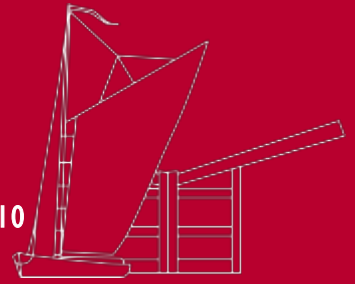


QUAGMIRE

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST CIO

QUAGMIRE 6.4

CHRISTMAS 2022



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Annual General Meeting of North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust

All current members of The Trust are invited to the AGM to be held at The Kings Arms Hotel in North Walsham on Thursday 12th of January 2023 at 7pm prompt.

Editorial

a week in the life of a Q editor

Thursday 8th December 2022

As one of the Trusts trustees, I shall be editing Quagmire this time. Hopefully we will have other trustees taking their turn in the future. Therefore, if it turns out that content is a little light, please blame me. I am writing this at the same time as I am sending out invitations to contribute, so only have the one article in hand so far. I'll write the results of my plea in the next paragraphs just before we publish.

Friday 9th December 2022

Well, yesterday I sent out a request to Officers and Trustees for content and this evening I can confirm that I have had 14 pages already. I am so impressed! Thanks to all.

Monday 12th December

Ivan kindly sent another article today. This one is on the subject of Permissive Paths.

Tuesday 13th December

Ivan's paths article edited into the software

Wednesday 14th December

The last article arrived this morning and has been inserted. Thanks to all contributors.

Having now experienced trying to prepare Quagmire for publication, I have come to truly appreciate the effort which Ivan has put into this over the years. **THREE CHEERS FOR IVAN!**

In the same way, my thanks go out to all contributors.

Now what we need is a new regular editor., please This isn't something I have time for every month, enjoyable as it is. I have the boats to run and am working with David Revill in Liaison. From next month I expect to be working with Bindwell Estates, down on the lower section, with my new wherry, at every opportunity. That lot is full time for me.

Like so many others, I've never had such a busy and varied schedule as I've had since retiring and wonder how I ever found the time for paid work.

Graham Pressman

From the Chair

The past few months have seen several, large movements in the operation of our Trust. Initially came the problems involved in the postponement of the Annual General Meeting. In accordance with the conditions of the CIO, we were able to re-arrange the date of this meeting to Thursday 12th January 2023, as you will now be aware.

Important and very valuable meetings have been held in various fields. Bringing our local MP Duncan Baker closer to the Trust's aims was a very good move, not only for the obvious, but also the hidden advantages of his position held in society. We appear to be gaining the confidence of the Environment Agency, based on our work already carried out, for example on the Ebridge Pound.

Our Work Party Leaders have overcome the problems occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic and appear to have held on to a good number of volunteers, which hopefully will increase in 2023 when the work fields expand to other areas.

Come the time, I expect that we shall be involved in helping the OCC in the re-watering task of the canal between Pigneys' Wood and Bacton Wood Lock.

