

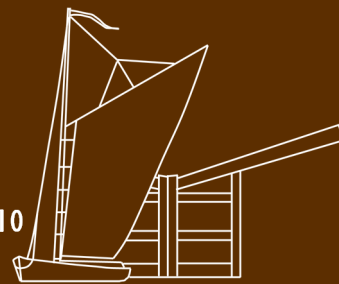
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QUAGMIRE

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST CIO



VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3

SUMMER 2020

Briggate Lock - c 1950



Postcard—courtesy David Ling and Wayne Beauchamp (see page 19)

Summer 2020

Meet Ed Cubitt - W.P. Volunteer and Trip Boat Skipper

Royston Spillway
April 2017



I can recall how a work party at Pigney's Wood was sprawled across the tow-path, having lunch, when a young lad came up on his bike. One of the volunteers called out "That's okay, you can go through", to which he replied "I'm looking for a work party." What inspired you to join us that day?

It was summer 2014, when I would have been 14. In terms of what inspired me to join you that day, there were several things. Firstly, I had been looking for a volunteering option to complete my DofE locally. Thinking about this, I recalled attending an Open Day at Ebridge (earlier that year, if I'm not mistaken) and one of the volunteers mentioning that the Trust was always looking for new faces, particularly younger ones. I had also recently completed a day of conservation work at school, and, having enjoyed this, the canal work parties seemed like something fun and interesting with which to get involved.

When I turned up to that first work party, I hadn't actually started my DofE, having decided to wait to do it with scouts rather than school. That said, I still wanted to get involved, in readiness for the start of my DofE. As such, it was a combination of having enjoyed some conservation work in the past, an interest in the canal, and looking for a volunteering activity for DofE, which inspired me to join that day.

How did you find it, working with the volunteers over the next few years? What did it teach you?

Reflecting on how I found working over the next few years, it was something very enjoyable with which to be involved. Everyone was very welcoming and supportive. They were keen to get me involved in each work party I attended. It was very satisfying, then, to see how areas changed after each work party, particularly on the Pigney's Wood stretch - which had been full of trees when I first came along - and is now a clear bank and well-used path. The work parties also taught me a lot, both about the canal and using the equipment. On most work parties, there was something new to learn. For example, I can remember a work party at Swafield Locks, standing in the lock chamber and being shown how the lock would have worked. Several items - beer bottles, for example - had been found in the chamber, which was being cleared out. As well as learning about the canal, I likewise acquired many of the skills needed on the work parties, be it the safest way to remove the trees and overgrowth from the banks and surrounding areas, or using the wood chipper safely.

You used the experience to help you gain some awards - which were these?

The first of the two awards was my DofE Silver, for which I needed to do twelve months of volunteering. I later completed my Queen's Scout Award, and, for part of this, I had to complete six activities from the International, Community and Values list. One of the options for the Community aspect was to "research and participate in a local environmental or community-based project to make an improvement in the environment or in the community". This fitted in perfectly with the volunteering I was already doing on the canal, with the work benefiting both the environment and the local community by creating a space for wildlife to flourish and the community to use. It made sense, then, by the time I was completing the award, to use the canal work parties and boat trips with which I was involved.

Wet skipper Ed for the VIP's
launching of *Ella II* June 2018



Not only did you help out with the boat trips, you also became a qualified skipper. What do you find particularly attractive about that task?

When I first saw the email asking for volunteers to help with boat trips, I was keen to get involved, as I have always enjoyed being out on the water. Also, the time commitment for these was more predictable, which was good when going into school exams. I had already completed my RYA power boat Level 2 and safety boat qualifications, both of which would help when sailing with scouts and for Sailing Club duties in the future. Graham was satisfied that, whilst these were not the specific qualifications ordinarily sought after, they would enable me to skipper the trip boats following a bit of training on them. This enabled me to use my boating skills to benefit the canal, whilst also enjoying being on the water and helping others access and learn more about the canal.

Now you're at Loughborough University, it's still pleasing to see you volunteering on the canal during the holidays. I believe that your course is transport orientated - do you see any possibility of this leading to a career in canal management in the future - or where are your strengths taking you?

Yes, I am currently studying Transport and Business Management at Loughborough University, and have just finished my second year. Over the next year, I will be completing a placement with South Western Railway in train planning, and it is at this part of the industry that I'll likely be looking when I graduate. It combines my interests in transport with my aptitude for logical thinking, planning and problem solving. Although it may not necessarily be exactly what I do when I graduate, it will most likely be something similar. I do, however, hope that I'll stay involved with the Canal Trust, and possibly with other canals in the future. Depending on where I live, I'd like to think that the skills and knowledge I have gained - both from volunteering with the NWDCT and from my course - will be of benefit.

Any final thoughts?

Nothing else to add, really, other than a thought that I had when out on my kayak at Ebridge yesterday. The canal is looking great now, with so many people using it, and it is very satisfying to think of all the work in which I've participated. Equally, seeing the difference my efforts have made, whether clearing trees and overgrowth or helping clear the spillway ready for repair, or seeding grass on the banks, gives me real satisfaction.

