is just one of the benefits of becoming a CIO. In addition to this, the CIO would have its own legal personality and so can enter into contracts in its own right rather than in the name of individual trustees. Trustees will also have limited liability.

CIO members still have key rights in law and under the Constitution and Trustees are still responsible for managing the organisation (note that Trustees for CIOs will only be Trustees, they will not have the dual role of Company Director).

In short, the advantages of the NWDCT operating under CIO status are as follows:

- The CIO is a separate legal entity and so it can enter contracts, hold property and employ staff in its own name. Consequently, any liabilities arising from the entry into such arrangement fall on the organisation itself rather than the trustees.
- Trustees of CIO's benefit from limited liability, which is limited to the amount they have invested in the CIO (ie nothing) or have guaranteed upon the winding up of the CIO.
- A CIO is automatically given a registered charity number which facilitates correspondence with HMRC on charitable tax advantages and also serves to reassure potential funders and donors.
- CIO's do not need to register with Companies House and only need to be registered with the Charity Commission (CC). As a result, CIO's are not required to file information at Companies House but file information with the CC, for which no charge is applied.
- The reporting and accounting requirements in the Companies Act 2006 do not apply to CIOs, charity law applies instead. CIOs are only required to report to and file accounts, an annual return and other documents with the CC.
- CIO's which have a gross income of less than £250,000 in any financial year may use the simpler receipts and payments basis to prepare its accounts.
- There is no minimum registration financial threshold to register a CIO.

In other news, it was resolved at the general meeting held on 27th November 2018 that a 'Steering Group' be formed to document and agree the priorities of the Trust. The inaugural meeting was held in December and a report will come before Trustees at the next general meeting on 29th January 2019.

North Walsham Town Council was successful in their bid for a £100,000 grant from NNDC under the Market Town Initiative, which seeks to promote the town centre for growth and tourism. Part of these funds has been allocated to create a series of circular walks from the town centre to various sections of the canal between Ebridge and Swafield. Finger post walking person signage and some brown tourist road signage are proposed when the exact routes are agreed. Some complications are arising due to the fluid nature of works along the canal and ownership issues. However, it is hoped that these can be resolved so that these new pathways can act to further promote the canal as a community amenity for all to enjoy.

Nigel Lloyd - NWDCT Administrator

Andrea Lamyman – Membership Secretary

As with many other organisations, the GDPR regulations have led to losing 50 or so members, as people haven't responded. However, we still have 257 on the books, generating £2,120 in subscriptions and £794 in donations. My next major exercise is to encourage gift aid contributions, now that we are a registered charity.

Taken from Andrea Lamyman's AGM report

Chris Black – Vice Chair

Funding bid for new top gates on Ebridge Lock

Many of you will be aware the top gates on Ebridge Lock are bolstered by concrete sandbags, which were placed there by Norfolk County Council in the 1960's, nearly 60 years ago. They are deteriorating and should they fail we will lose the water from the Ebridge pound and all the amenities enjoyed by so many will be lost.

The answer to this is to fund the provision of a new set of lock gates and associated remedial work costing in the region of £28,000

Ivan Cane, our Trust Chair, was made aware of the possibility of putting forward an application for the **last tranche of EU funding from the LEADER programme**. An Expression of Interest form was submitted, and accepted in mid October. We were then invited to submit a Full Application with a deadline of 16th Nov for the electronic copy and midnight on the 19th November for the hard copy.

Before we could start working on the Application a meeting with our LEADER support person had to take place and was scheduled for the 1st Nov. We met at Ebridge and she explained how we must approach the Application to give us the best chance of success. It then left us only 15 days until the first deadline.

Whilst the Application form looked relatively easy to complete it soon became obvious that it wasn't. Ivan, Mark Shopland and I were all involved in completing this difficult form and its associated attachments. I spent around 90 hours on this Application, helped greatly by Mary typing out the online form. As for Ivan and Mark, I suspect that a lot of midnight oil was burnt.

