

QUAGMIRE

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST CIO



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AUGUST 2021

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Laurie Ashton 1947-2021



August 2021

Laurie Ashton

On June 28th, a group of friends and family joined together for a memorial service, at Spa Common, in memory of Laurie. Volunteers had erected four gazebos, overlooking the Canal, Mill Gardens and Laurie's Lock. The service was conducted by celebrant Fiona Collett, and extracts of the service are shown below.

Welcoming comments were given by Fiona, who then read the following tribute "written by the lady, who spent half a century with him, his wife Julie":

"Laurie Ashton

An extraordinary man, Laurie was born in Buckhurst Hill, Essex in 1948. A lower middle-class family whose father worked on the railways – steam of course in those days.

Early on in his infancy he received a simple Meccano set, followed by more intricate sets on subsequent birthdays and I believe that by assembling the pieces through various configurations until he got the outcome he wanted, helped channel his future. Right from the start, his ability to envisage how things worked, how they were best put together and different ways to make them work optimally – together with his never ending desire to learn more, made him the self-made man that he became.

In his youth at school, he won a scholarship and then attended the local grammar school where he continued his education. He flourished in all the sciences, especially physics and mathematics. And because of his love of reading and books alongside his never ending desire to learn more, he also flourished in English and foreign languages, speaking fluent French and German. By the time he left Grammar School he almost certainly had enough knowledge under his belt to succeed in life.

However, Laurie was very 'hands on' – he wasn't going to sit behind a desk. He took an apprenticeship with Browns Engineering in nearby Loughton. In the meantime, at night college, he qualified for a higher degree in Engineering. In his late teens /early twenties he got a job in the research and development lab at MK electronics, some of you may remember the name, their products were timeless. During this time he also attended lectures at the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers at Savoy place, in the Strand in London – a place of which he later became a member.

Coincidentally, also in my early twenties I was a stenographer at the institute.

Shortly afterwards as fate would have it, I met Laurie at a party. I think it was love at first sight. But when he offered to take me home, what a surprise when I saw a converted 1950's bus outside. – I knew then he was a bit out of the ordinary.

I can bore you now for the next millennium but as we are not far away from Sheringham, I will just tell you that at the beginning of our courtship, I was baffled as to why he never made a date at the weekends and I didn't like to ask.

But eventually he revealed that he was a volunteer for the north Norfolk Sheringham and Weybourne Railway. As a child, Laurie used to watch the trains steam past behind the houses opposite his home in Buckhurst Hill and I can also remember lying in bed at night listening to the clonking and clanging of steam trains in the sidings of the station at the top of my road in London. Needless to say, soon after, I met some of his fellow volunteers and enjoyed many an hour with them. One of the first tasks of the Volunteers was the arduous laying of tracks in the 1960's. But through the extremely hard work of the volunteers we can now enjoy the fruits of

their labour and the pleasure of this wonderful historic line today. What a sad day it was when Beeching started to close them down.

We got married on Laurie's birthday 3rd July 1971 after which we began an amazing eventful journey through life. It wasn't always easy but where there's a will there's always a way.

We started off with nothing apart from what we had saved from our previous employments but Laurie wasn't going to be told what to do any more. He was going to do what he wanted to do or at least try. With a lot of hard work and a little luck on the way, our first success in business was in Buckhurst Hill, where we made our home.

Since then there have been many pursuit, too many to count on one hand. We have retired three times only to begin another escapade shortly afterwards

There always seemed to be another challenge on the horizon. - Laurie couldn't resist a challenge, so before we even had time to brush ourselves down from the previous challenge we had already started another.

We moved to North Walsham in 1995 and bought the Mill - a little bit run down. He now wants to renovate the Mill, the 16 foot diameter water wheel was completed some time ago, apart from the paddles, but these can be added at any time in the future. The lock you are looking at was completed by Laurie and a very talented and skilled mason and bricky, then in his 70's, Mr John Brice, now in his 80's, unfortunately he was unable to be here today because of ill health. But I'm hoping he can make a trip from Cheltenham to see us soon.

But before the bricklaying could commence, there was the daunting task of initially removing several large trees that had self-rooted inside the lock over the years, together with plenty of over growth and the like. Laurie bought his first digger - followed by an array of cranes and other machinery, necessary to carry out the forthcoming work. But renovating the lock alone was not enough, so shortly after we bought two miles of canal. Laurie never shied away from hard mucky, dirty work - nothing seemed to surpass him.

The rest is history but several years on we are nearly there, looking back now in 2021 I cannot believe where the years have gone, probably because we never stood still long enough for the cobwebs to settle under our feet.

I wouldn't have changed it for the world."

Following the Lord's Prayer, Ivan Cane, on behalf of the volunteers, was invited to talk about the last twenty years of Canal restoration:

What a remarkable man, what a history. You may not have known, but Laurie even had a category G Driving Licence - to drive a steam roller. This was very typical of Laurie's hidden talents. And what better place to remember him than here, at his Canal, close to his re-built lock on which he laboured with John to rebuild, with the lock gates that Laurie crafted from ex-Cromer sea groynes, and a stretch of water enjoyed by hundreds every year.

