

Quagmire

The newsletter of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust
Autumn 2016

Contact: mdablack@btinternet.com

News...



2016 Living Waterways Awards

You may have seen in the press or online about the Living Waterways Awards at which we received 'Commended' in our category.

We were one of only two finalists in the category and the winner was the restoration of the Nantwich Aqueduct. The Grade II* Listed iron trough aqueduct was designed by Thomas Telford and carries the Shropshire Union Canal. Nantwich benefited from £250,000 to support the project, which repaired and painted ironwork, and had brickwork repaired by skilled stonemasons.

This was an impressive and deserving winner but we must be extremely proud that we were the only other restoration project **nationwide** to have been selected as finalists competing with such a huge and heavily funded project.

The vast majority of the nominations were major projects involving much financial sponsorship and hundreds of volunteers and were already completed. During the selection process interviews at our canal a remark was passed that it was astonishing how much we have achieved with so few people in 16 years. (Where would we be without Laurie, Jeremy and John?)

Perhaps, when the canal has been restored and the whole length is available for wildlife and recreation we may stand a chance of winning in one of the categories?

The Trustees are grateful to Chris for taking the time to enter for this award, and to Barry for accompanying him to the Award Ceremony.

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/livingwaterwaysawards?src=hash>



Chris Black and Barry Mobbs

The LIVING WATERWAYS AWARDS 2016 – the full story!

It's 4th March 2016 and an email arrives in my inbox from the Canal & River Trust – '*you have only 2 weeks left to nominate your waterway project for the Living Waterways Awards 2016*'. I download the entry form – it is only five pages long, so could it be written up in time to meet the entry deadline? I'm unsure, but the entry form is **only** five pages long so I decide to consult the Trustees.

They agree that we should enter. I tell them it would be based on the top third of the canal as Laurie and the Trust have made really good progress on the section and the entry form is **only** five pages!

The deadline for entry is Thursday 16th March.

I start to write, page 1 takes 5 minutes – easy! Page 2 and I hit the first snag, the CRT want a referee, Norman Lamb MP first and best choice is at the Lib Dem spring conference and will get back to me... hopefully. The next box is easy and I am on a roll – then I come to Section 2. 'Project Overview' 500 words max! Sounds a lot but it's like squeezing a quart into a pint pot. And so it goes on – more and more questions and request for supporting information.

A day before the deadline and I get the OK to name Norman Lamb as our referee – great! It's very close, but hey Thursday 16th March doesn't exist. Is it Wednesday 16th or Thursday 17th? The CRT agrees that it is a print error – it's the 17th... phew.

5,800 words written and the entry form is ready to send. Button pushed and it's in the CRT's inbox.

April comes and I receive an email – '*your canal project has made it to the **visit** stage. You will be contacted by the assessors*'. The assessors arrange to meet me and want as many people on site as possible. All meet in the Bluebell Pub on June 17th for coffee and a chat about the project then take them to look at the canal. We view as much of the canal as possible and they are impressed – especially by the restoration of Bacton Wood Lock. July comes and I receive another email – '*your canal project has been chosen as a **finalist**!*'

The CRT request photographs of the project and arrange for a short film to be made of our canal project. They arrive on the 7th August to interview me, Laurie, David and others to capture the restoration work on the short film which will be shown at the Award ceremony.

The Award ceremony is to be held at the very grand Town Hall in Birmingham. Barry Mobbs, Trustee, will accompany me at the ceremony which means arranging a hotel room in the centre of Birmingham. I find a hotel nearby and we duly arrive at the hotel on the 14th Sept. We book in and the receptionist says I'll have to get the box of chocolates – you've been upgraded! We get a suite, two double bedrooms each en-suite, a lounge and kitchen **all for £75 plus £12 car parking on site!**

Following a walk up a flight of locks on the Birmingham- Fazeley Canal we get ready for the evening ceremony. Suits are mandatory and it is one of the hottest days of the year! We arrive at the Town Hall to be greeted by a champagne reception where we chat about projects with some of the many guests before dinner. The dinner is a splendid meal accompanied by photographs on the big screen of the many and varied projects – the money raised from the dinner going to charity. Dinner over and it's time for the awards. There are seven categories of awards and we are in Restoration and Historic Environment – last on the list. Like the Oscars – you're nominated but have you won anything?