That said we met the 16th Nov midnight deadline for submission of the online Application, but only after Mark had come over to rescue me when I found that my computer wouldn't attach the Excel sheets to the Word document. It was submitted at 20.45, phew!

The hard copy of the Application was completed over the following weekend and delivered by hand to County Hall, thus making the deadline for that.

However, a week before Christmas I received a telephone call asking for explanations of some parts of our application. This resulted in more full days of work for Ivan and me, and we have been warned that there may be more queries to come!

It is now a waiting game. The Application will be put before the Local Action Group (LAG) for consideration in Feb 2019 and hopefully approval!

Chris Black – Vice Chair

Mark Shopland – Grants Officer

New Notice Boards



We have been lucky to get donations from Interconnector (UK) Ltd, North Walsham Town Council and Hike Norfolk to cover the cost of new notice boards.

The plan is to use them to display information about the Trust, to encourage participation and to publicise events and activities happening around the canal. It is hoped that we also be able to display posters from other groups such as the Worstead Festival, Norfolk Wildlife Trust,

etc., and Tom Webster has kindly offered to keep the content up to date.

Each board can display up to six A4 posters and there will be two boards mounted together at Ebridge and one each at Spa Common, Royston Bridge and Paston Way.

Mark Shopland – Grants Officer

Mark Shopland – Grants Officer



Big Society Bid



The first major bid by the newly established North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust Charitable Incorporated Organisation was to the North Norfolk Big Society Fund for the purchase of a self propelled aquatic plant cutter and compact tractor.

These are to help us establish an Environmental Management plan for the Canal and its environs, initially for the Ebridge reach, and then to use it as a template for the other

sections. It is expected that the management of the individual sections can be developed to improve the overall environment, and its bio-diversity, whilst maintaining a balance between the needs of the owners and users. One of the most significant aspects of this management is the selective cutting and removal of overly vigorous and invasive species that have predominated during the canal's period of dereliction. This work will support the efforts of Chris Black in identifying the mitigation measures necessary to reduce any environmental impact in the design and engineering detail of the canal's restoration activities. Progress will be monitored using the species survey data provided by Suki Pryce and Tom Webster as a baseline with further surveys to see how this develops over the year.

The current weed cutter we use is only capable of shallow cuts whilst the self propelled vessel this grant will fund is fitted with a cutter whose depth and profile can be modified to suit our needs. This means we can begin to manage the underwater vegetation in such a way as to maximise the canal's capabilities for navigation, wildlife and fishing.



Mowing the plants on the banks and paths around the canal can also be challenging, with complex terrain and difficult access. The compact tractor that this grant will also provide is fitted with a cutter arm whose height and angle of cut can be adjusted to suit and is expected to speed up the more difficult cuts. A second attachment is a small front loader which will mainly be used for the careful and

controlled disposal of canal bank cuttings to allow the small creatures and insects they contain to migrate safely back to the water.

I think the award of this grant from the North Norfolk Big Society Fund should rightly be interpreted as a mark of appreciation of all the work the Trust has done so far and of confidence in what will be achieved in the future.

Mark Shopland – Grants Officer

Julie Kelleher – ICT Administrator

The Trust communicates with members via our Website and Social Media accounts:

Facebook Page, Facebook Group, Twitter, Instagram

Daily website enquiries are filtered by our "online secretary" at secretary@nwdct.org so that the right person receives the mail – and a check is made that a reply is sent.

Our world presence can be found on:

www.nwdct.org
www.Twitter.com/NWDCTrust
www.Instagram.com/NWDCanalTrust
www.Facebook.com/NWDCT
www.Facebook.com/groups/www.nwdct.org

The growth of social media is emphasised by these statistics:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	@ 6/1/2019
Facebook page LIKES	429	600	937	1290	1671	(1718)
Facebook group members					213	(258)
Twitter followers					91	(93)
Instagram followers					69	(75)

Julie Kelleher – ICT Administrator

Graham Pressman – Boating Officer

Last year we had the use of Laurie's weed-cutter for the management of aquatic plant life in the canal. This was vital and without cutting, weed was round the propellers in moments and the trip boats were stopped dead in the water. Laurie's weed-cutter is a wonderful adaptation he has made from a weed rake. It cuts to a depth of about 2 feet. We were cutting every week on a Friday, as a rule, and the weed was re-grown to the surface again by the Sunday.