I believe that many volunteers share your thoughts. We wish you well in your career, and thank you for all the work you have undertaken over your teenage years! Hopefully, when you return to Norfolk you'll be calling in on us - spade and tiller in hand.

Ivan Cane

The Revd Canon Paul Cubitt

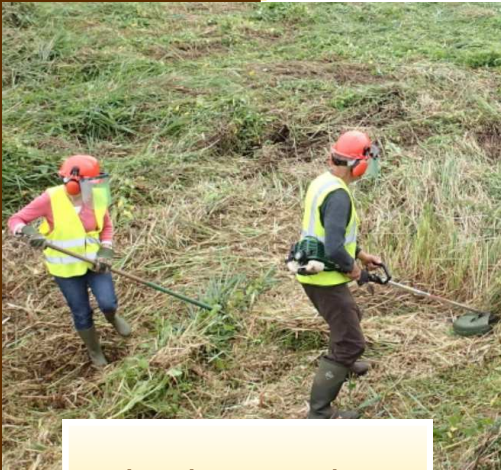
Paul Cubitt has been an ardent supporter of the Trust and its work since he came to St Nicholas Church, in 2014, he will be sorely missed by the community when he transfers to Dereham this August. He is much admired member of the local community and has done much for the town. Paul did find some leisure time to sail his small sailing boat at Ebridge. However, Dereham does not have the luxury of a canal, so Paul has had the lovely idea of selling his boat and donating the proceeds to the Trust. Thank you Paul and we wish you every success in Dereham.

Nigel Lloyd

Work Party Roundup

Mark Shopland - the Trust's Work Party Organiser reports:

As with so much else of our lives the Pandemic had a significant effect on the operation of the Restoration and Maintenance work parties. Formal WP's ceased in March with the last being held on Thursday 19th just before the formal lockdown date.



Strimming at Purdy's Marsh - using the new PPE headgear. (Alan Bertram)

These only restarted on the 11th June when the restrictions had been lifted to allow groups of up to six to meet in an outdoor environment whilst employing social distancing. For any tasks that might have involved inadvertently breaching these requirements, special forestry helmets were purchased fitted with clear plastic screens, which could be supplemented with additional face masks if required. In-field hand washing facilities were provided with anti-bacterial hand gel and wipes.

In early July the restrictions were again eased to allow groups of up to thirty to meet and we have been progressing on this basis ever since. One major effect of the pandemic is to severely curtail our fund raising events for the year which will have a major effect on all of our activities.

I would particularly like to thank Jonathan, an essential worker, who during lockdown, was able to regularly carry out the grass cutting regime detailed in our OCC Management Plan. This was an effort that was much appreciated by all of our users and, I believe, contributed significantly to an increase in our visitor numbers.

Formal Work Parties ceased in March with the last being held on Thursday 19th when a partial bund was installed in Ebridge Lock in preparation for the refurbished Lower Gate installation activities.

Formal Work parties were restarted on the 11th June when the lockdown restrictions were lifted to allow groups of up to six to meet under social distancing conditions in an outdoor environment. The first task was to properly seal the bund that had been installed in March so as to allow the lock to be drained.



Installing Bund (Tom Carr)

Do you have any pictures of recent, or ancient, work party activities. Mary Black continues to keep a hard record of these for use at Trust events? Please contact her at mdablack@btinternet.com if you are able to help. Thanks.

This was followed up by more work with sandbags to reinforce the eastern bank on the Ebridge Reach to repair 'Doggie Slides' which were weakening the bank. Additionally the fenced enclosed lock areas were tidied and trimmed to improve their appearance. Further work was carried out at Ebridge on the 25th to remove the 'bump' on the island, re-profile it and re-seed it. The spoil from this was used to build up part of the low section on the eastern bank of the Ebridge Reach.

A small Ad Hoc WP was formed by Terry Willoughby and his wife Margaret to clear several fallen trees at Honing Staithe on the 28th June. The Covid-19 regulations changed at the end of the month allowing party sizes up to 30, again socially distanced, to meet. The next WP on the 5th July completed the work at Honing Staithe by clearing and mowing the site.



Thursday the 9th July found us having a concerted effort in cutting the reed and Himalayan Balsam on Purdy's Marsh using Chris's Digger fitted with a scythe attachment, the tractor fitted with Dr Tom's Swingtrim scythe, the DR mower and the hand held brushcutter (unfortunately its Swansong!), altogether a very productive day. Particularly as it proved the

viability of the Swingtrim for our purposes and I would now recommend its purchase from Dr Tom.