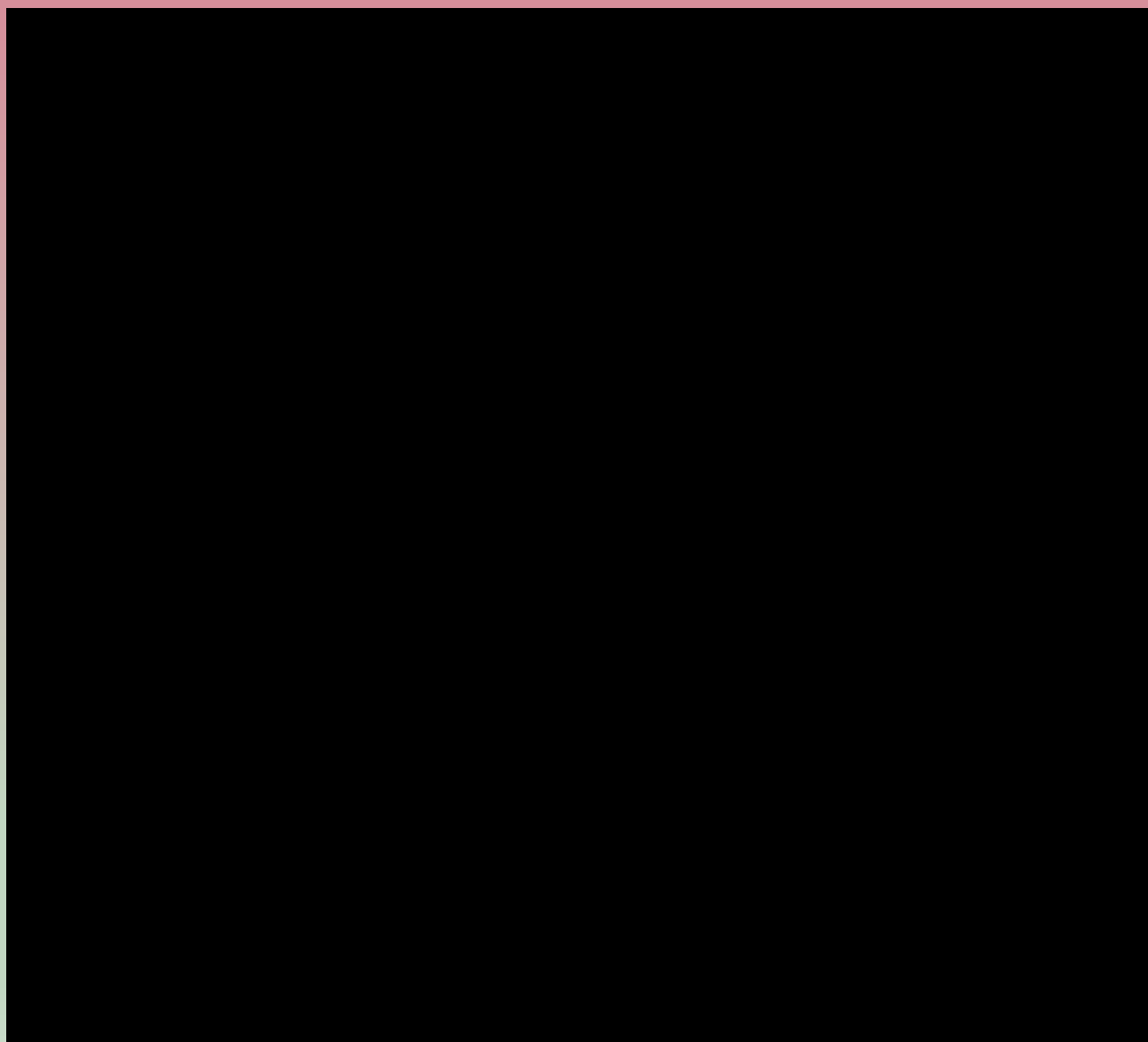
One sad point is the impending loss of our Membership secretary, who is moving on, having developed a wonderful members' list and information administration system.

I do look forward to a brighter and progressive 2023 with the co-operation of the Trustees, Officers and you, the all-important members!

David Revill
Chair

OPEN WEEKEND 2023

These two pages are going to be dedicated to the matter of the open weekend. David Batley has written the next page, so this page leaves me with the honour of pleading for helpers and organisers for all the various department heads, each of whom we hope will be heading up the organisation of their own displays etc.



There could be a new Norfolk wherry, called The Newun, available to conduct trips on the canal one day soon, depending on trustees' decision. Whichever boat we use, I ask that any available boat crew help in the preparations and crewing for that please.



NWDCT Open Weekend 2023

This morning, 5th December 2022, a trio of enthusiastic trustees met at Canal Trust headquarters.

The aim of the meeting was to start planning for the Open Weekend next summer. Part of this morning's discussion was about the venue for next year, is there another suitable place along the Canal that would show visitors a different aspect and potential activities that may

be enjoyed as the canal becomes better known?

David Batley (Funding Team Leader), and Graham Pressman (Boating Officer), would love to have some support and to create a team from trustees, officers and members of the Trust. Each department taking complete charge of their own section/display. Maybe you have some ideas about what would make a great weekend, you have connections with outdoor catering, musicians or other engaging activities to bring in visitors and introduce them to this pretty and developing canal.

If you would like to be involved, please email or phone

The as yet unconfirmed date for

NWDCT OPEN WEEKEND is **9th & 10th Sept**

Please email Graham at: boating@nwdct.org

Or phone Graham 07585 160 772

Work Parties News

Thanks to our volunteers for another great year restoring and maintaining the canal. We have been busy in the later part of the year clearing and beginning to profile the back sough by the Bacton Wood lock. The progress has been steady and the results are very clear.