We get to our category – only two projects were chosen and we were runner-up to the very worthy winning project. Not a bad result as it has put the NW&D Canal fully 'on the map'!

Chris Black, Vice Chairman

Barry Mobbs - Trustee

Greetings all,

Mary suggested that I write something about some of the other things that I get up to when I am not working with the North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust, so here is my first attempt.

One of my other hobbies is wood turning I have been doing for about ten years now. I was a founder member of Norwich Woodturners of which I am the current chairman. We meet on the first Friday of every month at the Senior Citizens Club in Wroxham road Sprowston (you don't have to be a senior citizen to come along and you are all welcome to join us to see what we get up to). The club is affiliated to the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain and we have regular demonstrations of woodturning by both professionals and club members.

Earlier this year Chris Black told me that some **wooden patterns were required for casting new iron bottom bearings for the lower lock gates at Bacton Wood**, so I offered to make them. An original bearing set had been found so these were used to determine the shape of the new patterns.

As you can see the originals were well worn and corroded but they had lasted nearly 200 years.

The bearing is in the form of a ball and socket joint and the original ball was fitted by driving the tapered square section shaft into the bottom of the lock gate hinge stile. For the new bearings Laurie wanted them made differently with a flange for securing to the stile and a small spigot for location.



I started with the socket for which I mounted a block of oak in a chuck using a faceplate ring. I then turned the necessary hemispherical recess in the top to suit the ball. I gauged the size of the recess using a ring that I had previously turned.



Oak block secured using faceplate ring.



As it turned out the ball did not have enough clearance in the socket as Laurie needed so I subsequently remounted the block and enlarged the recess.

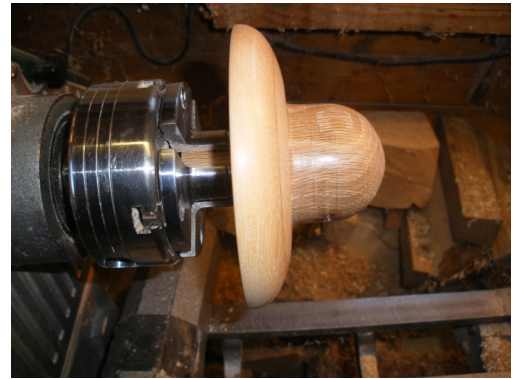
The ball part of the bearing was combination of spindle and cross grain turning. First I roughed out the flange and bored through the centre of it with a saw tooth bit. The spindle part was mounted in the lathe and a spigot turned to suit the flange together with a smaller diameter location spigot for inserting in the bottom of the gate.

I then glued on the flange and when dry turned it to the finished shape, including as much of the ball as possible.



To finish off the ball I reversed it by holding the small spigot in a chuck.

Below you can see the complete patterns which have now been used to cast the new bearings.



I probably spend most of my spare time involved in the world of folk music singing and dancing. I am a regular at many local folk music and dance clubs and also a dancer and musician with Weavers Morris. I have recently been able to bring woodturning into this by making Jig Dolls. These dolls have been used since at least the nineteenth century and I am sure that they would have been made many centuries earlier as well. They are not children's toys but are used to accompany music and some of our local traditional singers made and used them. They are held above a flexible board which is tapped in time with the music, this causes the dolls to dance and add some percussive accompaniment to the music as their feet hit the board. Most of the dolls that I have seen are made from sawn and carved pieces but all the components of mine are turned. The picture shows a couple of them in action, these two are made of softwood and painted with acrylic (I can't take credit for the painting as it was done by a friend).

Barry Mobbs, Trustee



The Trustees are pleased to welcome a new Trustee, Jane Gotts and our new Membership Secretary, Andrea Lamyman.