Top - Trust's Tractor with Swingtrim (*M Shopland*)
Purdy's Marsh Cutting Plans
Reed Stacks at end of day (*Alan Bertram*)

Nature Watch along the Canal with Suki, Perry, Julian and Tom

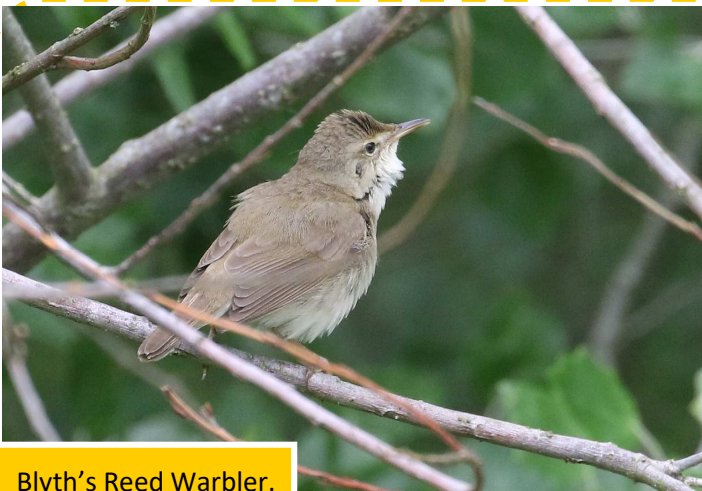
Waterweeds. This year, more of the alien aquatic Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii* is appearing in the watered Ebridge section of the Canal. This was present last year in small amounts, but has obviously taken much more of a hold in 2020, and is the major weed Graham Pressman is having to cut at the moment in the southern 3/5ths of the Canal. A small amount of the other common Waterweed *Elodea canadensis* has also been found this year in the adjacent back soke. These species, native to North America and widely introduced to ponds and aquariums worldwide, can be seriously invasive, but I've been advised to 'fear not!' in our situation. They aren't necessarily displacing other useful water plants in the Canal; they're good oxygenators; and they provide a useful habitat for many aquatic invertebrates such as water snails, plus cover for young fish and amphibians. Waterfowl, especially ducks also eat these plants. So hopefully, rather than being a problem, they'll be a useful addition to the Canal's biodiversity. And please do let us know if you see snails, ducks or anything else feeding on the Waterweed – thanks.



The Canal, just after cutting and before collection, showing much floating Waterweed.

Suki Pryce

We are sorry that Perry was too unwell to bring us his usual nature watch notes back in July. We wish him a speedy recovery, and look forward to his Winter Watch forecasts the next time around. Meanwhile, we have an item which Julian Thomas had sent to Suki, back in June, and he has agreed to let us include it in this edition of Quagmire.



Blyth's Reed Warbler.

Julian Thomas of the North East Norfolk Bird Club kindly sent us the uplifting news below in mid June. Julian, who enjoys wild life photography, runs courses on birds for the Norfolk Wildlife Trust at Cley, and volunteers for Peregrine Watch at Cromer.

"The section between the Bacton Road and Spa Common has a very high density of breeding birds, including 3 pairs of Cetti's Warbler (Schedule 1 species), 2 pairs of Grasshopper Warbler, with 2 more north of Bacton Road (Red listed species), 8 pairs of sedge warbler, 10 pair of reed warbler, 2 pair of garden warbler, 5 pairs of blackcap, 4 pairs of reed bunting

(Amber listed), 1-2 cuckoos utilising reed warbler hosts, (Red listed species), and is utilised by barn owls and kingfishers even if not breeding on site. The area is also known to be an important foraging area for nationally rare Barbastelle Bats (per Norfolk wildlife report 2018). The numbers of breeding marshland warblers do not compare with a site of greater area like Hickling, but the relative density is actually probably much higher. "

The Blyth's Reed Warbler, back in June, raised a flurry of interest from the birders at the time.

(Right) Twitchers at Ebridge June 9th - *Richard Fox*



Thanks to Ann Mason , who took this picture of a water vole , towards Swafield on 14th July

Stuart Buck spotted this cuckoo, across the Canal early in the morning of June 10th. And the grass snake, by Paul Biggs, on 19th July



I am delighted to report our first documented catch of a bream (see picture), we have received several "fishermen tales" of catches over the years but this is the first one with photographic evidence. The canal was once famous for its shoals bream which drew anglers from all over the country, so it's very pleasing to see this wonderful healthy 3lbs plus specimen caught from Ebridge on a pellet feeder early one June morning by a regular angler Alex Smailey, well done. Along with this we have had lots of reports of quality roach and rudd being caught via our social media and we are looking forward to the Pike fishing season which opens on the canal in 1st October. Whatever pleasure you use this wonderful canal it's always lovely to receive your pictures and feedback via our social media so please look us up.



Tom Webster

Graham Pressman - Project Officer reports:

New volunteer Nik, cutting the lining boards. (G.P)

I'm afraid, due do to the covid-19 lockdown, we have not achieved as much in the way of Projects as we should have liked this quarter.

Ebridge Lock Bottom Gates

By the time you read this, I expect that the lock gates, being prepared for the bottom of Ebridge lock will have been completely re-lined. Once that's done, they will only need caulking with oakum before being turned over to re-shape the heels, the iron pintle pin assembly and bottom bar. I need to measure the

correct position of the pot (in a mud free environment) before that can be done. Our wonderful WPO knows all about

that and is helping in every way he can. We only await the arrival of a pump (to pump out the lock), which can cope with some 20,000 gallons or more of mud, water and unmentionables lying at the bottom of the lock.

Ebridge Culvert

The famous "hole" in the culvert on the east side of the lock, nearest the road, has gradually been settling, since Laurie completed filling and making good the void, as reported in the last issue of Q. Huge thanks to our brickie, his mate and all the other brilliant volunteers who got involved and worked so hard to achieve completion of a project, which has been needing to be done for years. Thanks also to Laurie for all his work, here, over the last year.