Julie has asked me to talk about the restoration of the Canal, that has been a large part of their life over the past twenty years, and I am touched and honoured to be asked.

When Laurie was in his late teens, as we have heard from Julie, he volunteered on the NN Railway. Around the same time I was working for the "opposition" - on restoring the Stratford-on-Avon Canal with David Hutchings. David was my idol, and I've always seen Laurie as a "David" type character. David had vision, energy and single mindedness to get a project done. When the IWA aimed to have a rally in Stourbridge, British Waterways said "No! Can't be done", and refused to clear the

chocked up canal. David Hutchings got a few friends, a grabline and the BBC to film, and overnight cleared the obstructions. Laurie was like that. If the banks needed raising, he'd find someone like Carl Bird to supply the material. If he needed to move the soil - he'd buy a dumper. He had some of the biggest bonfires I've ever seen. And, as for mud - who can forget that bend by Pigney's Wood.

But to return to the story. David Hutchings actually came and surveyed the Canal in the 1970's and saw it as ripe for restoration. The East Anglian Waterways Assoc., through Alan Faulkner, worked through the 1990's of the legalities and paperwork, leading to the work parties being set up at Briggate and Honing locks.

Now there was another lad, in his late teens, who wanted to explore further up the Canal. He talked to Alan Faulkner, who pointed him in the direction of a Mr Ashton at Bacton Wood Mill. This lad, Graham Brown, found Spa Common Bridge and was amazed to see that some work had been undertaken on the quay heading below the bridge. He chatted to this boiler-suited gentleman, leaning on the bridge, about the Canal and the work that was happening, and asked him if he knew a Mr Ashton. The gentleman said "He's around here somewhere" and led Graham on a bit, until he revealed that he was the Mr Ashton in question.

Maybe Laurie saw in Graham a reflection of himself as a young teen, for Graham and his two mates, Ian and Matt, were invited to join Laurie in clearing BW lock chamber, dredging (sorry de-silting) the chamber below, whilst camping overnight on the bank. Graham soon became a firm friend of Julie and Laurie, and I'm pleased to say that Graham is here, with us, today.

Those works in September, 2001, led to Laurie being John's labourer as they rebuilt the lock. Then Laurie built the top gates, followed by the massive lower gates - in his shed - that he built especially for the job.

In 2009, Laurie and Julie bought the Canal, and I can always remember the day I passed Ebridge, only to be astonished at seeing a BW dredger, *Weasel*, sitting in a rectangle of water, there. Soon Laurie & Jeremy undertook the huge task of removing decades of silt, clearing the way for navigable waters to return to Spa Common.

The EAWA, and later the Trust, lent their volunteers' hands, wherever they could, to help Laurie reach his goal. Whilst Jeremy and Laurie and their machinery concentrated on the stretch to Swafield, the Trust's workers laid bricks at Royston and Ebridge Spillways, and raised the funds and undertook the refitting of the top gates at Ebridge. Laurie's charisma helped to inspire people, such as Jonathan, Terry, Alan, Frank, Dennis, Bev, Mary, Jane, - the Chris's, Davids, Grahams, Marks, Steves, Toms and many many others, who are here today. to work to help Laurie's vision become a reality. The Canal from here to Ebridge is a fitting monument to Laurie's work and vision. It has been a godsend to the Community's health and well being over the past COVID years, to those who have been wild swimming, youngsters bombing each other, paddleboarders, model boaters, canoeists, walkers, picnickers, anglers, birders and gongoozlers, plus all those who have been able to enjoy the delights of the wildlife whilst travelling on the tripboats. The wildlife, the fauna and flora, fish and invertebrates have all flourished - and Laurie always enjoyed his nature,



Laurie clearing below BW Lock, 20 Sept 2001. (G.Brown)

Laurie's legacy is even enshrined in the volumes of Hansard, where his work is described, in a speech to the House of Commons, by MP Duncan Baker, as "nowhere is there a finer example of conservation than the sterling work of the OCC - it was breath-taking".

Laurie's passing, at this time, when the light at the end of the tunnel was becoming so bright, is devastating. At a time when *Weasel* will soon be able to pass through Ebridge Lock; when the NCC are starting to talk about replacing Royston Bridge; when Jeremy's labours to complete the bank heightening towards Swafeld are close, as is the re-watering of the Canal, bringing water back to his waterwheel at the Mill. Which is where he and Julie started.

We know that Laurie would want to see the Canal restoration completed, and opened again to its former glory, as it was back in 1826. This is Julie's and Jeremy's wish, and the Trust will do all it can to help work towards that goal. The re-fitting of the Ebridge bottom gates are at the top of the list, whilst other volunteers, such as Jonathan and Graham Pressman will continue to maintain the banks and channel, keeping a working Canal open to the community for them to enjoy the toil of Laurie's labours.