Jane has lived beside the Canal for 14 years with her partner Cliff and her two children, Daniel and Carly. The whole family is very supportive of the restoration and Jane has often cut and trimmed grass along the banks, helped at film evenings, open weekends etc.

Cliffy has supported us in many ways behind the scenes – it is thanks to him that we have the well used benches beside the canal. Daniel spends many hours riding up and down the banks grass cutting and the Trustees are most grateful to him. Carly is growing up fast and enjoys

being a 'gofer' at events.

Jane has volunteered to be our Events Coordinator and will be a friendly and willing Trustee.

Andrea writes: I have lived in Hertfordshire all of my life and have holidayed in Norfolk for most of it. I am married to Andrew and we are both keen birdwatchers. After many months searching for our dream home, he happened upon a property close to the canal. A walk along the canal after our first viewing, coupled with our first Kingfisher sighting, sealed our determination to make the move happen. We now divide our time between Hertfordshire and Norfolk.

Andrew and I have 3 sons, all of whom love the Norfolk house and delight in kayaking, canoeing and even sailing on the canal. Happiness is... messing about on water! Meara the dog loves it too!

Deeply impressed with the achievements of the NWDCT to date and their ongoing restoration plans and fascinated by the industrial heritage of the canal and the mills along it, I am delighted to be contributing in a small way. I am particularly grateful to the committee members for their warm welcome and support whilst I learn the ropes. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone and learning all about the canal.

Photo Challenge.



October 2007

Ivan has sent this photo, challenging members to identify where it was taken. More recent photos of the area appear elsewhere in this newsletter, but have a go first and then see if you were right!

Work – parties have been well attended with volunteers cheerfully turning out even in boiling heat to take on whatever the day's task might be. Many members will receive work-party information and reports sent via David and will know that volunteers have been busy grass-seeding the banks near **Pigneys Wood**. As David has mentioned elsewhere, it is now possible to walk from Ebridge to Swafield along the eastern bank of the canal, courtesy of the owner, Mr Laurie Ashton.

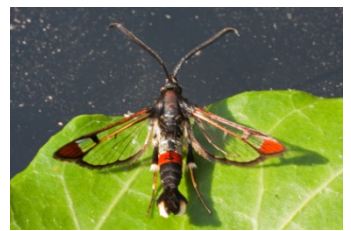


The restoration on this section is entering a new phase and will soon require regular maintenance rather than tree-felling and brush-cutting. Laurie will need help from people with experience of driving tractors in order to mow the banks, people experienced in handling boats to help with water-weed cutting and also those skilled in carpentry to help with making the lock gates. If you know someone who would like to be involved with keeping this section maintained and open for everyone to enjoy, please contact David Revill, 01603 738648

Volunteers Alan, Dennis, Jonathan and Frank (in the photo) became dumper drivers for the day in August.

More recently, work has been concentrated on '**Purdy's Marsh**' near Royston Bridge. This area has been neglected for years and Laurie is keen to restore it with a view to attracting reed-bed specialist species of moths, butterflies and birds. A colony of Red-tipped Clearwing moths, a Nationally Scarce Species, has already been discovered and photographed by our Wildlife Officer, Perry.

The next issue of Quagmire will contain articles and photos about the area around Royston Bridge, Purdy's Marsh and the Wherry Inn.



Red-tipped Clearwing Moth

Meanwhile, Ivan has been working on our pontoon and workboat. Ivan and Frank cut the boarding from the tops of the 10 sockets for uprights on the pontoon. They also unbent some of the sockets so that the sample upright fitted.

After some ferreting about, they found a length of wood, and some scaffolding bolts. The latter took 1½ hours to free up and get to work. The new transom was then cut to size and fitted to the little workboat. They checked that it was thick enough for both outboards, and hope that it's low enough for the petrol one.

10 uprights will be made, 1 metre lengths, with horizontal eyes at three positions. This will allow 3 layers of chains along each side. i.e. 3 X 10 lengths of chain - each with shackle and hook. .

Darren is thinking of how to make a canopy, using plastic conduit across from the three inner side uprights.

Recent Events

On 30th August 2016 the Trust's **AGM** was held in Honing Village Hall.