Ebridge Bank Raising

Jeremy and our new digger driving volunteer have done a great job in moving all that material from the lock side up onto the east bank at Ebridge, laid it and tracked it in with Laurie's machines. That banks is now more sound and a little higher. It will need topping up again sometime in the fairly near future and thanks to the public for their patience whilst the private path was closed. Special thanks to Carl Bird for supplying the material and having it delivered to us on his own truck.

Lock Footbridges

I am looking for a photo of the wooden footbridges which were installed at the lower end of the locks, especially that which went across the BOTTOM of Honing Lock, in order to reproduce one for Ebridge. Has anybody got such a photo please?

Weasel

Laurie and Jeremy, between them, hauled *Weasel* out of the water on the Ebridge slipway and jacked it up level, with the help of a few of our volunteers. Thanks all! The leaks in the boat have been found and exposed, ready for welding up. Thanks to Mark P for cutting those neat holes and in advance to Daren Wright for the welding and fabrication he is going to do for us.

On the weekend of the 15th-16th of August, at our Information Weekend at Ebridge, we will have an eco-friendly, ultra high pressure blaster from Aqua-blast coming to remove the rust and old paint from the hull. The public are welcome to observe this somewhat dramatic event from a safe distance. The water leaves the gun at something around twice the speed of sound, so it is a very noisy business.

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GET CLOSER than directed by volunteers on duty on the days. The great benefit is that there is no abrasive to get into the engine or damage passing vehicles. Once re-launched, *Weasel* will be available to carry out the necessary de-silting at Spa Common.



Marked out for cutting (G.P)

Above Bacton Wood Lock

The re-watering of the section above Bacton Wood lock is entirely in Laurie's gift and not connected with The Trust. However, many tons of soil have been utilised over the past few months to continue to raise the level of the banks, to enable a reasonable depth to be achieved up to Swafield Lower Lock, as seen on the back page photograph. Meanwhile Mark P has made a start on trimming the piles at Royston Bridge Spillway, ready for the re-



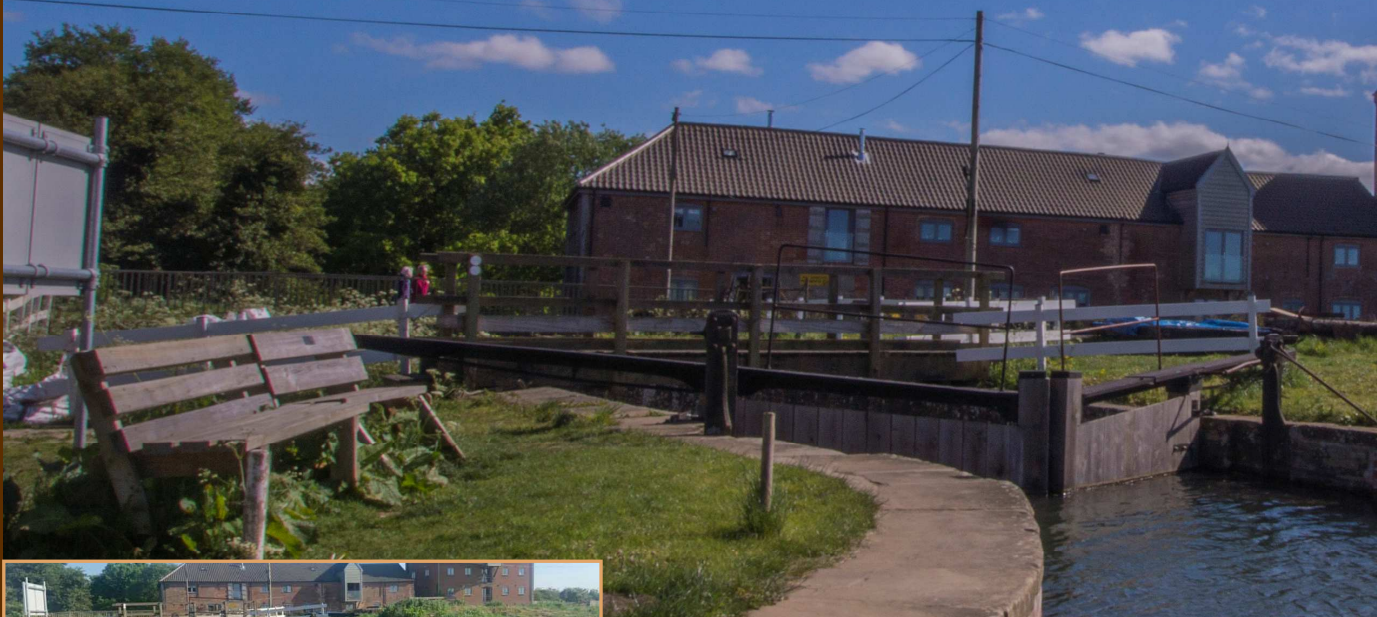
Trimming the piles (G.P)

watering. This spillway is the means by which the level is controlled on that pound. Before anyone asks, the black band is a controlled burn, designed to prevent any possibility of an accidental fire when oxy-acetylene flame cutting. I do know that Laurie only now needs a few thousand more tons of material to complete the raising of the banks, and a couple of other little jobs that need completing. A few more days of work should do it!.

