

THE EASTERLING

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WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

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PROJECT HEReward- WELCHES DAM to HORSEWAY

Another “attack” on the Old Bedford River was launched on 17 November when campaigner John Revell, in his narrow boat OLIVE EMILY, negotiated the shallow and muddy entrance channel leading up to the Salters Lode entrance sluice and then navigated through the sluice and into the Old Bedford. John was accompanied by David Venn, who is the Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association’s Peterborough Branch, and they succeeded in getting a bit further than on a previous attempt albeit still well short of Welney, to say nothing of Welches Dam, before being beaten by the heavy growth of cottweed. One thought is that too much water is being drained away from the Old Bedford via the Welney Lake sluice and this is keeping the level low which, in turn, encourages weed growth.

Another development is that the Peterborough Branch has obtained permission from the Middle Level Commissioners to carry out some improvement work to that section of the Forty Foot River that leads up to the head of Horseway Lock from the north. Plans are to cut back vegetation and leave a clear channel some two metres wide. This section is currently navigable but if the channel is widened it should attract more boats to use the section which can only add publicity to the campaign.

It is significant to note that the branch received an answer from the Middle Level Commissioners in just one month, whereas the request to the Environment Agency to access Welches Dam Lock to assess the restoration work needed has now been pending for several months.

Meanwhile this Association is in the process of opening a separate Project Hereward banking account to enable details of the expenditure to be kept separate from the EAWA’s day to day transaction.
Photo Mike Daines



EAST ANGLIAN WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the year ended 30 June 2015

Incoming Resources	General A/c Unrestricted £	Restricted Funds £	2015 £ Total	2014 £ Total
Subscriptions & Donations	1147.50			904.50
Weeping Cross Fund	1250.00			1000.00
Every Click	--			24.41
Gift Aid	273.75			255.20
Investment Income	30.31	10.44		35.43
Annual General Meeting	337.50			200.00
Total Incoming Resources	3039.06	10.44	3049.50	2410.47
Resources Expended				
<u>Costs of charitable activities</u>				
Easterling Newsletter	350.08			427.17
Working party's insurance & costs	371.00			371.00
Sleaford Navigation Trust (dredging appeal)	-----			1000.00
Project Hereward	19.44			-----
<u>Management & Administration</u>				
AGM expenses	397.50			195.01
Postages, stationary & meeting room hire	116.48			74.40
Company Registration & Web Site Fees	50.85			53.26
Scrutineer's fee & subscriptions paid	109.00			109.00
Total Resources expended	1414.35		1414.35	2229.84
Net Incoming Resources	1624.71	10.44	1635.15	180.63
Total funds brought forward	<u>8609.93</u>	<u>2912.85</u>	<u>11522.78</u>	<u>11333.08</u>
	10234.64	2923.29	13157.93	<u>11522.78</u>

BALANCE SHEET as at 30 June 2015

Current Assets	2015	2014
Cash at Bank – Current Account	5362.30	3593.22
CIOF Charity Deposit Account	9123.31	9082.56
Total	<u>14485.61</u>	<u>12675.78</u>
Current Liabilities		
Sundry Creditors	74.68	---
Life Membership Fund	<u>1253.00</u>	<u>1153.00</u>
Total	<u>1327.68</u>	<u>1153.00</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>13157.93</u>	<u>11522.78</u>
Represented by Income Funds, General Account	10232.64	8609.93
Restricted Funds	<u>2923.29</u>	<u>2912.85</u>
Accumulated Fund	13155.93	11,522.78

For the year ended 30 June 2015 the company was entitled to the exemption under Section 480 of the Companies Act 2006. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with Section 476 of the Act. The directors acknowledge their responsibility for (1) Ensuring the company keeps accounting records which comply with Section 386; and (2) Preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year, and its profit and loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of Section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act relating to accounts, so far as is applicable to the company. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to company's subject to the small company's regime.

Alan Faulkner (Director)

DIRECTORS REPORT for the year ending 30 June 2015

Results: Income at £3,037.06 exceeded expenditure by £1,622.71 on the General Account and by £10.44 on the Restricted Account, the position again being influenced by some generous donations including £1,250 from the Weeping Cross Fund.

Expenditure at £1,414.35 was modest, particularly in the printing and distribution of "*The Easterling*" where the inclusion of some colour pages continued to be welcomed. A number of members receive "*The Easterling*" by e-mail and this has contributed to a significant saving in postal costs.