Chairman's Welcome & Report

Firstly, I thank you all for attending this evening and for giving your time to support the Trust.

Sadly I have to report on the sudden death of our Membership Secretary, Sue Boulton. A sad loss to the Trust, we all miss her happy smile and wicked sense of humour. "Goodbye Old Friend."

It has been a very busy and eventful year, work on the Canal is going extremely well and the results are receiving favourable reports from walkers, bird watchers and anglers. We are also getting great coverage in the press, especially following our Open Day at Ebridge on the 18th & 19th of June. I won't comment further on this as I am sure it will be covered by our various Officer reports.

Our Wildlife Officer, Perry has been doing great work with his reports and excellent photos which are on our Facebook page. If you haven't seen them please log on, you will be surprised.

My thanks also go to all the Officers, Trustees and Work Party members and supporters who give so much of their time in so many ways.

I will now hand over to the Secretary who will lead us through the evening and trust you all enjoy the rest of the meeting. Once again I thank you all for attending our AGM

Roy Medcalf, Chairman

Press Officer's Report

The Trust held its' AGM recently in Honing Village Hall and was well attended. The meeting was opened by the Chairman, Mr Roy Medcalf who welcomed the attendees. Later, the list of the ten Trustees was read out by secretary Mrs Helen Drury and they each declared that they had no conflict of interest. The treasurer, Mr David Gosling, put his summary of the annual accounts to the meeting and this was accepted. The reports by Mr Chris Black, vice-chairman and Work Party Leader; Mr David Revill, Work Party Organiser and Press & Liaison Officer; Mr Perry Hampson, Wildlife Officer; Mrs Julie Kelleher, ICT Administrator; Mr Barry Mobbs, Trustee and Mr Tom Carr, Chartered Surveyor and Special Advisor were all presented and well received. Mary Black, editor of the Trusts' newsletter, the "Quagmire" reported that the next issue would be out in October. At this meeting, there was no re-election of any Trustee in accordance with the Terms of the Trust. The basic points of the meeting being completed, there was great interest in a visual presentation by Dr Mary Fewster from the Norfolk Industrial Archaeological Society, covering the "Recording Norfolk's Industrial Past over 46 years by the NIAS". This was very interesting, showing a different angle to our industrial past. On to the musical scene with two versions of "The Ballad of Walsham's Canal" performed by Barry Mobbs and "The North Walsham & Dilham Canal" sung by Tony Baylis. These were two interpretations of the state of the canal and wonderfully presented. The evening closed with a raffle organised by Gisela Revill and refreshments by helpers. A number of the visitors took the opportunity to put their questions to the Trustees and officers present.

David Revill, Press Officer.

Full minutes of the AGM are available on request at: secretary@nwdct.org

Our second **open weekend** for 2016 coincided with **Norfolk Heritage Open Days**.