News Snippet. Nathan Arnold,, Waterways Team Leader at the Environment Agency, stated:

“Our waterways are part of our nation's rich heritage and beauty, and they contribute to our environment, our health & well being, and our economy”

(Press Release 5th Feb 2020 , Mervyn Day, E.A. River Inspector F.B)



10 Years Ago 4 July 2010.



GRAPHY

Ebridge Fun - May, June and July 2020
 Acknowledgements, clockwise from top left, 1 -4
 Glennis Dillon, Graeme Turner, Elizabeth Ruth,
 Darren Cooke, Graeme Turner.
 Main photo - Alex Martell

The Wider Scheme of Things

C&RT, EA, IWA, EAWA, WRGies are all acronyms that litter this publication—but who are they and what do they mean? Let's see how they and the NW&DCT fit together.



**Canal &
River Trust**
Making life better by water

From nationalisation until 2012, over 2000 miles of waterways were “managed” by various Government departments, from the Docks & Inland Waterways Board to British Waterways. In 2012, the majority of these waters were passed to a new charity, only second in size to the National Trust. The C&RT philosophy has become one of working with volunteers and the community, using their waters to “make life better by water for everyone, every day”. They are committed to improving “health, wellbeing and happiness, protect the environment, enhance learning and encourage prosperous local communities”, “transforming canals and rivers into spaces where people want to spend time and feel better”.

The main link between C&RT and the NW&DCT is through the C&RT's sponsorship of the Restoration Hub. The Trust beat many Societies countrywide when they received the *C&RT Living Waterways Award for Restoration and Historic Environment* with a “Commended” in 2016.

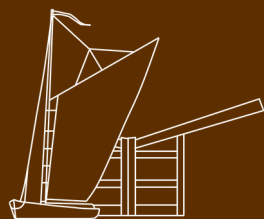


**Environment
Agency**

In 1996, the Government set up an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by Defra. This huge agency works “to create better places for people and wildlife, and support sustainable development”. Their brief covers regulating waste, water quality, fisheries, conservation and ecology, and managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.

Due to historical factors, the EA also inherited some 650 miles of (mainly) eastern river navigations to manage, from the Thames and Great Ouse to the Suffolk Stour. For some ten years, the plan was to transfer these navigations to the C&RT. During this time, Defra continually cut available monies to that area of their responsibility. In 2019, the transfer was refused, leading to a major re-organisation within the EA, aimed at producing a 5-year plan for a sustainable navigation programme by 2026. To this end, the EA has created a Navigation and Commercial Activities Department.

Being in the East of the East has meant that most of the NW&DCT's involvement with the EA has been through its Water Framework Directive Management Catchment Managers, rather than with the EA's Anglian Waterways Operations Team or Navigation Activities Department.

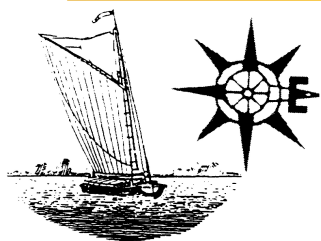


The NW&DCT is an associate member of the IWA, EAWA and the NCA, and through them the WRGies and Restoration Hub.



The **IWA** was formed in 1946 to campaign for the conservation, use, maintenance restoration and sensitive development of British Canals and Rivers. It is now the major national umbrella body for those interested in our country's waterways. They range from supporting early canal restorers, such as David Hutchings, who actually came on their behalf to survey the NW&DC in 1972, to the setting up of the *IWA Restoration Hub* in conjunction with WRG and C&RT, which champions restoration and provides access for restoration groups to the collective knowledge and expertise of its volunteers and staff. The Hub provides professional experts (e.g. surveys for Ebridge Spillway renovation), training, studies and reports, insurances, grants, a portal for restoration groups as well as an annual conference and regular webinars. The IWA also provided the Trust with an interest free bridging loan of £20,000 to cover the gap between paying for the installation of Ebridge top gates and the arrival of the actual EULEADER monies some months later.

"In my opinion, the amount of work required to restore the waterway is comparatively small." David Hutchings, *Inspection Report for the IWA, 1972*



The **East Anglian Waterways Association** was formed by Teddy Edwards in the 1960's, following a fallout between the IWA and its Fens Branch. For the next 50 or so years it became the main voice of the waterways of the East and the Fens. Its work led to the re-opening of the Old West River on the Great Ouse system; supporting the restoration of the Great Ouse to Bedford; lengthening the through route on the Middle Levels to cater for 70-foot craft; and supporting the restoration

of the Slea Navigation. In Norfolk, the EAWA purchased Dilham Dyke, restoring it to navigation. From 1992, under the auspices of the late Alan Faulkner, it was instrumental in re-starting the process to restore the NW&DC. Official reports were commissioned, looking at the environmental factors, civil engineering locks and channel, and other factors. In 2000, work parties started, with Briggate as the first venue, and the EAWA continues to be a joint sponsor of today's work parties. In 2007, the EAWA encouraged the establishment of the NW&DC Trust to encourage greater local involvement in the Canal's restoration. As with the IWA, they supported the Trust with the bridging loans for the Ebridge top gate restoration.