Ready for next year, The Trust has the use of a purpose built weed-cutter, which cuts to a depth of over 5 feet. Let's see the plant-life in the water get up to the surface from that depth in 3 days! An application has been made for a grant to buy the thing. Mark and I collected it on its own trailer from the Laundry Loke Industrial Estate and took it straight to Ebridge, where we launched it at the dry dock end of the mill pond one chilly evening.

The machine had been standing for a few years, but the engine started easily and the hydraulic motors all worked perfectly. The various joints all needed to be eased and lubricated, the blades had to come off to be cleaned, de-rusted and re-fitted and we had a serious problem with one valve and the motor, which drives the blades. A friend of David Revill, who knows about hydraulics, came along with a mate of his and solved both those little difficulties for us, for which I extend my heart-felt thanks.

So now, we have a full-depth weed-cutter, which we can use every summer to keep the aquatic growth under control. But don't go away with the idea that we just drive up and down chopping randomly. Oh no! We have to have a written policy, following proper guidelines and we absolutely have to follow it. Places have to be left uncut to provide shade for fish where needed. The plant growth itself has to be nurtured and encouraged in appropriate volumes and places. Nutrient levels have to be taken into account as does oxygenation. The operator has to be constantly alert to the varying depths of the canal and adjusting the height of the blade so that material is cut to within 6" of the bottom, and no closer, so as to avoid damage to the roots.

Once cut, the cut material will then float to the surface, whence it can be raked up, using a rake attachment on the weed cutter (or Laurie's mechanical rake) and placed on the banks. There will be some animal life in that, such as snails, invertebrates etc. These can make their way back into the water. When the weed dries out, it is very much smaller indeed than it is when it is saturated and hanging in the channel. Alternatively, a much more eco-friendly method is to allow it to collect by the lock to be hiked out manually. Frankly, that is a quicker method too. However, if left floating it will get around propellers and get caught in fishing tackle, much as it would uncut.

Finally, who does weed cutting benefit?

The obvious first answer is all those passengers on the trip boats. But then so do the anglers. There is less for them to get their tackle fouled in. Should anybody fall into the canal or, however unwise, decide to swim in it, there is less chance of getting tangled and dragged down if there is less plant growth. Then there is chemical pollution (albeit naturally occurring chemicals). Nutrients build up as the material dies and falls to the bottom, where it degrades and rots. Soon there is too much nutrient for the water to maintain a balanced and normal wildlife structure. Next there is water flow. Weed severely congests the channel. It slows the movement of water and in doing so restricts oxygenation of the water. Next, the slower the water is moving, the more any silt will drop out and re-block the waterway. If a canal is not maintained, we soon see what happens. Water plant management is a normal and vital part of waterway management, which can only be replaced by regular use by deeper drafted boats. Since there are no working wherrys on the canal these days, regular maintenance using a weed cutter is the correct solution for the long term benefit of all users of the waterway.

Graham Pressman – Boating Officer

Tom Webster – Fisheries Officer

The canal continues to fish well, the unusually warm conditions for October and November produced lots of successful pleasuring angling.

I have received a few enquiries about only seeing lots pictures of Pike and Perch catches for the canal, the reason for this is that the smaller silver fish such as Roach and Rudd don't make such a spectacular picture as larger predators. So even though the canal is teeming with them you don't see many pictures unless they are of a specimen size.