I would like to particularly thank Jeremy, Jane and their family and Jonathan for all they have done to support Julie, over the last couple of week's and to keep the Canal work ticking over.

My personal memories will always be of Laurie, in his boiler suit, greeting me with that Essex lilt "Hello Ivan". His signature 'Laurie Shrug' and his fantastic laugh, especially when I threw my prize handsaw into his roaring bonfire.

Laurie, Thank you for all of this - we will continue your work until we can all sail up to Swafeld, and down to Wayford Bridge Marina and beyond. Thank you Julie for letting me say these few words.



Track off - no problem that a fag won't cure.

Pigney's Wood Nov 2015 (IC)

Fiona then asked if anyone else wished to say a few words. Tom Carr recalled the 1970's:

Soon after leaving school, I joined the railway society at Sheringham and became involved in irregular volunteering with a group of mostly east Londoners and Essex young men, who came up to Norfolk at the weekends. The society was the brainchild of people like David Rees and Chris Bird who, with others, had organised the tours that could call on the remaining locos for steam tours in the region.



The volunteer work parties were forming in the early 60's, when I would have been working alongside Laurie on various projects. I think that these included the overnight rebuilding of the golf links crossing at Sheringham and the building of footings for the signal box at Weybourne, which had

Laurie, fourth from left, with cigarette, in the company of the track gang (Chris Bird - JOINT LINE Summer 2015)

been transported by low loader from Holt. With Bernard Amies, who farmed near North Walsham, I learnt to replace and tension barbed wire on the boundary fences, while Laurie worked on more demanding jobs better suited to his skills.

So when Laurie and I turned to talk of railway restoration, during a lull in the re-hanging of gates at Ebridge Lock, we realised that we must have digging adjacent holes trenches at the same time without realising it. It is strange that 55 years had passed since our first meeting and memory has not retained more of what we did together despite my having a photo of shovelers at the time.



Laurie, third from left, preparing the foundations of Weybourne signal box. (Chris Bird - JOINT LINE Summer 2015)

Fiona then invited people to share their memories and let Laurie live in their hearts, and recited the following, slightly doctored, poem:

A canal is a mix
Of fragility and strength
Of ancient locks
Up and down the length
And breadth of the East
And, for what it's worth (they soon dry, wring 'em out)
Those pairs of soaking socks

A lot of people lend
Willing brains and hefty brawn
A helping hand
In a flooded dawn
In all the pouring rain;
And in Ebridge or Bacton, or Swafeld
Loads of great ideas

A canal is a road
For a lot of freight to ride,
Landscape to read
Two centuries wide.
And here in the sun
Workshops growing strong
And, to top it off (and here, and now)
Waterside restored

A lot of people love
The canals and what they mean
To work and live
By the water's gleam;
They will have their day
Then everyone will say (or sing, or shout)
Canals are back for good

Fiona added:

Laurie passed away unexpectedly on the 2nd of June and sense of loss felt by those who knew and loved him is immeasurable.

Julie and Laurie had spent their entire married life together, they were a team. They shared a life and a work ethic that many would have shied away from.

Between them was a mutual love of the life they had built between them, a life that has led them here to this incredible house and this beautiful canal.

A committal followed.



Photos J.Kelleher

Jane and her family had prepared a refreshment buffet in the Units, which was enjoyed by all, swapping stories and memories of Laurie, his machines and his Canal. ☯



Archive Slot— The Grand Opening

Dr Richard Joby

In the February Quagmire, we mentioned the late Dr Richard Joby's 1977 book on the history of the Canal. For the Archive Spot, this time around, we are re-printing his account of the Grand Opening of the Canal.🌐



Eventually, a meeting on 15 December 1824 resolved to build the canal, starting immediately. Three score labourers were finally assembled in the market place twelve weeks later, did a little token digging and celebrated for the rest of the day. The 'Norwich Mercury' report gives the number of navvies at 100 and has them coming from Bedfordshire. It would appear that not all of them assembled in the market to march behind the band to start work. The major part of the digging was completed in fourteen months for the first seven miles, the first wherry being able to reach Ebridge on 14 June 1826.

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The first delivery to the Cubitt mill at Ebridge was watched by "thousands of spectators" with the workmen being given "a plentiful treat of Mr Sharpe's strong ale and Mr Barclay's brown stout". This was followed on 29 August 1826 by the formal opening, reported thus in the 'Norwich Mercury' of 2 September 1826:

"The North Walsham & Dilham Canal was opened for Navigation on Tuesday last, and as might be expected, both from the importance as well as the novelty of the event, attracted the greater part of the population residing in that neighbourhood. The vessels were appointed to meet at Wayford Bridge, where the Canal commences".

"At an early hour the bells of North Walsham were ringing a merry peal. On the Market Cross and principal Inns the national colours were displayed".