Principal Activities: The principal activity remained that of an Amenity Society, working to secure improvements to the waterways in Eastern England for the benefit of the general public. The company is a non-profit distributing company limited by guarantee (No 895405) and is registered as a charity (No 251382).

Fens Waterways Link: This project, which was pioneered by our Association and by the Lincolnshire Branch of the Inland Waterways Association, continues to make slow progress but funding remains a major problem. The wisdom of using the original route of the South Forty Foot River from Boston down to the Black Hole Drove pumping station has now been accepted and an option has been selected southwards from there, which involves a new lock at the pumping station, a second new lock into the river Glen near Guthram Gowt and a new bridge to carry the busy Spalding to Bourne road across the waterway.

Currently progress is subordinate to work on the proposed Boston Barrage to protect that town from flooding. To achieve this a barrage is to be built across the Witham a short way downstream of the junction with the South Forty Foot – funding has been agreed and the work should be completed by the end of 2019. It will feature a section that will normally lie flat on the riverbed but which can be raised to block the river and prevent the risk of tidal flooding. As such it will have little effect on the South Forty Foot.

At present the river downstream from the Grand Sluice and through the town presents a decidedly uninviting appearance when the tide goes out and plans are being made to keep the water at a consistent level under a Water Level Management (WLM) scheme. This would make it easier for boats to enter or leave the South Forty Foot, would improve conditions for them as they travelled through the town and to stop on their way and at the same time deep water moorings could be created. It had been hoped that the WLM could proceed as part of the barrage project, with a lock being built at the barrage site. However sadly this lock is not included in the present plans but an area will be created next to the barrage for it to be provided at some future date when the WLM plans are further forward.

North Walsham and Dilham Canal: We continue to give full support to the North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust and to cover the insurance requirements of the Trust's very successful working parties. These have made some remarkable progress particularly upstream of Bacton Wood Lock where the intention is to reintroduce water to the currently dry pound. The Association holds just over £1,000 as Restricted Funds in our accounts and this is available for further work on the Ebridge pound once an agreement can be reached with the Environment Agency which placed a stop order on de-silting work in 2012.

The Broads: We continue to hold a watching brief over the area and it is encouraging that some of the arrears of dredging are being tackled as part of a scheme involving funding from the European Union. We continue to support the work of the Bure Navigation Conservation Trust and the River Waveney Trust.

Welches Dam: One of the biggest challenges facing the Association is the continued closure of Welches Dam Lock at the entrance to the Forty Foot River, which forms part of the alternative route through the Middle Level Navigations. The lock is owned by the Environment Agency who closed it, several years ago, by driving a piled barrier across **most** of its southern entrance, hence preventing it from being used for navigation, although not lessening the pressure of water on the gates. Meanwhile the condition of the Forty Foot River that links Welches Dam lock to the rest of the Middle Level system continues to cause concern due to leakage and the water level has been lowered permanently.



Five of our directors, led by Professor Andrew Storrar, have joined up with members from the Peterborough Branch of the Inland Waterways Association to investigate the problem and to work towards a solution under the Project Hereward banner. The lock still holds up a head of water from the Old Bedford River and whilst the structure needs some repairs its condition is better than was at first feared. The main focus of attention has been on the Forty Foot channel and visits have been made to other waterways under restoration to try and determine the best method to make the channel watertight.

General: The Association continues to maintain its watch over its widespread area, taking action where necessary, and giving help and advice where it can. Approaches have been made to the Secretary of State regarding the management of the Great Ouse and the tidal section of the river in particular and some progress has been made. The Association played a significant part in the Ely moorings issue helping to achieve a workable solution and our early intervention in the Holywell moorings issue stopped the moorings being removed. Support is given to the activities of like-minded bodies with whom we are linked; these include the Association of Nene River Clubs, the Chelmer Canal Trust, the River Stour Trust, the River Gipping Trust, the Well Creek Trust, the Little Ouse Group, the River Sleas Trust, the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust and the various branches of the Inland Waterways Association.

Directors: The directors who served during the year were Christopher John Brian Black, Alan Henderson Faulkner (Treasurer), John Hodgson, John Raymond Mayhead, David John Mercer (Secretary), David Edward Revill, Roger George Sexton (Chairman), Andrew Storrar (elected 19 June 2014), David George Tomlinson and Jeffrey Alun Walters.

None of the directors receive any remuneration, but can be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses.