We have received funding from the Sheringham Shoal which has allowed us to invest in modern battery powered equipment as we try to make the move away from petrol powered tools. This is really important to us and we will keep looking for solutions to update our equipment.

Our work party leader Terry has been hard at work with his chainsaw, clearing saplings and brush which are then chopped up and burnt by other volunteers. Alan has also been busy manning the camera making sure that our progress is well documented.

As the year draws to a close I am working with volunteers and Trustees to update our posters and documentation in the hopes that we can attract more volunteers to join our work parties in 2023.

Adam (Work Party Organiser)

Our work includes:

Canal Bank maintenance
Clearing saplings and bushes
Working with heavy machinery and tractors
Big projects including replacing lock gates
Using boats for work and transportation



Can be tough going in the winter (MP)

We have a variety of work suitable for all. PPE and training where necessary will be provided. Please bring your own wellies.



Work parties are held fortnightly on a Sunday starting at 9.30 am. See www.nwdct.org/work-party-information-page/

Progress in our relationships with the Environment Agency, owners of the lower sections and two of the relevant Councils.

A little while ago we submitted an initial proposal for the re-watering of the sections between Ebridge and Honing locks to the owners and the Environment Agency. Whilst it has always been the case that NWDCT have intended to keep a close watch on ensuring that any works we may suggest must benefit nature, this report stressed the fact. Much detail was included, although there is sure to be more needed.

By way of expressing some of those plans, we are talking in terms of retaining, but managing the tree canopy, raising water levels in order to encourage fish and emergent growth at the sides, planting hedgerows at the canal left and right boundaries, to support more wildlife, re-watering the back soughs with water travelling at a much faster velocity (with additional variety in profile of that channel), adding fish and eel passes at the spillways and minimising de-silting in such a way as to ensure that maximum possible benefit can be gained in the canal channel, whilst, at the same time, ensuring a navigable status. Our varying experiences in the Ebridge section has gone a long way to inform us in these regards.

In recent months, conservation has become more and more important to all concerned. It seemed that the time had come to express our intentions in clear words. That we did! It has to be said that putting a bit more flesh on that bone has met with enthusiasm from all concerned.

David Batley, our new Funding Team Leader, has spread his net far and wide with tremendous success, building relationships as he goes. Even EA have felt able and been prompted to advise us where we can reach out for help to cover the costs of getting our plans professionally prepared and approved. We might even *hope* to have the process of re-watering under way by December of next year. By the time of publication, we might well have all the quotes for the initial surveys in place.

Add to all of the above, we are now in very regular contact with Bindwell Estates, on the lower section, helping where we can and hearing of remarkably encouraging long term plans for his properties from Honing to Wayford Bridge and Dilham Broad.

Graham Pressman

Boating News - Graham Pressman

We have been able to welcome a new steerer on board, Ralph, who has been very helpful this past summer. We have continued to run party bookings only, so that means 'friends and family', because of caution around Covid. However, that has worked very well, so I'm inclined to continue in that vein.

Just call me on the bookings number, which is 07585 160 772 to book your trip. It's rare that we can't do the day and time of your choice. Just ask! Day or night.

Permissive Paths:

These two words have recently appeared both on OCC notices, and social media. I would like to point out that the OCC paths, and the Honing Staithe Cut Canal Walk (The latter built and maintained by the Trust), are not "Permissive Paths", and the Trust takes care not to call them that. Hence "Laurie's Way". Their correct terminology is either a Canal Walk or Canal Way, for, in the case of the OCC, they are on private lands with no rights of public access. (The Honing Staithe Walk is on Common Access Land).

To be a Permissive Path, the landowner usually comes to a formal agreement with the Council, this ensures that the authority will address problems encountered by users with the landowner; provisions relating to the future maintenance of the path and possibly even payments. An "official" PP sign will usually be displayed, and the path may be closed for a day in the year, to prevent it becoming a right of way over twenty years usage. The owner of land crossed by a PP is liable for injury to users and should have a public liability insurance. A PP may also be established by the owner of the land granting consent in a less formal arrangement, but the public liability still remains. The OCC didn't wish to follow the PP route, and so called them Canal Walks. However, legally, that could be a grey area. Maybe the OCC, and the Honing Estate should consider formalising the walks into PP's. Meanwhile, those walks should not be referred to as PP's.