"The procession was led by a fine vessel under the command of Captain Wenn, in which the Lieutenant of the County and Lord Suffield, with the Committees, and many Gentlemen of the neighbourhood, embarked at eleven o'clock, followed by a small boat called the Gazetteer, commanded by Capt. Green, with a band of music on board; the next in procession was Capt. Saul; then followed a number of large vessels, filled with company from the surrounding neighbourhood. The day was most favourable and the wind fair, which soon brought the fleet through the first three locks to that beautiful piece of water above Mr Partridge's Mill on the estate of the Hon. Col. At this place the procession lay to, and the company partook of refreshments which had been provided for the occasion, the band, a most excellent one, playing national airs, etc. At this time upwards of a thousand people were afloat, and the road from North Walsham to Witton, and the banks of the canal, thronged with thousands of spectators, amongst them all the fashion and beauty of the neighbourhood, highly delighted with the novelty of the scene. After

remaining at this place an hour and a half the vessels again got under weigh, and proceeded through the remaining three locks, and on passing through the last entered a most beautiful piece of water on the domain of Lord Suffield (on which it is intended to establish an annual water frolic) and arrived at the termination, at Antingham, at four o'clock; from whence the company returned in procession, to the King's Arms in North Walsham. The procession was led by the Rev. W. Rees, master, and about 90 of the young gentlemen of the North Walsham Grammar School, who had been received on board the Committee's boat at Swafeld Bridge, and followed by the band, the carriage of Lord Suffield (drawn by four beautiful greys) containing his Lordship, Col. Wodehouse and the Hon. Edward Harbord, was next in succession, and was followed by a long train of carriages, gentlemen on horseback and a vast concourse of persons on foot, to the dinner at the King's Arms, at which the Hon. Lieutenant of the County presided at one table and Lord Suffield at the other. Between 50 and 55 persons were present."

Our thanks to Richard's family for permission to publish these facsimiles from his book. ☺



Sept 2001 GB



EAWA Work Party 2005

The Restoration of Bacton W



Sept 2020 AB



Feb 2017 IC



Feb 2017 IC



July 2012 IC



June 2012 IC

AB-Alan Bertram, MB-Mary Black,
GB-Graham Brown, IC-Ivan Cane.



Flood Lock 2001 - 2021



Mar 2006 MB



Sept 2009 IC



Nature Watch along the Canal with Suki, Bob and Pam

Alder Carr and Spa Common County Wildlife Sites: Parts of the NWDC Wildlife Corridor

This spring, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) asked me to resurvey one of their woodland County Wildlife Sites (CWS) near North Walsham – Alder Carr. This is a privately-owned small (2.2 ha) but unspoilt and attractive wood south west of Royston Bridge and to the west of the North Walsham and Dilham Canal (NWDC) – see map. It's separated from the Canal by part of another CWS – Spa Common. This comprises the damp meadow between Alder Carr and the Canal (we'll call it Alder Meadow); Purdy's Marsh; more damp meadow beyond the stream round Purdy's Marsh; and the semi-restored Canal in between. Since surveying Alder Carr, my colleague Mary Ghulam and I have gone on to survey Alder Meadow and the Canal part of the Spa Common CWS; and plan to do the rest during the coming year. Why I'm writing about them is that these sites form an important part of the semi-natural (and mainly privately owned) 'sleeve' that largely envelops the Canal and helps to make it so valuable as a wildlife corridor. It was therefore serendipitous and timely that the NWT gave me access to some of this private land this year, as I've become increasingly interested in the wildlife corridor aspect of the NWDC.



Alder Carr: We found over ninety plant species when we surveyed the wood in May, and our birder friend and helper Bob Cobbold found twenty six species of birds in a quick subsequent recce of the wood (see list). The site has probably been wet woodland for a long time - at least since the 1838 OS map and probably longer; is surrounded by old hedge banks, and contains many veteran alder, including old coppice trees. It may well be a *bona fide* ancient woodland judging by some of the indicator plants found (marked * below). The centre of the site is marshy and open with occasional ponds, and species of interest here include Large Bitter-creed, Common Hemp-nettle, Yellow flag, and Skullcap. The surrounding woodland includes a wide variety of trees and shrubs, including dense thickets of Holly and Rhododendron, and has a fine woodland floor/spring flora. This includes Wood Anemone*, Lesser Celandine*, Bluebell*, Three-nerved Sandwort*, Primrose*, Sanicle*, and common dog violet. A good variety of ferns also grow there: Hart's-tongue, Broad Buckler-fern, Male-fern, Polypody, and Soft Shield-fern.

