

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL TRUST

In co-operation with the East Anglian Waterways Association Ltd

Subject: Work-party at Spa Common (Bacton Wood Lock) and Purdy's Marsh
Date: Sunday 5th February 2017.
From: Chris Black, NW&DCT.

THE PLAN:

- To help Laurie with the construction of Bacton Wood Lock's new bottom gates.
- To transport the gates to the lock-side in readiness for the first phase of the installation.
- To cut down the old reeds in Purdy's Marsh and remove general detritus.
- To stack the reeds and detritus in manageable heaps.

WORK ACHIEVEMENT: The weather was calm and dry which meant that the facing boards could be fixed on to the second lock gate. A small number of the 17 volunteers who turned out today were chosen for the gate work and the remainder, including myself, to make our way to Purdy's Marsh.

The work on the gate was straightforward as it was basically a repeat of the work done on the other gate a fortnight ago. Laurie had already loaded the finished gate onto the trailer and once the second gate was completed the two gates were readied to be transported to the lock-side.

Meanwhile the rest of the work-party was ready to start the daunting task of reed cutting on the marsh. As it is early February it is outside the bird nesting season but even so the team were told to be aware that work should be halted if any nests were found. Only one old degraded nest was discovered.

It was very tiring work as the reeds need to be cut down with hand tools and powered hedge trimmers. It was not possible to take a larger cutter machine on to the marsh as it is very boggy in places and in any case the use of hand tools meant that we were better able to look for nests etc.

Lunch was called at approximately 12.15 at the marsh as it was such tiring work. I walked down to Bacton Wood Lock to collect my lunch only to find the two gates arriving at the lock. The heavy gates were lifted off and placed on levelling blocks to ensure that they were not distorted. After this had been done the 'gate' work-party had their lunch.

With lunch break over the gate work-party made their way up to the marsh. Laurie brought his dumper up to try to move some of the old tree stumps up to the northern end of the marsh. However the ground was too wet to cope with its weight and it sank into the mire a couple of times having to be retrieved with the help of the Hy-Mac.

It proved to be a very successful day with approximately one third of the marsh cleared and the lock gates readied to be put into place in the lock.

Work ceased at approx. 15.30

Chris Black, Work Party Leader