For more - please see

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/countryside/landowner-statements-highways-act-1980-section-31-6/permissive-paths/>

Ivan Cane

12 December 2022

EAWA Archivist for the NW&DC Records

Waters Elsewhere - Funding

Quagmire 6.4 Waters Elsewhere.

Seven Years Toil

The Shropshire Union Canal Society Volunteers recently celebrated by laying the final “golden” block, onto the base of the relined 600 metres of the Montgomery Canal, at Crickheath. This section of the restoration of the Canal has taken the SUCS’s work force some seven year’s hard toil. First, the removal of great crested newts from the site took two years, then COVID intervened. Other problems included subsidence of the Canal banks and towpaths, geological issues and ground conditions.



The Canal had lain mainly dry for 80 odd years, trees and bushes were removed, the channel profile established and dug. Linings then laid, which in turn were covered with a protective layer of blocks. (q.v. Q 6.1 p16) The tow-path was built up, stabilised and then a compacted stone path laid along the top.

Following the laying of the final Golden Block, two stop planks were opened slightly to allow water to fill the section. Then, a small dredger and pan were craned into the re-watered canal, so as to remove a clay bund, leading to the length being re-joined to the national network.



The delivery and craning in of the dredger, was made very difficult by the restricted access to the site. As a result the dredger was christened *Tightanic*, and it was hauled into position by volunteers haling it from both banks. The volunteers are now moving on to restore the channel link towards the

Schoolhouse Bridge replacement (q.v. Q 4.4 p 16.)

For further information see <https://shropshireunion.org.uk/restoration/>

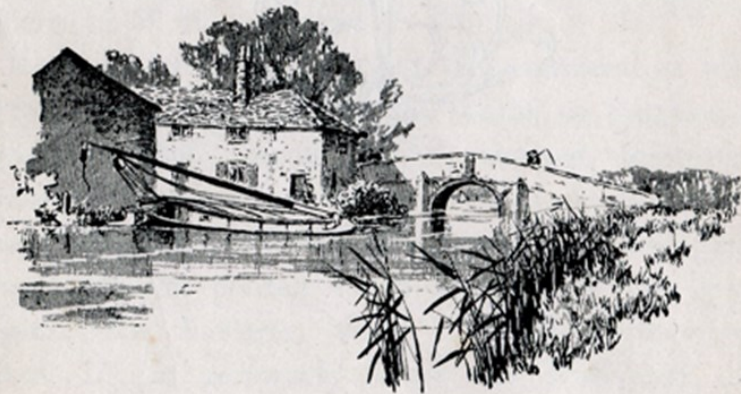
With thanks to the SUCS for the photos.

Ivan Cane, NCA.

Archive Slot - The Mitigation and Compensatory Reports

Quagmire 6.4 Archive Slot

NEXT morning we were off again, and turning back, kept to the right up the sinuous turns of the Ant till we saw Wayford Bridge in the distance, backed



WAYFORD BRIDGE.

up by the fine hillside woods known as Wayford Woods, in which are the “Devil’s Ditches” entrenchments supposed to be Roman. We soon got up to the bridge, but we ran

aground and couldn’t get off till a friendly farmer brought some ropes and a block, which he fastened to a stump of a tree, and the entire strength of the company being then put on to the ropes, the tug of war went decidedly against the ship, which came off with a jerk that sent us all on our backs in a nettle bed.

party appeared – and American couple – who hired the Norwich pleasure Wherry, Zoe, to join them. Halfway through the month, they reached Wayford Bridge, with the intention of cruising to Ebridge Mill. These are excerpts from Walter’s writings:

In fact, the NW&DC is a canal, junctioning with the Smallburgh River. The Ant’s course was to the east, through East Ruston.

Up the Ant to Ebridge Mill (Walter Rye – *A Month on the Norfolk Broads* – 1887? – pp 60-65).

Back in the early 1880’s Walter Rye, and his three friends (the four named The Poet, the Liar, the Athlete and the Anti-quary – but not necessarily in that order) cruised the Broads for the month of August, in a “roomy old tub, half wherry, half cutter, of about fourteen tons, drawing 3ft 9in, known as the *Lotus*.” She had been cleaned and fumigated for the trip. During this process an addition to the



A LOCK.