On behalf of the Board

Alan Faulkner (Director)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 46th Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 17 April 2016 at the Sutton Staithe Hotel at 2.00pm. The Agenda will be: -

- 1: Apologies for Absence
- 2: Minutes of the 45th Annual General Meeting held on 19 April 2015 at South Kyme.
- 3: To receive the Directors Report for the year ended 30 June 2015
- 4: To receive the accounts for the year to 30 June 2015.
- 5: To re-elect one third of the Directors in accordance with the Association's rules. Chris Black, David Revill and David Tomlinson offer themselves for re-election.
- 6: To elect a Scrutineer. Mr John Cordran offers himself for re-election.
- 7: To receive a report about the North Walsham & Dilham Canal
- 8: Chairman's Report on the year's work.

ARRANGEMENTS for the AGM on 17 April

Those intending to attend the AGM might wish to consider visiting the Broads Museum in the morning - £4 entry to the museum plus £2.50 for trip on its steam boat from 10am onwards. The museum is just five minutes by car from the hotel, where we shall be gathering at 1pm for lunch (carvery £7.95 & sweet £4.95). After the AGM members are invited to take part in an organised visit to parts of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal to see the work that has been carried out. Payments to be made individually, but please advise David Revill of what you intend to do, so that he can make the appropriate bookings at the museum, at the hotel and for the afternoon trip. (43 Kings Road, Coltishall, Norfolk, NR12 7DX – 01603 738648 – davgis@live.co.uk)

HERE AND THERE

BOSTON BARRIER: During the autumn exhibition panels have been on display at the Boston Barrier Community Hub on specific days and times to illustrate the latest design changes and the tidal flood defence scheme in more detail than ever before. Meanwhile the impact of the barrier on river flows has been assessed and meetings have been held with river users to discuss this. It is intended to submit a Transport and Works Act Order Application in the spring. The £92.3 million tidal flood barrier has been designed to reduce the risk of tidal flooding and to protect Boston from a repeat of the tidal surge that happened on 5 December 2013.

RIVER GIPPING: Work last summer was largely taken up with repairing the cracked lock wall at Pipp's Ford. Meanwhile in September a new recruit arrived from Glasgow in the form of a small Kubota digger and this was immediately put to work excavating for the new by wash. A row of gabions has been installed from the new footbridge to the weir and the work in the autumn has been to complete the gabions and finish off as much as possible the area below the footbridge and above the weir.

THE BARGE YARE: The November issue of the River Gipping Trust's journal contains news of the sale of the barge YARE. She was built by Orvis & Fuller in Ipswich in 1871 to join the fleet of thirty Gipping barges carrying all manner of goods but principally agricultural chemicals for Packards and Fisons. She was one of the last barges to be employed on the Ipswich to Stowmarket run before becoming a house boat at Pin Mill in 1933. Since then she has provided many enjoyable days for her owner and hosted many weekends for the Ipswich Scouts. YARE's hull is carvel built, fastened with treenails and iron nails and has a bluff bow and stern with a straight stem and is the only Gipping barge still intact. She has retained her original structure and still floats but has now been sold subject to contract for £65,000.

TALKS GIVEN: On 3 December Alan Faulkner talked to a well attended meeting of the Royston & District Local History Society about the River Great Ouse. Following this the society made a generous £50 donation to our Association. Alan followed this up on 27 January with a talk about the Fenland Waterways to 84 members of the Ipswich & District Historical Transport Society who have made a £30 donation to the Association. Both donations have gone to the Project Hereward account.

BEDFORD & MILTON KEYNES WATERWAY TRUST: The Trust has announced plans to start creating the new navigation by working from both ends. The Milton Keynes Development Partnership has chosen Crest Nicholson Regeneration as the preferred development partner, for the mixed use 15-acre site at Campbell Park Canalside. The site will include a 100-berth marina and will form the start of the canal link through to Bedford. It will also have over 300 homes of various styles and sizes with car parking, a convenience store, a café, a restaurant, a nursery and a pub. Meanwhile at Bedford the Trust is working with the Environment Agency, the Canal & River Trust and Bedford Borough Council to see if it is feasible to extend the current head of navigation of the river by about three kilometres from the old mill site

at Kempston upstream to the Box End Water Park. This would provide an ideal destination for the Trust's trip boat *John Bunyan* and for other craft. Dredging will be necessary and the headroom under the existing footbridge would need to be increased by 1.6 metres with new approach ramps. As this will be the link to the new waterway park a new bridge might be justified. The most challenging part of the project is whether to go round or through the weir, that was built in 1978, with a one-metre deep lock.