It was good to see several children at the canal fishing with their families during school half term. Having chatted with a few of them, most were attracted into fishing at the canal because it is:

- Free to fish
- Local with parking
- Easy to fish (open banks / lots to catch)
- Friendly (not many serious anglers)

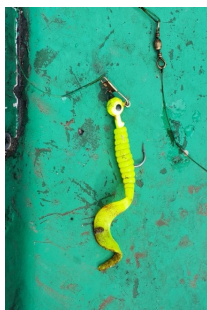
I particularly enjoyed seeing my daughter, Elsie "accidentally" catch and land her first pike. It weighed around 4lbs and was caught on a light tackle with 2lb line and size 14 barbless hook, set up for trying to catch larger silver fish. A great achievement for a 10-year-old and one very proud Dad!



Tom's nephew, Marcus

I am looking to "revamp" the fishing rules, nothing with the content, just cosmetic changes to make it more user friendly to read at a glance and get across the more serious items that get missed by anglers, such as closed season dates and the ban of barbed or treble hooks.

These are the two most serious items that are misunderstood, not known/or abused and have recently caused 2 incidents tackle that should never have been used on the canal in the first place.



The first incident was our Boating Officer's finger becoming hooked on a banned barbed pike lure that had got snagged on a buoy. Snagging is a hazard of fishing, but barbless hooks are a lot less likely to get snagged in the first place and had the lure been barbless it would have also been a lot easier to remove (as I am sure Graham can vouch for). Secondly, I had to remove a discarded pike tackle set up of 2 barbed trebles, (trebles are banned) that had entangled itself around a dog's leg, I am thankful the dog didn't panic and it



was easily removed as this could have been a lot more serious.

I stress the majority of anglers are happy to follow the rules, some may need a little education but it's only a minority of anglers who continue to ignore the rules, alas this isn't an uncommon problem.

To finish on a positive note, I have revamped my piscatorial and Perry Hampson's donated fauna displays, partly due to some water damage from the open weekend. Suki Pryce has been brilliant in helping me put together a Flora display to complete the set.

I continue to try to promote the canal with social media activities and have some more of my father's stories from the canal for the enjoyment of social media.

Tom Webster - Fisheries Officer

Alex Hurrell – Media Officer

Press Release 3rd January 2019

Rare bird draws crowds to canal

A rare visitor is attracting birdwatchers to a north-east Norfolk beauty spot.

Eagle-eyed bird enthusiast Robert Cobbold, from North Walsham, first spotted the black-bellied dipper on the North Walsham and Dilham Canal at Ebridge on December 28.

Since then birdwatchers have been flocking to the area and the dipper has been seen dozens of times along the canal between Ebridge Lock and Briggate, one-and-a-half miles away.

The bird, which has probably come from Scandinavia, is a rare visitor to Norfolk. The last confirmed county record is believed to be one seen on the River Thet in Thetford from early November 2012 until late March 2013. It was joined by a second bird towards the end of its stay.

Local birding expert James Appleton is especially delighted at the dipper's arrival on the canal as it has family connections for him dating back more than 40 years.

His late father Claude spent much of his childhood living in a cottage at Ebridge Mill. In 1974, when the mill was still working, Claude, alerted by a mill worker, saw his first Ebridge black-bellied dipper and James, then aged eight, remembers watching it through a window.

Then, almost exactly 20 years ago, on January 1 1999, his father found another black-bellied dipper on Ebridge Mill Lock. "Just like the current bird, it would feed at Briggate as well as Ebridge Mill and stayed until late February/early March delighting 100s of birdwatchers," said James. "The canal is pretty much the habitat a wintering dipper requires - it's certainly finding lots of food."

Britain has its own resident dippers, with chestnut underparts below a white bib, chiefly found west of a line drawn south along the Welsh border and north of the Peak District National Park in areas with clean, usually quite fast-flowing water, weirs and waterfalls. The black-bellied dipper is a subspecies and a rare visitor to the UK.

Jo Waite, who lives in an apartment in the now-converted Ebridge Mill, said that there had even been three birders in position before 8am on New Year's Day, anxious to spot the foreign visitor.

"We have a family of teal which spend the winter on the canal here. Also kingfisher, egret, dabchick, mallard, mute swan, coot and moorhen," she added.