Of course, the *Zöe* having been left at Ludham Bridge, we had to abandon the *Lotus* to the visitors at night, but we all came on board and sailed on in company the next morning up what was really the Ant, though it is dignified with the name of the "North Walsham and Dilham Canal." Would that all canals were as pretty as this quiet little river, which is falsely so called. It is a perfect paradise for small boats and canoes, twisting and turning about through bushes and woods, and the most rural scenery; but I fancy this was the first time that a fourteen-tonner had squeezed its way up it, and the were turning the corner, that he saw two moor hens swimming across.

He took a careful pot-shot, and I am bound to say that he knocked the water up all round about the birds, but they escaped. And we were very glad they did, for on closer inspection it turned out they were two of a brood of very tame ducklings belonging to the cottagers. The

ordinary broad guide maps do not extend so far north.

Less than a mile from Wayford Bridge we were called upon for a small toll, levied apparently by a sort of poll-tax, for the skipper wanted us to go below on approaching the bridge, and had to make a declaration that we had no merchandize on board. The toll collector lived in a charming little cottage in a riverside garden, with a quaint little caboose looking over the river, and papered over with all sorts of engravings from illustrated papers. So narrow was the river just before we got to Ruston Common, that we could touch bushes with a stick on

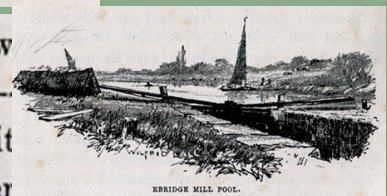
either side, and as we passed that, the largest left of our Norfolk "goose greens," we were scraping our copper over the shallows every two minutes. Fataman wanted to go and see Porson's birthplace and grave; but we were afraid some one might take a bucket of water out of the river while we were away, and so strand us. Just before we reached "Dee Bridge," and passing through the lock, we saw what used to be Dilham Broad, on our left. Skipper remembered sailing a race on it in years gone by; but it had almost wholly grown up now, though the thicket of reeds and rushes was very pretty. To the left, just before we came to the bridge, were some very funny looking one-storied cottages on the river's brink, and here we might have got into a nice muddle. For the Athlete (who had been amusing himself all day with shooting anything he could, though he did not then, nor at any other time during the voyage, procure us anything of an edible nature), thought, as we were turning the corner, that he saw two moor hens swimming across.

He took a careful pot-shot, and I am bound to say that he knocked the water up all round about the birds, but they escaped. And we were very glad they did, for on closer inspection it turned out they were two of a brood of very tame ducklings belonging to the cottagers. The next lock was the prettier, but both were in a terribly bad state of repair, and we should have been less surprised than disgusted if the gates had given way as we went

through. The wind failed us here; so we all had to tow in turn, and at last got to the end of our journey—Ebridge Mill, close to North Walsham, beyond which it was out of the question to go. Still we had to go under the bridge, through the lock, on to the mill pool; so as to get width to turn, and having done so, moored by the great steam mill. That evening we spent going over the mill, and we were all fairly astonished at the splendid machinery and numerous "notions" which we never expected to see in so outlandish a place, and which were all explained to us by a most intelligent and courteous foreman.

Although Walter labelled the canal "beyond... was out of question to go", wherries were still regularly trading to Swafeld at the time, and in 1891 the *Maid of the Mist* reached Antingham Basin – but that's a story for another day. Walter's book is available on Google as an audio book. (Walter Rye –

A Month on the Norfolk Broads – 1887? – pp 60-65).



Ivan Cane - EAWA
Archivist

New Wildlife Officer

I took over the role of Wildlife Officer late this year. As I am both new to the area and new to canals, I have spent most of my volunteer time familiarising myself with both. I have greatly enjoyed exploring the area and learning the history and current situation and challenges. I have been struck by the beauty and the significance of the canal and the passion and devotion of the historic and current “carers”.



The desire for areas of the canal to be a valuable resource for wildlife and community is overarching and I look forward to making a contribution to this fine objective. To this end the wildlife team are performing an on going survey of the fauna around the Ebridge to Bacton stretch of water. Currently there are limitations to access but a reasonable assessment should be possible. There are current discussions with the potential for exciting new projects and I hope the Wildlife team can be helpful in their works. We have mink rafts being constructed for positioning along this

stretch to ascertain who is using the banks (of the four legged variety). The trust already has many lovely photographs taken around the canal over the years showing off the wildlife. All of these species are evident currently. We hope to continue to catalogue other inhabitants. The trust holds a meticulous and comprehensive flora survey performed by my predecessor, Suki Pryce. We hope in the coming months, season appropriate, to have matching fauna data.