MARCH TRIP BOAT: Mrs Sheena Hartley has started a new trip boat service based at her home in Upwell by offering trips to either March or Salters Lode for up to 10 passengers. She has had a new and innovative 58-feet long boat built for the service and this enables her to take people on a skippered and catered day cruise during which she supplies coffee and biscuits, a three course lunch and afternoon tea on the return journey. On 9 October South West Norfolk MP Elizabeth Truss was taken for a trip on the new boat and we wish the new venture well.

OUSE WASHES CONFERENCE: Held on 25 November in Downham Market Town Hall, chaired by Time Team Archaeologist Francis Pryor, this explored the heritage of the washes. It was a journey through time, starting with the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, and moving on to conclude with Oliver Cromwell's time as MP for Cambridge. The unique drainage engineering heritage was of particular interest for its effect on the landscape and accompanying social and economic changes it created. The first floor Assembly Room housed several exhibition stands including Project Hereward's display stand, which attracted a steady flow of visitors throughout the day. This was the second conference in a series of three and it attracted around 100 delegates. The final conference will be held on 9 November at the Ely Maltings.

RIVER ANCHOLME: Both the User Group and the River Trust have expressed their concern at the build up of silt in the Old River loop that runs through Brigg. Boats are prevented from using the moorings, which then causes problems for the Ancholme Rowing Club. And at South Ferriby a sluice was damaged in the tidal surge early last year allowing silt to enter at each high tide and build up in the lock chamber. The build-up of aquatic weed is another problem for canoe and rowing clubs. To help to keep the channel clear, the local authority has purchased a "Truxor" weed boat, to be used on the Ancholme and other leisure waterways in the county.

THETFORD CLEAN UP: For the last 18 months Sean Ready, a volunteer litter picker at Thetford, has removed literally thousands of pieces of rubbish from the river in the town using his homemade plywood boat. Sadly, the boat sprang a leak and was found to have a rotten bottom but generous people in the town got together and raised £650 enabling Sean to buy a polycarbonate canoe and get back onto the water to resume his public spirited work.

This is an excellent example of what can be achieved and is particularly appropriate as there is renewed interest in the restoration of the river.

BROADS NOTES AND NEWS

WATER, MILLS and MARSHERS: A major scheme to provide better access to the Broads, to renovate mills and to educate young people has received a £2.6million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the £4.5million overall cost. Under this 38 projects are to be carried out over the next seven years. Led by the Broads Authority, with 56 partnership organisations, the scheme will focus on the rivers Yare, Bure and Waveney, particularly in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Acle and Loddon. There will also be a focus on the drainage mills at Halvergate Marshes which has one of the greatest concentration of mills in Europe. Here it is planned that skilled students from Easton and Otley College will carry out conservation work on 22 of the 80 mills restoring them to their former glory.

BROADS TOLLS: The Broads Authority has agreed to raise tolls on the Norfolk & Suffolk waterways by 4.5 per cent, a significant rise on last year's figure of just 1.7 per cent. The original plan had been for a 6.2 per cent increase but this was strongly opposed by the hire boat industry, in view of the adverse effect this would have on tourism. But to lessen the impact on the hire boat industry, the multiplier of 2.6 per cent has been reduced to 2.55 per cent.

HOVETON GREAT BROAD: Details have emerged of the £4 million investment planned for the Broad with £2million coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the same amount from European Union funding. Prime of place is work to improve the water quality to benefit wildlife and to improve access for more people to enjoy. Nutrient enrichment has been a problem for many years and the project will transform the current murky algal-dominated condition to a clear, plant dominated state, rich in birds, insect and fish. The ferry service from nearby Salhouse Broad, which enables people to reach the nature trail, is to be improved and promoted. Signage is to be improved and more volunteers are to be involved to provide better explanation of habitats and species to visitors. And for the first time Natural England will run guided boat trips out onto the Broad whilst a new canoe trail will be established running through the Hoveton Marshes.

PADDLE BOARDING: Last August the Norfolk Stand Up Paddleboard Club laid on a demonstration on the river Wensum at Bishopsgate and the sport is now growing rapidly in popularity. Coupled to this, the paddle boarders have been cleaning up the river and in an initial two-hour session in September filled six large bags with rubbish, further sessions are going to be held. At least one person commutes to and from work on his board – he travels from his home near Carrow Road to St. James Mill and he, too, picks up litter on the way.