The Trust took part in the nationwide Heritage Open Days on the weekend of 10/11th September 2016 at Ebridge Lock. The main intention of this exhibition was to provide information to the general public about the history, decline and plans to revive this, the only locked canal in Norfolk. The first important point to make is that this canal is NOT a canalization of the River Ant. By the enabling Act of Parliament of 1812, the canal was to be cut separate from the River Ant and so it was constructed as an artificial waterway. This is evidenced by the straightness and gentle curves of the banks which can now be seen between Ebridge and Swafield. The old River Ant wandered erratically and had no real depth of water to support the passage of vessels such as the wherries, which were used extensively here in days gone by. The weather on Saturday was a little on the damp side and therefore not so many folk came by, but on the Sunday, the exhibits and other attractions were well visited. On the lock chamber island, the Ebridge Model Boat Club members were exercising their skills in controlling and showing off their models to the great interest of the many. Also on that island were a number of canoes from The CanoeMan of Wroxham, and these were taken out during most of the Sunday in the wonderful sunshine to paddle up as far as Spa Common and Bacton Wood Lock. The Trust brought a boat along in the hope of being able to take visitors and members for a trip up the canal but this could, unfortunately, not be carried out due to so much weed being present in the water, fouling the propeller. The Trust's Wildlife Officer occupied a tent on his own to show photos and examples of some of the moths, which he caught during some late night Moth Studies. All of these examples were kept in perfectly safe and good conditions, for later release back into the wild. Of great interest were two photos: one of a cricket and the other a moth, both of which have only recently been seen in this area and, according to some, are very rare in other parts of the UK. Also on the nature side was the spectacle of the two parent swans teaching their cygnets to fly! A veritably rare sight to behold. One Trustee braved the sunshine to have a table full of books for sale whilst the true heart of the day was the exhibition of maps, books, photos and archaeological finds made during the maintenance of the canal so far - old lemonade bottles with the 'marble' stopper; beer bottles of a hundred years ago; clay pipes and any amount of crockery – mostly broken. Old photos brought back many happy memories to some folk who used to use the canal to learn to swim, row a boat, fish or just sit and relax – all of which are now once more possible at this location, although swimming may not be recommended (but was it ever?). It is now possible to walk from Ebridge to Swafield along the eastern bank of the canal, courtesy of the owner, Mr Laurie Ashton. There is no access to the banks of the canal between Ebridge and Honing Staithe Cut. On both days the 'inner man/woman' was looked after by the refreshments available such as hot and cool drinks, snacks and wonderful ice creams, partaken sitting in the sunshine viewing the expanse of blue water of the mill-pond and canal, fields, flora and fauna, now regenerated by the restoration of this pound.

David Revill, Trustee



Visitors at the Open Weekend enjoying a canoe trip

From the Trustees and Officers:

Roy Medcalf - Chairman

Anglers Corner

Don't forget your Thermometer

A mild spell of weather followed by a sudden fall in air temperature can mislead the angler completely. Air temperature does not translate to water with the speed one would suspect. Arriving at the river bank with frost crystallising the grass, it seemed that roach fishing must be off, for roach are very susceptible to a sudden drop in temperature.

Fortunately, I had my thermometer. I expected a reading of near freezing, but in fact the reading was 46 deg. F. The water temperature could only have dropped a couple of degrees at the most. At this temperature it seemed a reasonable proposition to fish for roach. A fairly deep swim looked as though it would produce some sport.

I loose fed a few maggots as free feed, and with light tackle on the pole commenced fishing with a single maggot. A half hour passed before I had a peck from some small fish, I carried on feeding a few maggots little and often. Eventually these tantalising bites ceased as larger fish moved into the swim. A good strong pull and I was into my first roach, which showed they were well on the feed. For the next two hours I had some good sport with seven fine roach in the net, the best weighing in at just over 1lb. 4oz.

Had I not been assured by my thermometer I might not have fished at all and missed an excellent mornings fishing.

Roy Medcalf, Chairman

Editor's note: On this occasion Roy was not fishing in our canal. We have had reports of roach, rudd and pike in the canal and would like to hear of any more species that are found.



A happy fisherman during our Open Weekend



The second quiz photo - January 2012

Queries and Questions!

Re: Land Issues.

It was queried at the 26th July Trust meeting, whether other organisations have similar problems re E.A. and re-watering sections of canals. I can report that C&RT have had similar problems with the re-watering of around 3 furlongs of the Northern Reaches of The Lancaster canal. This should have been open to navigation June 2015, but a year later it is still on hold, mainly as the pound cannot reach navigational height, firstly so much water was needed to soak into the bed and banks, and secondly through leaks. Mind you, the floods earlier this year have caused £2m damage to an aqueduct on the Northern Reaches.....

The River Stour Trust have been able, after 10 years negotiation with EA, to link the top of Stratford St Mary Lock with the River Stour. To do this they have had to float a small digger, on a raft, to the site. At first the "Bio" EA officer would only agree to the navigational channel to be de-silted to a depth of 90mm (yes that's 3 and half inches). The Trust wanted 1.2m. Eventually the EA "Bio" man compromised to 0.9m, but with a 0.3m margin either way (*think about that!*)

So the answer is, yes, other groups have similar problems.
Ivan Cane, Archivist



Items of interest to members:

Wayfarers trip on the East Ruston Arm of the canal.