Recent assessment of water quality around this stretch provided some very encouraging results. There appears to be a flourishing fish population as anglers along the banks will testify. Alongside maintaining and possibly improving the water quality we have been looking into the value and practicality of the use of barley straw bags for control of algae. Discussions regarding this are in process. I took up this role, by my own admission, as an enthusiastic amateur.

I hope that this enthusiasm alongside a devotion to caring for and the sharing of our surroundings may prove valuable to the canal and the Trust.

Katharine Benstead

Future Intentions

Over the past year, the trust have prepared a basic proposal for extending the usable length of the canal to the south. This proposal has been sent to owners and the Environment Agency. It includes much detail around our plans with regard to bio-diversity.



Indeed, with a whole raft of Bio-diversity Net Gain regulations coming into place, following the UK leaving the European Union, the complexity and need for surveys and preparatory paperwork has, rather than decreasing, increased a great deal. This has involved a huge learning curve and it is inevitable that

it will involve employing professional services from conservation specialists. We believe we have identified three or four of those and are currently studying their offerings and costings.

These organisations cost a small fortune by my standards as a retired canal worker. The figures would be inconceivable were it not for the fact that I have also set up a number of businesses during my working life, in between cargo carrying work by boat. Funding for this work has to be found and David Batley, our new Funding Team Leader has been doing not just a grand job but, frankly nothing short of a set of miracles. His successes over the past few months and his plans and preparations for the coming weeks and months are quite incredible.

The other element of this is the matter of building trust and respect from other parties. The Trust simply cannot achieve the success we hope for all alone. Owners, Agencies, our Member of Parliament and paid specialists all need to be on board.

What the Trust is planning is hoped to make this canal one of the finest examples of change for the better in the country. Every element of nature has to be accounted for and improved upon at every step, whilst improving access for the public in a way which does no harm. Frankly, that is a tall order, but is achievable, with care and detailed planning.

We are involved in building relationships with Town, District and County Councillors as well as the other Government agencies. We have to accept and respect the fact that councils are currently very strapped for cash, so can commit very little money. But they can provide support at a very high level. We are hoping that some of the new housing developments being planned will result in help to improve our local environment via investment into the canal and it's corridor.

New off-shore windfarm developers are bound by restrictions, rules and laws to promote suitable, ecologically mitigatory projects ashore. David Batley is working hard to have some of their funds come our way. The fact that we are committed to the use of green electricity in any way we can, such as our solar powered trip boats and electrically powered tools, chain saws and strimmers, is a fine example. Such innovation reduces noise and fuel pollution very much, whilst enabling maintenance and ecological improvements to continue. We hope the public will reap the benefits of all that in the coming months.

All of the above is really just a teaser. There will be reports on progress as it occurs over the coming months. The future is truly looking up for the North Walsham and Dilham Canal.

Graham Pressman

David Batley writes

Following our regular zoom committee in November, three trustees met at Trust HQ at Spa Common tasked with building a plan for the Open Weekend 2023. Graham Pressman and David Batley were both present, along with one other Trustee.

The answer: We needed some new recruits from out there in membership land, willing to join a specific, finite project to develop a first class open weekend next year. We don't know what form the open weekend will take. We're open to suggestions.

So!

WHO? We need some new recruits from out there in membership land, willing to join a specific, finite project to develop a first class open weekend next year.

WHY? It must follow our mission statement, it must involve the canal, conservation and boats but the talents, imagination and experiences of the new recruits will decide the form of the weekend.

WHEN? we have three dates. On February the 14th the trustees and the new recruits will meet and share ideas. On Saturday the 24th of June, Midsummers Day, a good day to meet by the canal and report back on the finalised details. Then we take a holiday to be ready the Open Weekend itself.

WHERE? Anywhere on the NWDC, where we can have a large number of visitors, car parking, trip boats, canoes, paddle boards and swimming.

HOW? To be decided by the group, once recruited.