"In addition we see water voles and otters. The range of wildlife to which we are treated is growing all the time. If you can take your eyes off the water and look up you may see buzzards, red kite and skeins of beautiful geese passing by."



Bird watchers at Ebridge (Jo Waite)



Black-bellied dipper (James Appleton)

Alex Hurrell – Media & Press Officer

Suki Pryce - volunteer plant surveyor

NEW YEAR PLANT-HUNTING ALONG THE CANAL

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's New Year Plant Hunt. Last midwinter (2017-2018), I took part for the first time in the BSBI's NYPH. The NYPH is citizen science similar to the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch: the BSBI asks volunteers to submit lists of native and naturalised alien plants they have found in flower in wild situations during a three-hour walk (as many of these as you wish), at sites throughout Britain and Ireland between 30th December and 2nd January. The Hunt is growing in popularity year by year, with thousands now submitting records; and participants' observations are helping the BSBI to build up a clearer picture of how our wild and naturalised plants are responding to changes in winter weather patterns across Britain & Ireland.

My Plant Hunts. Last year I chose Cromer, East Runton, and West Runton for my three-hour recording spots; and this season I did Overstrand, Upper Sheringham, and – yes - the Canal north of Royston Bridge. The weather was quite mild both years, but I was still amazed at the number of species found in flower. I asked several botanising friends to guess what numbers they thought I would have seen, and they reckoned between none and 25; but last year's total haul was in fact a startling **77**. (And I'm proud to say that my West Runton list of 54 plants just squeaked in at the bottom of the NYPH's 'Longest Lists' list. This is still much fewer than many recorders', though, with the biggest recent lists from Berkshire and Cornwall comprising 140+ plants from single sites.) My lists this year have been a bit smaller, averaging 45 species per site; but I have continued to find new entrants wherever I go - 35 this year - bringing my current overall total up to a proud **112**.

Effects of soils and habitats. My recording areas have been a mix of town, village, lanes, commons, woods, fields, and canal-side, and about 15 % of my total species have been naturalised garden plants. These reflect my sites' built-environment influences; or - in the case of the Canal - show the influence of its imported soils/fill.

Effects of climate. My non-Canal areas are all near the sea, so though these spots are often chilly they are milder overall in winter than places further inland. This has helped to boost my overall total, but probably acted to reduce my more inland Canal list, which contains just **22** species.

Categories. Winter flowerers can be categorised into several groups (plants found along the Canal are shown in **bold**):

- a) Plants capable of flowering at any time of year and at lowish temperatures (typical are **Daisy, Annual Meadow-grass, Groundsel, Chickweed**)
- b) 'Winter Specialists' (**Winter Heliotrope** is the classic one)
- c) 'Springtime Specialists' flowering early (eg Snowdrop, Primrose, Lesser Celandine, Hazel).
- d) 'Autumn Stragglers' (typical are **Yarrow, Ragwort, Hogweed**). Though my Canal list contains just 22 plants, it has in compensation provided me with several plants new to my overall list, and these are probably all of this 'Autumn Straggler' type. They include **Black Mustard, Wild Carrot, Cut-leaved Crane's-bill, Two-rowed Barley, Water Chickweed, Water Bent, Broad-leaved Dock, and Feverfew**.

Conclusions. Analysis of Plant Hunt results, instructions on how to join in, and much more can be found on the BSBI's NYPH website. I highly recommend the Hunt as a fun activity for plant-enthusiasts, with a mildly competitive side. It takes you outdoors, keeps your botanising brain from rusting too much over winter, and the sight of these gallant plants in flower at the shortest day-length time of year is cheering and uplifting. Next year I plan to do the Canal south of Royston Bridge, and feel sure that this species-rich section will surprise me with many more new plants: anyone who'd like to join me then, do please let me know (sukipryce@hotmail.co.uk).