Bob Cobbold's Bird List for Alder Carr

Buzzard	Woodpecker	Magpie	Cettis	Sedge
Sparrow	Cuckoo	Jay	Warbler	Warbler
Hawk	Stock Dove	Song Thrush	Whitethroat	Wren
Kestrel	Woodpigeon	Blackbird	Blackcap	Great Tit
Pheasant	Carrion Crow	Robin	Chiff Chaff	Chaffinch
Green	Jackdaw	House Martin	Reed Warbler	Reed Bunting



Jay, Chiff Chaff, Cuckoo - B. Cobbold

Spa Common: Alder Meadow is a damp site which was probably once summer pasture or hay meadow. Long ungrazed/uncut, it is now dominated by tall, coarse species like Dock, Nettle and Hogweed, with scattered Willow, Oak, Alder and Birch. This tall herb community does contain some more interesting/attractive species, including Common Reed, Purple Small-reed, Greater Pond Sedge, Greater Tussock-sedge, Yellow Iris, Marsh Thistle, and Water Chickweed. There's also some fine clumps of the unusual golden-scaled Scaly Male-fern. In addition, some surprising relicts of the meadow's former state still remain, including Pignut and Knapweed which are normally found on much dryer, less nutrient-rich land. And – as with so many CWSs - grazing could give other less-competitive meadow species a chance to reappear. The same probably holds true for the yet-to-be-resurveyed eastern parts of this CWS.

A final treat before we left this area: we got a proper sighting of a Water Vole swimming across the back soke by the Canal - magic.

Conclusion The map shows CWSs and a Site of Special Scientific Interest along the Canal. The NWT are open to designating more parts of the Canal 'sleeve' as CWSs (and I can think of several sections north-west of Ebridge Lock that should qualify). So increasingly it seems that the whole NWDC and its environs are tending towards becoming one extended CWS - which I personally welcome and think is a desirable destination for this valuable canal corridor. 🌀



Pam Tyler - the BDS County Recorder for Dragonflies visited Ebridge Mill-pond on 24th June and recorded the listed species on the day. She states:

It includes totally unexpected sighting of a Downy Emerald. This is a dragonfly that breeds in woodland ponds, so the open habitat at Ebridge is totally unsuitable. I believe it must have been a wandering male from the small population over 2 miles away, so a sighting that is unlikely to be repeated anytime soon.

The Downy Emerald has in fact been recorded before, along the Canal, however, it is the first time the protected Norfolk Hawker has been spotted and listed. Which is good news. It was hoped at one time to attempt to make a habitat for the Norfolk Hawker, on Purdy's Marsh, but a change in NWT staffing, unfortunately, meant that the project never materialised. 🌀

Common Name
Banded Demoiselle
Four-spotted Chaser
Red-eyed Damselfly
Common Blue Damselfly
Azure Damselfly
Emperor (dragonfly)
Blue-tailed Damselfly
Downy Emerald
Norfolk Hawker
Hairy Dragonfly



Above - Female Blue-tailed Damselfly

Left - Male Norfolk Hawker

Right - Female Hairy Dragonfly

Fishing Notes - Tom Webster

Finally the glorious 16th of June has come and we look forward to another fishing season on the canal, just to add the usual reminder the pike fishing season doesn't start until October.

We have received some wonderful reports of specimen roach, rudd, perch and bream, just waiting for this seasons first tench report but we know they are there. Please feel free to share with us your catches via our Facebook group.

A special mention to one of our regular anglers Jamie Shailes, his regular updates on catches have been a hit on our social media pages, its these type of reports from anglers which form an important part of data capture for Trusts continuing work for the restoration of the canal.

Finally I will leave you with a small sample of some of Jamie's canal specimens.

Tight lines, Tom - Fisheries Officer 🎣



Rudd



Rudd



Roach



Perch

A perfick end to the day - captured by Glenis Dillon at Ebridge Millpond on 17th July 2021



Meet Graham Brown

Hi all, Ivan has asked



me to introduce myself so here goes. My name is Graham Brown and I am really happy to have been given the opportunity to help the Trust and Old Canal Company restore the canal. I have had previous involvement in the waterway having led some initial work parties in late 2000 and in 2001 at Briggate, Honing, Ebridge and Bacton Wood. Prior to that I had undertaken some canal restoration work with the Water Recovery Group on the Lichfield Canal and Droitwich Junction Canal.

I had the great fortune to work with Laurie Ashton at his boatyard at Wayford Bridge prior to and between University terms over a couple years. I have great memories of boating up the canal from Wayford with him and working on clearing his lock at Bacton Wood.

After University I worked for Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park as a Boat Ranger and then on the Forth and Clyde Canal manning the Falkirk flight of locks. I then became a hydrologist working on Scottish hydro schemes, flood risk and water supply schemes. I returned to Norfolk in 2007 and started volunteering again on canal work parties around the same time. I also moved to a cottage in Lock Road, Honing and spend many an evening canoeing below the lock.