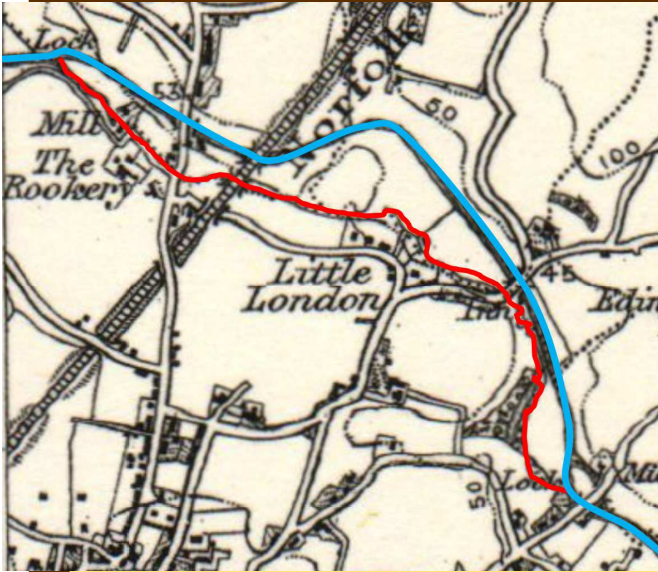


WRGies are the volunteers of the Waterway Recovery Group, whose magazine, *NAVVIES*, has over the last 50 years brought news of restoration projects throughout the country,

shared expertise, and been a founder of the Restoration HUB, cited above. WRG also arranges Canal Camps, to help cultivate a specific project by providing a team of volunteers for a weekend, week, fortnight or more, across the Country. Over the years, the NW&DC has benefitted from day and weekend WRGies' camps, and, in 2017, a fortnight's camp gave a considerable boost to the rejuvenation of Ebridge Spillway. The Trust also gained *Ella II* through the *NAVVIES* magazine.



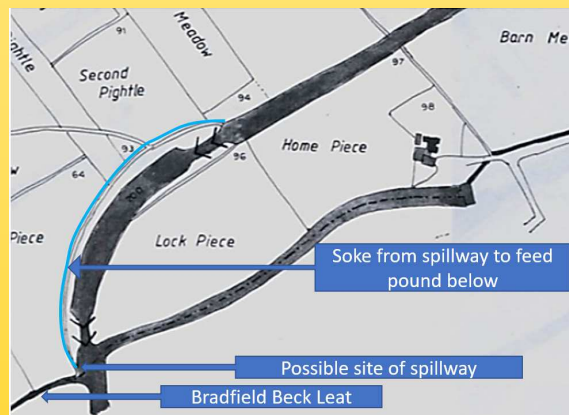
The **Northern Canals Association** is an informal meeting place for waterway restoration groups north of Birmingham (yes, that includes the NW&DC!). It generally holds two meetings a year at different restoration sites, in which locations there are opportunities to examine others' problems and solutions, and to network.



So we had the River Ant, NW Town Drain, and Bradfield Beck all feeding Swafield Mill Pond. When the mill was powered up, it drew water from its pond, powering its wheel then releasing it into the millstream, which followed the course of the old River Ant (red-line), behind the Wherry Inn, joining the Canal's west soke, passing the bottom of Royston spillway, where the unnamed stream from Knapton joins via the culvert under the Canal. The flow then travels via the sewage works to eventually enter the Canal below Bacton Wood Lock.

Now the Bacton Wood/Swafield pound's waters serviced Bacton Wood Mill and the Canal. It also had a substantial spillway at Royston Bridge, so a fairly large amount of water was expected to be flowing down this length. We know that there is a very small spillway between Swafield top and bottom locks, but this was to control the level in those 100 yards. So the question is - "Where did the water for the Bacton Wood pound come from?"

This pound has no inflowing streams along its length, nor does Swafield millstream supply it. But the water must have come from somewhere. My conjecture is that there must have been a large spillway on the Swafield Millpond that serviced the Bacton pound. The only map clue is that of Neville Lee's redrawn Playford's 1839 map of Swafield, where there is a definite soke dyke shown from the millpond, around both locks then entering the Canal below the bottom lock. Maybe, one day an archaeological dig might discover the remains of a spillway between the Bradfield Beck leat and the top lock.



Ivan Cane

Where does the water come from today?

Swafield Mill went out of use before the Second World War and its original millpond was filled in. The millstream/River Ant is but a small stream, that disappears by the road at the Wherry Inn. The higher River Ant from Antingham and NW Town Drain are diverted around Swafield Top Lock, entering the Canal below. Much of Bradfield Beck has been re-routed between Southrepps and Swafield and today it joins the Canal below Swafield Bottom Lock. So all three streams now combine to provide the water in the Canal for Bacton Wood, leaving the unnamed stream from Knapton, and "bleed" waters from the Canal servicing the stream to the sewage works.