Suki Pryce - volunteer plant surveyor

Sunday work-party news

Following several meetings between the Trust's officers and Sir William Cubitt, on behalf of the North Walsham Canal Company, work-parties have returned, after some six years, to **Honing Staithe Cut**, the **Honing Staithe Canal Walk** and **Brigate Millpond**. Nature's succession has presented the Trust's volunteers with a huge backlog of work, which is being tackled with both Sunday and weekday work parties. Brigate Millpond is also the area where our new generation of volunteers, Year 9 NW High School Duke of Edinburgh Bronze youngsters have started their Community work as part of their Award.

Ivan Cane – Chair



Brigate lock March 2015...



...2018



Brigate millpond 2012...



...2018

7th October 2018

Following the method statement prepared after the earlier visit to Brigate, the position of the stand of upright sedge (or stump grass) was located and carefully cut around. Thereafter a line was cut in a northerly direction from the west end of the site beside the pill box to meet up with a line running westerly from the top of the lock. The area between these lines and the road will be the first to be tackled. This will allow the lock to be seen as well as a small part of the mill pond/island and the pill box.

A lot of vegetation and dead wood was cut, cleared up and some was burnt but a considerable amount more needs to be done. The regrowth has been extensive in the last three years and there are two large fallen trees. The mill pond varies in depth and a plan is needed to efficiently remove the reed in the water. The use of a large mower is suggested for the island and to the west of the mill pond once the initial clearance of the 'dry' land has been undertaken.

21st October

The work-party was joined by 5 DoE Bronze students from North Walsham High School accompanied by a teacher and one parent.

The DoE party were fully kitted with safety helmets, specs, hard hats and high viz tops. Following the HS&E talk, the party were introduced to the Canal, its history and restoration story. This was followed by a visit to Bacton Wood Lock to see how the lock worked. The DoE students then made their way to Brigate to join the volunteers.

The work-party was split in two, the team at Ebridge Lock continued cutting and burning reed and scrub. The team at Briggate cut scrub so as to get to the fallen trees in the millpond. All the crown branches were cut off by hand and burnt. All brambles cut during the previous work-party were collected and burnt.

4th November

Most of the tree in Briggate millpond was cut and stacked. Small brash was burnt, attended and fed by some of the DoE students. Other students cleared most of the brambles along the roadside, transferring them to the fire. The large mower was used to cut the area by the lock.

Chris & Jonathan fitted new chicken wire on to foot-bridge at Ebridge Lock.

Darren worked on Ella II and stopped water leaking between solar panels.

Ballast was put on the path between sandbags at Ebridge.



These two work parties were the first to welcome DoE Bronze Award community volunteers from the North Walsham High School, which was a steep learning curve for us all. However, they were keen and capable and between them helped enormously with the brash clearances at the millpond. The second photo shows two volunteers, with 68 years difference in ages but no difference in work ethic! Ivan Cane.

18th November

Chris and Eloise Heath started cutting reed in Briggate millpond pond at 9am. Twelve DofE students turned up (instead of ten) and they were given PPEs. The rest of the overhanging brambles etc. along road edge were cut back and burnt on a fire at the lock end of site along with a lot of scrub and reed that had been cut by Chris earlier. With the long reach hedge cutter all the tall reed and scrub along the pond edge was cut back, raked up and taken to fire at the other end of site. A lot more of the tree was cut up and stacked behind the pill box. Three or four people were in the pond after all the tops of the reed were cut and removed, trying to cut the reed base below the water line. (We may have to make up some hook like tools on longish handles that can be dropped in and then with a sawing motion pulled towards you). Captain Graham called asking for a volunteer to help on Ella II, Kevin T went off to crew. Chris H cut a path way through to define the island edge. Both of the fires were then tidied up to make safe. The fences were then made secure and work finished at 3.30pm. I then took all tools back to Spa Common.

