

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Work Party at Swafield Canal and lock

Date: Sunday 18th January 2015

From: David Revill, NW&DCT and EAWA

THE PLAN. To assist the owner in clearing some scrub from near to the bank of the canal and to locate the tail wall at the foot of the upper Lock, Nr 6.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT. The morning started with ice etc. on the motor-cars but with a bright sky. On arriving on site we discovered that the field was white with frost but likely to thaw so therefore all vehicles (most) were left at the entrance by the gate. The final total for volunteers was 16 (sixteen) who, following the usual briefings, set to! In the absence of Chris (and Mary), Darren Cooke assumed the post of Work Party Leader for the day and it was he who took off up to Lock Nr 6 to do the exploratory work there, assisted by one other of course. The rest just naturally fell into the mode of a well drilled squad upstream of the road bridge. Our resident pyro-man, Alan, soon got a fire going to consume the large quantities of brash and dead grass, brambles and felled saplings which were produced from our labours. It did not take too long for a really different scene to become apparent before our eyes, with the edge of the canal being visible and the sparkling waters flowing by in the bright sunshine. Lunch was taken from 12.30 and good news was received from Darren on his return from Lock 6 – they had located the top of the tail wall and, on digging down further, discovered that it was covered in tree roots, which presented a most formidable task to remove, even to clear a small area. As we started to sit on a variety of perches to take our refreshment, the owner appeared pushing a wheelbarrow containing some bags! Lots of pairs of interested eyes peered enquiringly over when the bags were opened to reveal a cooking pot full of chilli con carne and chunks of fresh baked bread! Delicious of course and our compliments went to the chef, Anne! Thoughts went to what a psychiatrist would have thought of a bunch of adults sitting beside a canal on 18th January eating such fare? Call the men in white coats? For us all, though, it was very pleasurable and in no time at all it seemed we were back at the work face once more until about 14.30 when we started to trek back across the field – the site nicely tidied up. The weather really played its' part in making this a most enjoyable day out with quite warm sunshine and very little air movement to disturb the peace. The volunteers finally left site at 14.58.

David Revill
Work Party Organiser
NW&DCT and EAWA