In 2009 I became a Director of the East Anglian Waterways Association and was briefly a Trustee of the NW&DCT in 2010. Around this time I went to work for Norfolk County Council to establish their Lead Local Flood Authority service and ran this for 7 years. It was in 2012 that I took over responsibility for the regulation of small watercourses which meant I had to step down from my voluntary positions due to the potential for a conflict of interest to arise. Following this I moved South of Norwich as my growing family had outgrown our small North Norfolk cottage.

I have been away from the restoration of the canal for 9 years and I am in awe of everything achieved in that time by the Trust and the Old Canal Company. I feel very privileged to be given another opportunity to support this amazing waterway and to preserve this special piece of our heritage for future generations. Whilst I am devastated that Laurie is not here with us to push us on, I am more determined than ever to help Julie, Jeremy and the Trust achieve a lasting legacy to his memory for others to experience and enjoy.

In taking up this role I very much look forward to reacquainting myself with some old friends and to making some new ones as we bring the canal back to life. See you all soon. 🌀

WORK PARTY DATES FOR AUGUST

Sunday 1st August and 29th August 2021

PLUS Help needed over the weekend of 14/15th August to set up, from 9 a.m. on the Saturday and take down from 3:30 p.m. on the Sunday.

Please Note - no Thursday Work Parties planned for August, at the moment.

Chair's Notes - David Revill

It is only a matter of months since you voted for me to become your chairman, but what a tumultuous time this has been – some good and some very bad. The worst occasion

was, of course, the passing of the very hard working owner of the Bacton Stretch, the most worked up-on section of the canal, Laurie Ashton. I expressed our thoughts in the June *Q-Extra* about Laurie so here shall only say that he is, and will be, greatly missed as a friend, visionist and a wonderful example of the get-the-job-done person!

On the good side, despite the dreadful disease spreading over the land in the form of Covid-19, great strides have been made with the composition of the Trust. To lighten work-loads on some, other supporting posts have been and are being created. An online membership scheme and donation system has been instigated and is working very well; the first and experienced WPL on the canal in 2000 has returned now as our Work Party Co-ordinator; others have re-affirmed their dedication to the Trust; our volunteers at the 'work face' and behind the scenes are beaver-ing away with renewed vigour and we are expecting to soon create a new post in the field of welfare.

Restoring a canal is not only shedding blood, sweat and tears in the mud, but nowadays spending hours and hours talking, discussing, negotiating and eventually agreeing on the way forward towards our goal.

For this, I thank you **ALL**: our Trustees, Officers, Volunteers, Supporters and Members in all fields for your help and dedication – without YOU we could not move forward. I must stress here that this also applies to all former Trustees, Officers, Volunteers et al for without their hard work in the past, we could not be where we are today!

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible for an enjoyable time at the Open Days at Ebridge on August 14th and 15th. And especially at the Volunteers and Members Evening session from 6 p.m. Stay safe 🌀

ICT Notes - Julie Kelleher

Website: The NW&D Canal Trust website continues to be improved upon. James, our Press Officer, is our second

website administrator and has made some fantastic changes to the layout of the Leisure Activities section especially the 'Eco-friendly Boat Trips' page and many other activity pages. Also included on this page is a map of North Walsham with the footpath to the canal marked from the corner of Bacton Road and Crow Road in North Walsham.

Website NEW FEATURES: We've added in three places 'DONATION' buttons, the main one being in the section called 'Support Us'. Payments are made immediately into our PayPal account and every few weeks all the monies raised are transferred over to the Trust NatWest bank account.

You may have also become aware of our new MemberMoJo facility. We have 'membership buttons' in various places on the Trust website that will take you to this new feature. You can amend your membership database entry (record) and make a payment as required. We hope that you find these facilities useful especially during these days where many are not using cash anymore.

Ebridge Information Weekend: Cash not necessary, only a smartphone because you will be able to make purchases (food or merchandise) using our new QR 'event' codes.

Social Media: A few of our trust Officers are administrators for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram where many of our supporters upload their photos and stories of their days along the North Walsham and Dilham Canal. 🌀



Open Weekend 2019 (IC)