2nd December

At Briggate Chris B took a party of the students through Mr Howes's access gate to the canal and coppiced nearly all the alder saplings, which were then brought back across the road and were burnt up on the West side of the lock on the original burn site. Steve L finished cutting the undergrowth at the fallen tree end and a group of students raked up the brash and this was burnt on the fire. The rest of the students with wellies were in the mill pond raking dead reed leaves and branches out to the banks to dry out. Using the powered hedge trimmer a large area was cut beneath the water line to expose an undisturbed view of the water. Barry M cut up a lot more of the fallen tree and this was removed from site. We then stopped for lunch and the students were collected by parents. Chris H then got into lock chamber with the aid of his ladder and systematically crept along the East side of chamber sawing all the trees out. The same was done along the West side. All the cut trees and other rubbish was hoisted out and the majority was burnt but due to failing light and the fact that we needed to make sure that the fire had burnt down we piled the rest up for the next visit. Mr Howes's gate was closed ready for him to lock later, and the main site fencing was pulled back and securely attached. Chris B met up with Mark and went to view the sites for erecting the new signs.

16th December

At **Honing staithe** Jonathon P went round foot path areas and cut grass with mower, while Barry M cut up and removed tree that had fallen down across foot path. With the help of half the DofE children the large mass of brambles was cut back on the bank to expose the bridge, all the under growth where it entered the bridge and small saplings were cut back and removed from the canal where it entered the bridge. A fire was started and all the brash was burnt. At about eleven o'clock tea break was called and Christmas fare was partaken. Using a grappling iron the rest of the children were pulling out dead branches and reed growth from the staithe cut. Kai and Noah who had stayed on after the rest of the children had been collected went along the edge of the staithe and cut all the alder saplings down and brought them back and piled them up to one side to be burnt up at a later meeting. Chris B cut some dead branches that had fallen across the mouth of the staithe; these were dragged across, cut up and piled up again to be disposed of later.

6th January 2019

Volunteers were back at **Honing Lock** to tidy up the general area and remove small trees growing in the lock walls as well as brambles and reeds. As work would be near the lock edges a safety throwing line was positioned nearby. The main work carried out was the clearance of the area adjacent to the east side of the lock. The DofE youngsters were set the task of raking up the cut reeds and grass and making piles for the local canal wildlife to inhabit. The small trees and bushes alongside the footpaths were cut back and placed on the brash pile. The lock walls were cleared of brambles and small trees, which were damaging the brickwork. The chestnut paling fence on the west side of the lock had fallen down as the posts had rotted. This was re-erected using temporary posts and will be reported to the owner of this stretch of the Canal. *(Before and after photos taken during the work-party)*



Terry Willoughby – Work-party Leader

Thursday work-party news

13th December

Following the success of the Summer Mid-Week work parties organised by Chris Heath we are trying to make this a permanent feature for those unable to do the weekends and those who are just gluttons for punishment.

The first of these was held on Thursday 13th December as Thursdays seemed to suit the majority who expressed an interest and is sort of midway'ish between the two weekend workdays. Luckily we were not embarrassed by a wild influx of people and it let us concentrate on the installation of both notice and display boards at **Ebridge**, a notice board at **Spa Common** and a display board at **Bacton Wood lock**. Ebridge was the most complicated as it involved a scaffolding frame supporting two notice boards and given the wind blowing across the site it was decided to just install the poles and let the concrete set. The boards were added later and attracted a rather adverse comment from one lady walking her dogs about not blending in with the countryside; however her dogs did like the poles and christened them for us.

Mark Shopland – work-party Leader

My thanks to Mark for organising the purchasing and manufacture of the notice boards and Chris Heath and Nigel Thompson for their work on the information Boards, plus Tom Webster who has agreed to be the "Notice Board Keeper". Ivan Cane – Chair



Queries and Questions!

This enquiry was received via our website in October:

My husband and I are enjoying our canoe this Autumn and have had some delightful paddles on the Ant around Wayford Bridge, Dilham, Stalham and Sutton. We would love to explore the first part of the Dilham Canal from Smallburgh but read on the riverside board that we need to pay 'at the jetty'. However we do not know which jetty and how much to pay. Please can you enlighten us? Thank you. Debbie

A reply was sent and is summarised here:

Many Thanks for your enquiry about the Lower Canal. Here's a little bit of information about the canal generally, that we hope will help to answer you.