Mike Playle

I have organised the Wayfarer Broads cruise for a couple of decades and usually alternate between the North and South rivers. After a few days on the wide open stretches where we can guarantee some good sailing I try to take the fleet somewhere different - like the Surlingham backwaters, the Ribs of Beef in Norwich or Ellingham on the Waveney. I would love to get to Bungay one day but the portages, where they exist, are too small for our boats plus there are other obstacles. I have portaged round the lock at Coltishall as I have inflatable rollers that can carry the laden boat tens of yards and could do that at Honing if there was enough water and a reasonable track round.

I am most impressed by the work done at Ebridge and will try to get a canoe there one day.

The 16ft Wayfarer class dinghies are big, heavy things for two pensioners to move about just for a couple of miles of water - plus I have to tow it from Leicester where I now reside. If I could bring boats up through/round the lower locks then that would be a different matter.



This image shows us optimistically entering the canal from the Ant with sails and masts up thinking that we could dodge the trees - but this was not to be.

This image shows us actually under sail on the **East Ruston** branch. We wanted badly to sail where it was at all possible so hoisted the sails for this short distance. *Mike Playle*



Some background information on the **East Ruston** arm
by *Ivan Cane*:

The East Ruston Branch is an interesting example of how the Canal builders changed the local watercourses (within 1000 yards 1812 Act) to supply water to the Canal. It was part of the original River Ant Navigation that flowed from Dilham Mill to the village of East Ruston, where the waters of the Hundred Stream joined it. A little further downstream was the original East Ruston Village staithe. The Canal builders used that bit of the river to make the canal branch, with a new staithe at the end. The Hundred Stream then flowed into the branch and down to the canal - this was of course in the opposite direction to the original flow of the River Ant. The Ant Navigation was then deprived of its waters and the original staithe (now a little football field) closed, served only by a stream.



The third quiz photo April 2014

~~~*Waterways Elsewhere*~~~

Swansea canal

Swansea Canal Society volunteers and Glandwr Cymru - the Canal & River Trust in Wales - are working to reopen parts of this 16 mile canal. They have enlisted an unusual ally - the engineer tasked with filling it in back in the 1970s! Have a look at a very interesting article on:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-37157107>

See also the item in ‘**Queries and Questions**’ – Land Issues - about the [River Stour Trust](#)



*Grey Wagtail perched on The Weasel*

## Dates for your diary

**Thursday 24th November.** **Coffee Morning** 9am to 12:30. St Nicholas Room, Vicarage St, Nth Walsham. NR28 9DQ. Refreshments, photos and information.

### **Pre-booked private talks/presentations.**

*If you are interested in attending any of the private talks, please liaise directly with the organisers via their web-links.*

#### 2016

|                                 |                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November.       | Briston Wives Group.                  | Ivan Cane.                 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November.       | Freethorpe Womens Group.              | Chris and Mary Black.      |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> November.       | North Norfolk Model Engineering Club. | Ivan Cane.                 |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> November.      | Chelmsford IWA.                       | Ivan Cane.                 |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> November – am. | Chet Staithe Probus.                  | Ivan Cane.                 |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> November – pm. | Martham Local History Group.          | Ivan Cane.                 |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> November.      | Norfolk Wherry Trust.                 | Ivan Cane and Chris Black. |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> December.       | Bacton Local History Group.           | Ivan Cane.                 |

#### 2017

|                            |                        |                       |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 11 <sup>th</sup> January.  | Wherry Stalham Probus. | Ivan Cane.            |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> October.  | Park Farm Probus.      | Chris and Mary Black. |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November.  | Wissey U3A.            | Ivan Cane.            |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> November. | Trunch Friends.        | Ivan Cane.            |

*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 2016/17 Quagmire (at the Trustees' discretion) is the first week of January 2017. Contact [mdablack@btinternet.com](mailto:mdablack@btinternet.com)*



***The final Quiz photo, July 2014. So now you know!***