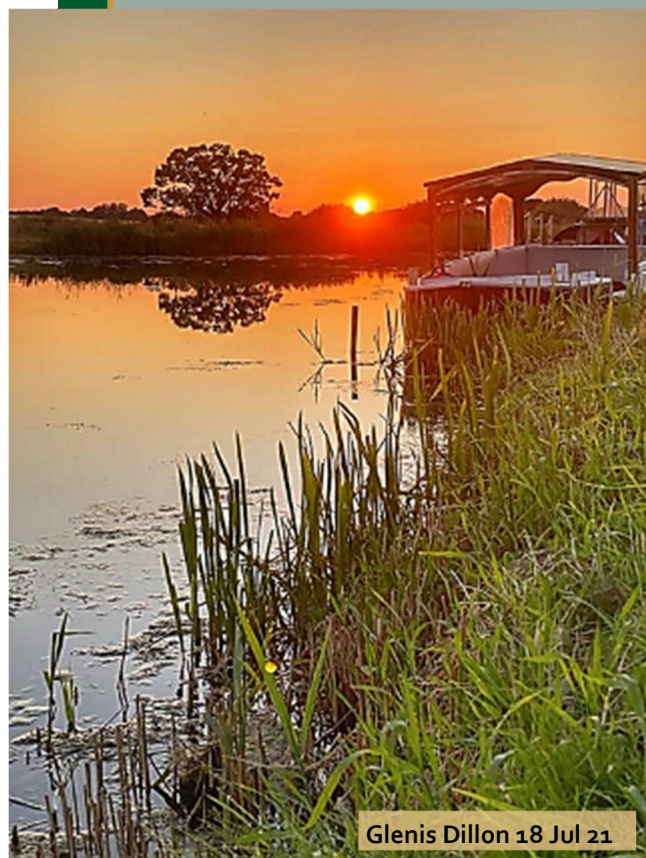


Boating News - Graham Pressman

We have had an incredibly quiet period with the trip boats, despite doing everything possible to ensure we are as Covid-Safe as it is possible to be. On public trips we are spreading passengers across two boats, run in tandem in a push-tow format. We keep *Ella II* for just one household and have Perspex screens fitted to the picnic bench on *Sue B.* so as to separate couples, whilst remaining within hearing of the other boat. The boats are anti-viral treated before every trip.

Everybody who has been on a trip with us has expressed their enjoyment and many have donated more than the minimum donations listed. For this I am very grateful, it makes it all feel worthwhile. For those who don't know, that's £7.00 per person on public trips and £40 per boat on charters (that'll be up to 6 persons per boat and no other member of the public aboard) as minimum requested donations. We did have a huge family (household) of passengers, spread over boat boats running in tandem. That was a wonderful trip. If I remember correctly, that ended up with 18 passengers between the two boats.

What's lovely is that most walkers, fisherfolk and other boaters wave and smile as we pass with passengers. That really is enjoyable to see. Of course, the passengers wave back, so it's great for everybody. This canal really has a truly all-encompassing bunch of users with such a wide range of hobbies and interests, all taking place in one happily shared space. ☺



Glenis Dillon 18 Jul 21

Press Date for the November 2021 edition of *Quagmire* is Monday 18th October.

Please keep those articles and photos coming in, to: qeditor@nwdct.org

Waters Elsewhere and Work Party Reports are held over to the next Edition

OPEN WEEKEND - 14th & 15th August - Ebridge Millpond

Saturday 11 - 5, Sunday 10 - 4

Parking available at the old Pet Shop, behind the mill, with thanks to Tim Briscoe

All Weekend

- ♦ Heritage Canoes
- ♦ Go Paddle with paddle boards
- ♦ Cromer Artspace Group with a display of art-work
- ♦ Model Boat Club
- ♦ Trust Boat Trips
- ♦ BBQ, teas, coffee, cakes etc.
- ♦ Licensed Bar with Real Ale, lager wine and soft drinks in conjunction with the Recruiting Sergeant of Coltishall.
- ♦ The Trust's various information stalls and sales

PLUS

Saturday

- ♦ Crazy Ladies Wild Water Swimmers

**6 p.m. onwards – Members and Volunteers Evening,
including the presentation of the Top and Bottom Gate
Trophies, Bar & BBQ**



Sunday

- ♦ Harvey Davison Chapter

**It is planned to have musical jams on both the Saturday and Sunday
afternoons**

Notice of the AGM.

**The AGM will be held in North Walsham, on Tuesday 12th October at 7:30p.m.
Further details will be published in the September Q-Extra.**

Contact the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust CIO

Working To Secure Norfolk's Canal Heritage



North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust CIO
Unit 4 Bacton Wood,
Anchor Road,
Spa Common,
North Walsham,
NR28 9AJ

Registered Charitable Incorporated
 Organisation No 1180474

Email the Trust's Officers:

Chair - David,	davgis@live.co.uk
Membership - Andrea,	membership@nwdct.org
General Information,	secretary@nwdct.org
Boat Trips - Graham P,	boating@nwdct.org
Fishing - Tom,	fishing@nwdct.org
Grants - John,	grants@nwdct.org
Work Parties - Graham B	workparty@nwdct.org
Administrator - John,	admin@nwdct.org
Quagmire - Ivan,	qeditor@nwdct.org
ICT - Julie,	ICT@nwdct.org
Wildlife - Suki,	sukipryce@hotmail.co.uk
Treasurer - Barry,	treasurer@nwdct.org
Media - James,	press@nwdct.org
Archivist (EAWA) - Ivan	archive@nwdct.org
Events - Graham M.	events@nwdct.org