Thank you all for your attention,

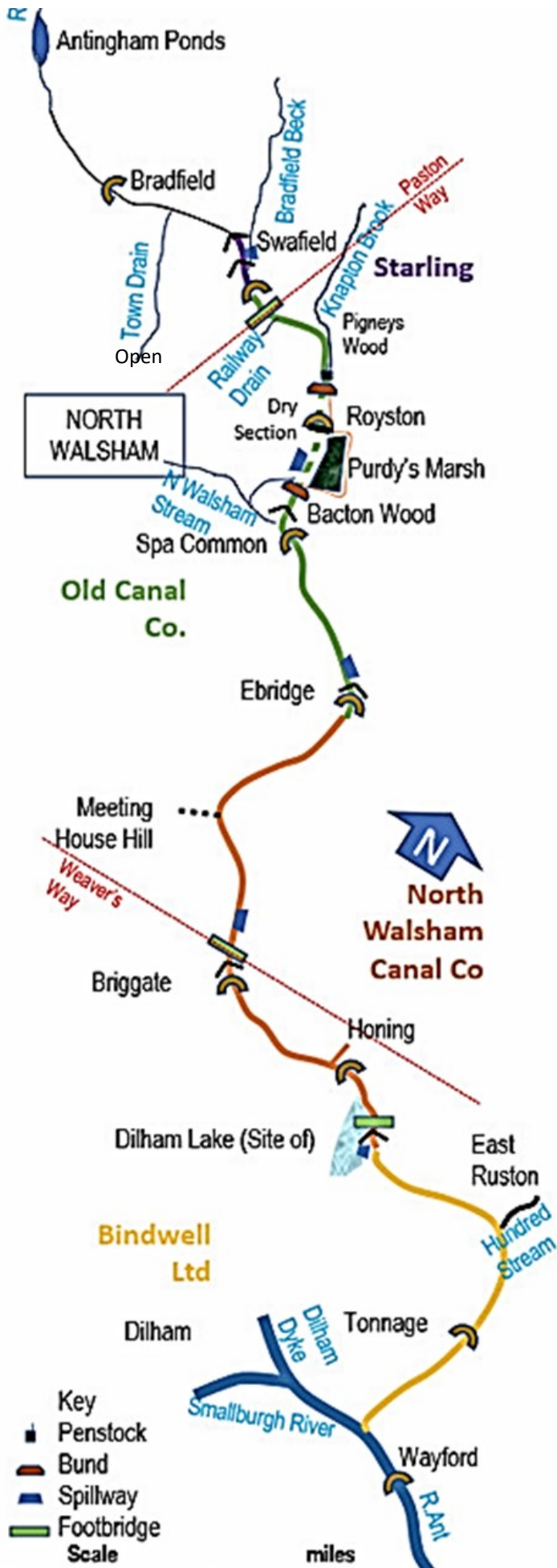
Best wishes, David Batley

Ebridge Open Weekend

2nd & 3rd September 2023

Trust A.G.M.

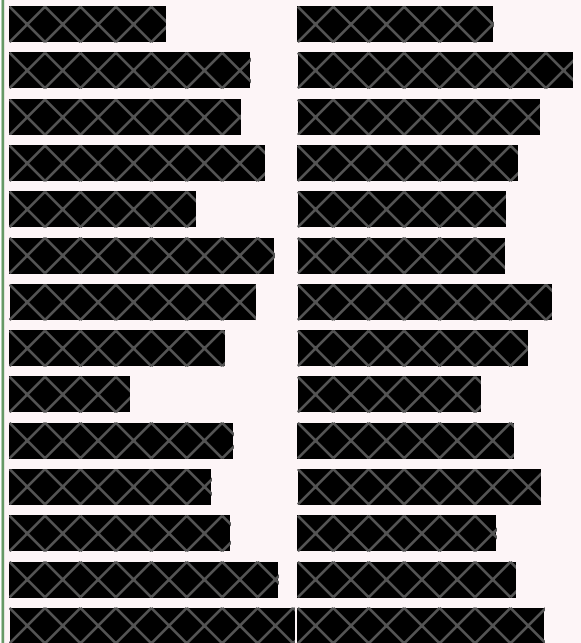
Thursday 12th January 2023



Contact the North Walsham & Dilham Canal Trust
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

Email the Trust's Officers:



Copies of the Trust's A3 **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, are available at £2, inc p& p.

Past copies of **Quagmire** are also available for £2, including p&p.

Please contact the editor for details.

qeditor@nwdct.org

QUAGMIRE Christmas 2022



**Happy
Christmas Holidays
and
New Year
To
All members
And supporters**

**Special Thanks to
Everybody from
Outside Agencies
Who have all
been so
Supportive of
NWDCT
this year**