

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Work-party at Purdy's Marsh area.
Date: Sunday 30th October 2016.
From: Chris Black, NW&DCT.

THE PLAN:

- To continue the clearance of the detritus from the west side of the east back-soke.
- To burn the brash and Himalayan Balsam

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: The weather was typical for the time of year. Early thick fog made driving a touch hazardous but eventually the fog cleared to reveal a pleasantly warm and dry day. 18 volunteers turned out – a very good number as again there was a lot of small trees and brash to clear from the edge of the soke dyke. Laurie's Hy-Mac developed a fuel problem at our previous visit so the first task was to get his other machine from the canal bank near Pigneys Wood. Jonathan was volunteered to go with him to bring back the other vehicle.

Contrary to our perception from a distance, the tree growth proved to be quite dense, with many of the willows sporting broken branches. Laurie's heavier machine easily pulled out the small willows, so complete trees were delivered to our bonfire where they were cut up saving any good firewood. Laurie's delivery of brash and trees kept Barry and me very busy with our chainsaws, without which we could not deal with the quantity of timber and saplings. Chainsaw work is very tiring over prolonged periods so we stop for rests periodically for safety reasons.

With two large fires alight much of the brash was burned but the larger pieces of timber, not useful as firewood, take some time to burn away and require fairly constant stoking to keep a compact burning fire. With so many volunteers turning up today there were plenty of stokers! I am amazed by the work effort of our volunteers, everyone seems to know what to do instinctively – perhaps we should pass on our secret to the Norwich City Footballers following their 5-0 loss to Brighton!!!

We continued to find timber lying in the vegetation beside the soke-dyke and this needed to be removed and cut up. Unfortunately just leaving willow on the ground to rot doesn't work – it sets down roots and you just get another tree on the soke edge.

The time change to GMT meant all were ready for a break at approx. 11.30 so lunch was taken early.

After lunch we continued the removal of the timber and brash for several more yards downstream. The team were getting rather weary however we tackled what looks like the final clump of broken willows. We sorted the dry brash from the green wood in readiness for a fire at this point at our next visit.

We will return in two weeks time to get this clump of brash cleared.

Work ceased at approx. 15.30
Chris Black, work-party leader