Waters Elsewhere—The Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation

The Company of Proprietors of the C&BN was formed under an Act 1793. The Navigation joined the Blackwater Estuary with a large 107' X 26' sea-lock at Heybridge, Essex, rather than the sea-port of Maldon. Engineered by John Rennie, it runs 13.75 miles, mainly alongside the River Chelmer, through a further 12 locks to Springfield Basin in Chelmsford. It opened on June 3rd, 1797, when the first brig sailed into Heybridge Basin with coal for Chelmsford. Unusually, the navigation was built with only 2 foot of water, the lowest draught on any Eng-

lish waterway. The barges were 60' X 16', carrying 25 tons. These barges remained horsedrawn until the 1960's, when diesel outboard motors were fitted, sparing the Proprietors the costs of towpath maintenance. By the 1960's, as well as the main trade continuing to be timber to Brown and Sons, the company also had a good income from the sale of Willow, which grew profusely along its banks, plus fees from sea-going craft moored at Heybridge Basin. The freight continued until 1972. At this time, the Proprietors were unsupportive of pleasure boating. A long-sustained campaign by the IWA's Chelmsford Branch led to a change of heart, with trip boats, hire craft and private craft all contributing to the tolls collected. The local

Branch helped to form the Chelmer Canal Trust, and, during the 1990's, over £400,000 was raised for the repairs to locks, with the derelict Springfield Lock and Canal Basin re-opened in 1993.

Unfortunately, towards the end of the century, the Proprietors had started to diversify, leading to financial difficulties, followed by administration in 2003. The imminent threat of the closure of the whole navigation - with the loss of all its community benefits - led to the IWA setting up a subsidiary company, Essex Waterways Ltd, to rescue the Navigation. On November 14th, 2005, EWL took over the day-to-day management and maintenance on ten-year rolling agreements in perpetuity, whilst the Proprietors continued as the Canal's landlord, maintaining its statutory role as Navigation Authority and maintaining the bye-laws.

The EWL saved the Navigation from closure. It now operated the Navigation for the public benefit, with a small number of full-time paid employees, namely, the Waterways Manager, three lengthsmen, lock and basin staff at the busy Heybridge Basin, plus some seasonal staff. Unfortunately, the administrators sold all the major assets, such as tea room, caravan sites, lock houses, even the trip boats. Leaving EWL to raise income for maintenance from moorings, angling and canoeing, willow sales, water sales, trip boat operation and grants. Volunteers undertake much of the work, with major projects helped out by the WRGies Canal Camps. See

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFyUllfgToY>

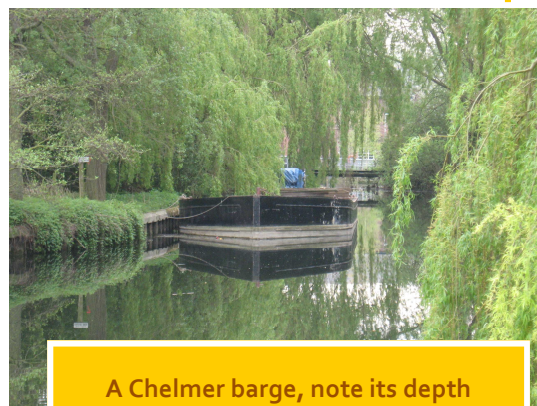
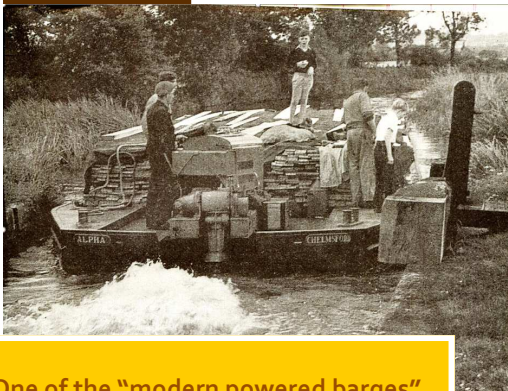
for further information. (with thanks to Neil Edwards, Company Secretary, EWL.)

Ivan Cane

Quagmire

One of the "modern powered barges" photographed by E.Boesch c1962.

"Essex Waterways Ltd took over the day-to-day management and maintenance of the Navigation, whilst the Proprietors continued as the Canal's landlord."



A Chelmer barge, note its depth markings. (2011)

Boating News - Graham Pressman

On 16th June, the aquatic weed cutter resumed work on an almost daily basis. Ebridge Mill Pond has been kept more or less weed-free for model boats, small craft and swimmers. Sadly, a paddle broke a few days later, so I have had to bring it home and had the paddle re-built with the help of

volunteers. I extend my thanks to all involved. As a result the boat was back in

action on Wednesday 22nd July. I shall then be able to resume training of a new weed-cutter operating volunteer.

On Saturday 18th July, we took our 1st couple out on *Ella II* since the lockdown. The boat took a fair bit of cleaning up after half a season idle, but it was worth it. The boat is being cleaned down with anti-viral chemicals between each trip, passenger numbers are limited to six, all from the same household or bubble. Steerers are over 6'6" away with a mask.



Glenis Dillon



G. Pressman

Coming Events

Boat Trips - If you are interested in yourself and your family - or a bubble - taking a trip along the canal, please contact Graham Pressman, on 07585 160 772.