A3

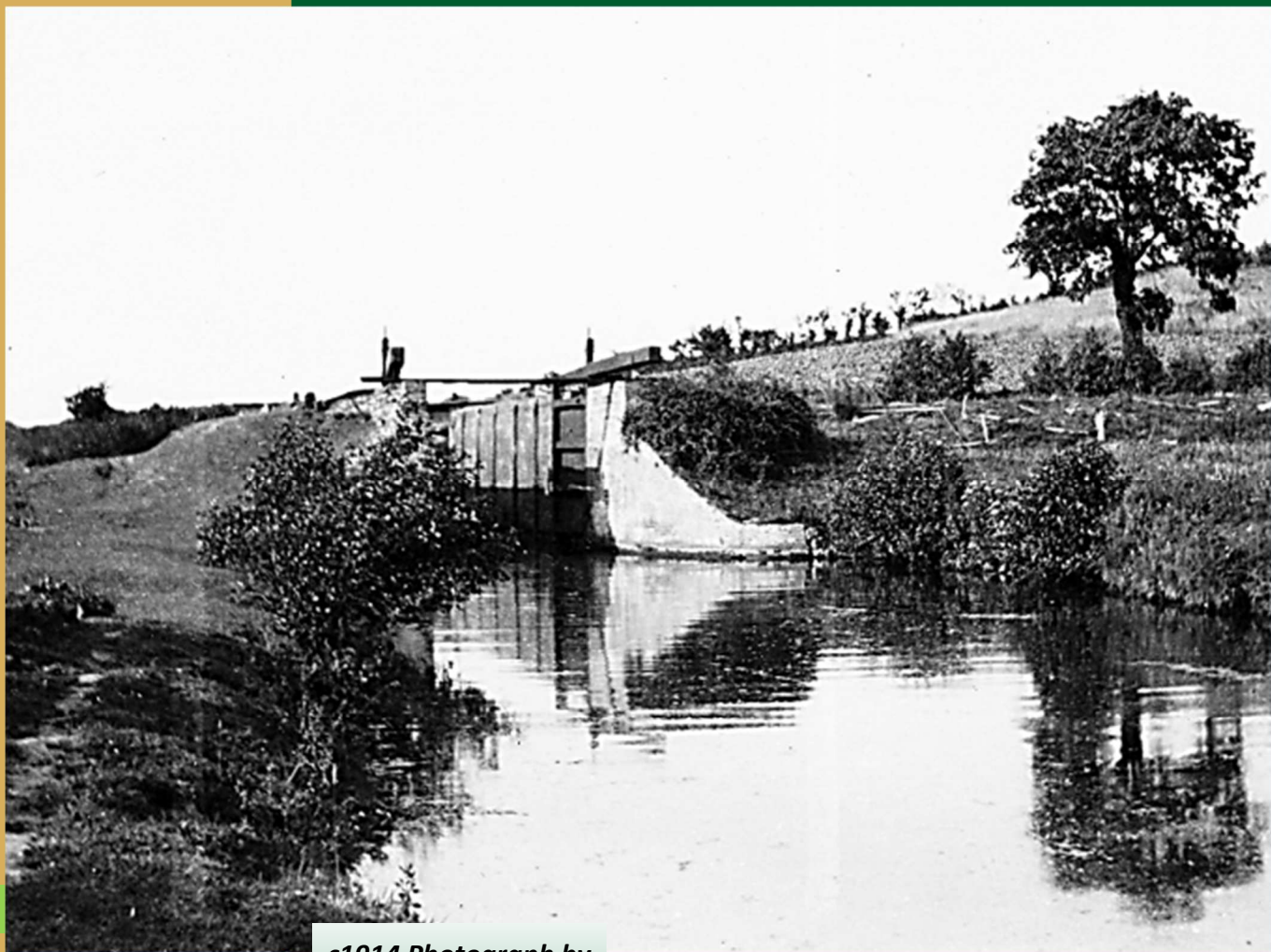
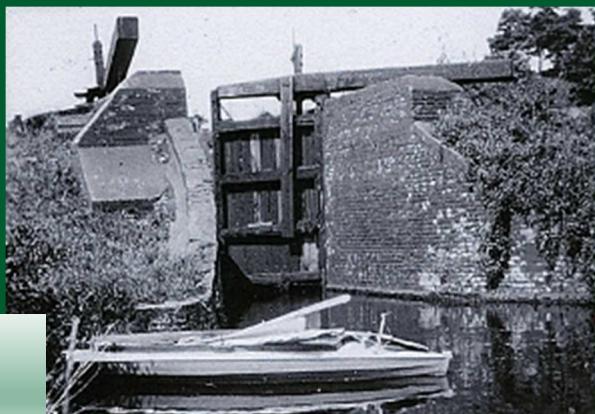
For copies of the Trust's Access Map of the Canal - showing access points, car parks, pubs etc on one side, and an O.S map with enlarged sections showing the locks, on the reverse, e-mail the editor - £1 + £1 p& p.

QUAGMIRE

August 2021

Bacton Wood Lock

1907
Sale Particulars



*c1914 Photograph by
E.M. Corbett, with
thanks to Jamie
Campbell.*



1956
NCC Archives