The NW&DC is a privately owned Canal, with four different ownerships. The Trust is working with the various owners to aid them with their plans to encourage more use of the Canal. The Lower Canal was sold by the NW Canal Co. in 1981 and is owned by Bindwell, who offer permissive access to private users and are working to improve access to boaters, in particular kayaks and canoeists, plus the provision of moorings for private craft, along their length. Additionally they have provided the provision of portaging points around the NWCCo's Honing Lock, and have also undertaken bushing and the removal of fallen trees so as to enable easier access for users. All of these works require funding, but do not generate income.

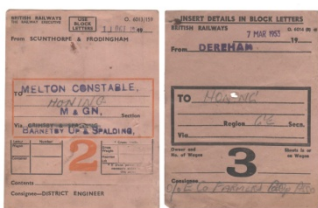
The NW&DC had always been a Canal that has encouraged both pleasure as well as commercial traffic. Edward Press converted six wherries for pleasure use in the late nineteenth century, and the Sale Particulars of 1907 also emphasised this aspect. In those days tolls were collected first at Tonnage Bridge and later at the Honing Lock Cottage. Today's Canal Owners still have the legal right to charge tolls, which is reasonable - one pays to take one's car onto a private car park or visit a National Trust property. I have an EA Boat licence for the Great Ouse, but have to pay a toll to the River Cam Commissioners to travel towards Cambridge. However, to employ a toll-keeper would not be economical. In the case of the Lower Canal, Bindwell have set up an honesty box, and ask users to donate for use of their section of the Canal - a voluntary toll.

This allows you to access the Lower Canal, with a diversion to the East Ruston Branch - unfortunately the Butcher's Arms is no longer open to welcome you at that village. Alternatively/also you can continue to Honing Lock and make use of Bindwell's portaging points to access the Middle Canal. Passing the Canal Camping site (www.canalcamping.co.uk) at Dilham you can then turn right, after Dee Bridge, into Honing Staithe Cut (2.4 miles). The Cut was restored by the Trust some ten years ago, and recently the Trust, working in conjunction with the NWCCo, the owners, have returned to undertake some remedial work. It's also a good place to stop and picnic before your return journey.

The toll jetty is on the left, with a notice, as you approach Tonnage Bridge. Suggested Tolls are £4 per canoe.

Ivan Cane - Chair

Items of interest to members:



It's surprising what you can come across when rummaging in junk shops. We were in Holt recently, trawling the vintage shops (yes, we are a couple of sad people who dress up in 40s clothes now and again) when we found loading dockets from various places including Victoria Docks for delivery via various rail companies to Honing Station. Some were for items headed for 'Cubitt'.

As you probably know, Honing Station is long gone but it used to be very close to Briggate Lock and indeed sometimes the Station was called Briggate Station



There are some interesting photos online showing the Station as it is now with 'ghost' pictures of what it would have looked like in its heyday. The Weaver's Way footpath is 61 miles long, between Cromer and Great Yarmouth but it comes closest to the Canal near Briggate Lock and Honing Staithe.

Chris Black - Vice Chair

2019 Calendars

Following the success of the 2018 calendar, The Showcase Gallery in the High Street, North Walsham has produced another for 2019. Last year's calendar included a photo of the picnic bench and millpond at Ebridge, and this time **the Canal is represented by a photo of Ella II** with happy trippers enjoying the Canal. There are still calendars available at £7.50 each.

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 29th October 2019 The Trust AGM.

Talks & Presentations 2019

Thursday 21 st February	Brooke Thursday Club	Chris & Mary Black
Tuesday, 27th February	Probus North Walsham	Ivan Cane
Wednesday 17 th April	Hickling Ladies Group	David Revill

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 Spring 2019 Quagmire (at the Trustees' discretion) is **7th April 2019**. Contact mdablack@btinternet.com*



With thanks to member Gwen Nunn for sharing this lovely photo.