Demonstration Day- Ebridge Lock- Sunday 16th August - 10 am to 4:30pm

This year, instead of its usual extensive displays, beer and food provision, the Trust will be providing opportunities for people to come and see its recent work and equipment. *Ella II* will be offering pre-booked trips for "bubbles"; a demonstration of Weasel's de-scaling, with Ultra High Pressure Eco-friendly blasting machine; volunteers blacking the hull (see page 9); the weed boat operating along the Canal; re-planking on the lower gates plus displays of the Trust's machinery used for maintaining the banks. Trustees and Officials will also be on hand to answer your queries. It is hoped that the Ebridge Model Boat Club, paddleboarders, swimmers and kayakers will likewise be in attendance.

AGM - At the moment, the Trust is unable to arrange a venue and time for this year's AGM. Hopefully, the situation will be clearer by September, when the date, requisite notice and papers can be circulated.

STOP PRESS.

At the end of July, the Trust's Weedcutter started work on the Lower Canal, at the request of the owners, cutting and removing weed along the length above Tonnage Bridge.

G. Pressman



From The Chair

It has been very pleasing to see how much the volunteer group in the Trust has been able to achieve in relative safety – isolation . We are fortunate that so much can be done in the open air on a solitary basis , in a bubble or at a distance.

The canal banks and the environs continue to be heavily used by walkers and their dogs and a wide range of minor activities continue with the blessing of the Old Canal Co Ltd, Laurie Ashton's company including one sided water polo practice during those four weeks of cloudless spring.

It has not stopped a few contacting Nigel Lloyd our administrator about matters outside the control of the Trust. It seems that because our efforts are very visible we should receive complaints and deal with rutted bank tops and inadequate notices.

Elsewhere in this edition you will read of the progress at Ebridge and the progress with the bank height raising north of Ebridge Spillway.

You can expect to see a recovery of the momentum of Ebridge project, which we hope will achieve the completion of the works at the lock this year . Very public proof of our intention and competence appears to be the main reason given for joining the Trust. We must be content that others merely enjoy what we have completed so far.

I hope that you will be able to bring friends and others to the Canal as further restrictions are lifted. We need to increase the membership and income now that we have taken on the care and maintenance of the canal from Ebridge to Bacton Wood Lock under an arrangement with the Old Canal Co and the Environment Agency.

Tom Carr, 15 July 2020

Funding Round-up

Interconnector (UK) Ltd kindly awarded us a grant for the purchase of an electronic dissolved oxygen meter to support our environmental management plans in the canal corridor.

The Worstead Festival fund chose to support part of the cost of refurbishing the Ebridge Lower Lock gates and it is expected that these gates will be installed later on this year.

A local entrepreneur made a very generous donation towards the establishment of refreshment facilities for our volunteers. This provided two Stainless Steel free standing Kitchen workbenches, fitted with a sink and an instant hot water heater.

The Geoffrey Watling Trust once again chose to support our activities with a grant towards the purchase of a replacement generator, an additional strimmer/brushcutter to support increased clearance work and our own cement mixer

With the support of 'North Walsham in Bloom' and the Local Horticultural Society we made a bid to the RHS towards the purchase of specialist indigenous wildflower seeds for our conservation areas. This was put on hold due to the lockdown.

Mark Shopland, Grants Officer

Contact the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust CIO

Working To Secure Norfolk's Canal Heritage

North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust CIO

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Email the Trust's Officers:

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Membership - Andrea,	membership@nwdct.org
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Media - James	Media@nwdct.org

Administrator's Notes

The Trust is starting to come out of hibernation after the COVID crisis. There has been little to report on the Administration front. A small team have been meeting virtually, using Zoom, to keep matters ticking over. I am pleased to report that a meeting of socially-distancing Trustees was arranged for July 20th.

Unfortunately, we were been unsuccessful in applying for a discretionary business grant to assist us with loss of revenue caused by the COVID crisis. However, I have been able to sort out a rateable value for Unit 4. NNDC gave us an 80% discount as we are a charity - which has been a great help. I am also taking on the Insurance responsibilities from David, Revill, data is currently being transferred between parties.

Nigel Lloyd

Membership Secretary's Notes

There has been a steady stream of membership applications (all but one electronic) adding a further 15 members to our list, and whom we welcome. It was decided that, during COVID, we would not be chasing members for due subs. It remains to be seen how many lapsed.

Andrea Lamyman

Briggate Lock. The Trust's Archives have been lucky in receiving three pictures of Briggate Lock in the 1950/60's over the past few months. One (right) from our member, Warwick Press, in NSW Australia, is dated 1953, whereas the front cover picture from around 1960, shows more leaks from the lock cill. The front cover picture also shows water coming out of the right ground paddle culvert, even though the paddle was not raised. Maybe this was signifying, even at that date, that the culvert was collapsing. A later photo, from 1966, shows the left gate planking had collapsed by then. Note also the Yarmouth and North Norfolk Railway Bridge in the background. If anyone has a better picture of this bridge - please let the archivist know.



Our thanks to Richard Howlett, Wayne Beauchamp, Warwick Press and Mark Price.

QUAGMIRE Summer 2020



Raising The Banks



Raised Banks at Little London, May 2020—Alex Martell See page 9