VINCENT PARGETER: One of the country's leading millwrights, Vincent Pargeter, died in hospital early in November aged 72. Over the years he restored a series of mills in and around the Broads including the Thurne Dyke drainage mill, Polkey's Mill on the Yare, Stracey Arms Mill, Hardley Mill, Oby Mill on the Bure, the well known Denver Mill and several others. Not content with this he was also known for his work in restoring the Norfolk wherry MAUD with his wife Linda.

AYLSHAM WATER MILL: A long running dispute lasting over ten years has at last been settled over a plot of land at Aylsham mill. The mill owner always claimed the plot of land came when he bought the mill in 2004, whereas Aylsham Town Council wanted the land to allow local people access to the water. After a public enquiry and years of negotiation Broadland District Council has turned down a request to obtain the land without permission. The owner now intends to go forward with his renovation plans which include plans to build three town houses there.

HICKLING BROAD: Work on a much needed project to dredge a channel through Hickling Broad and to improve water quality started in November as part of a £1.4million project. The work includes restoring banks in the area including Hill Common and creating islands for water plants and birds. Extensive research is also planned into the toxic Prymnesium which has killed thousands of fish. Indeed, the work was dependent on the toxin not being disturbed and in turn this was governed by the temperature of the water – the colder the temperature the less chance of the toxin being disturbed.

BECCLES: Plans for a £2 million project to secure the future of Beccles Quay has been announced. A partnership has been formed by Waveney District Council and Beccles Town Council to look at the immediate structural issues at the quay which include flooding, the decaying river bank and the subsequent loss of moorings. Meanwhile the Big Dog Ferry which operates 40-minute trips between Beccles Lido and Geldeston Lock made more than 900 trips last year. The usage has, however, revealed the need for a new engine for the boat and an appeal has been launched to cover this.

BRIDGE CRASHES: Larger boats are becoming more common on the Broads and between March and August last year there were seven incidents of vessels getting stuck under bridges, against none in 2014 and three in 2013. The Broads Authority says it has now become a serious issue and more needs to be done to educate those hiring boats on water tide levels. The most common place has been at Vauxhall Bridge in Great Yarmouth, where five of the incidents took place whilst the other two were at the Thorpe railway bridge and Beccles Bridge. The problems for older structures are well known – Potter Heigham bridge which dates from 1385 is considered the most difficult to navigate whilst Wroxham Bridge dating from 1619 is the second most difficult. The waterways also feature lift or swing bridges such as the railway bridges at Reedham, Somerleyton and Trowse and lifting bridges at Breydon Water and at Carrow Road, Novi Sad and St. Julians in Norwich.

WASTE FACILITIES: Since 1 April 2012 boat waste, where the boat is used for self-catering accommodation, is now classified as commercial waste rather than household waste and is charged accordingly by Norfolk County Council. As a result, many of the former dumping locations, such as a series in the Great Yarmouth, Broadland and South Norfolk local authority areas, have now either been closed or are about to be closed. This has led to a danger that there could be a corresponding increase in fly tipping. To combat this, in future, information about the location of authorised tipping sites is to be included in the manual for all hire boat skippers.

Staunches, Stanches and Flashlocks

By Ivan Cane

Early navigators on our rivers are said to have towed small boats behind them so that, when they reached shallows, they would place the small lighter across the stream. After this they would bank up either side, thereby staunching the water enough to raise the level and allow them to progress.

The millers also needed at least a five feet head of water to run their mill wheels, so their weirs were another obstacle to the navigator. One solution was to have a boat on each length, and tranship the cargo across the bank. On the Gloucestershire River Frome cranes were provided for this purpose. The most usual solution was to render a part of the mill's weir removable. This was usually done by placing a beam over the water, resting rimer handles against it, with the rimer paddle bottom supported by another beam on the river floor. Opening for navigation meant losing the miller's head of water for a considerable time, so negotiations were often needed. For example, at Eynsham Mill on the Thames, at 5pm on Monday and Thursday at 8pm, the rimers were lifted by a uniformed lock and weir keeper, with larger vessels then allowed through. This system continued until the navigable weir, or "flashlock", was replaced by a pound lock in 1928. The 1885 sketch below shows some of the rimers in place, with one leaning on the end of the beam (*Thames.me.uk*).



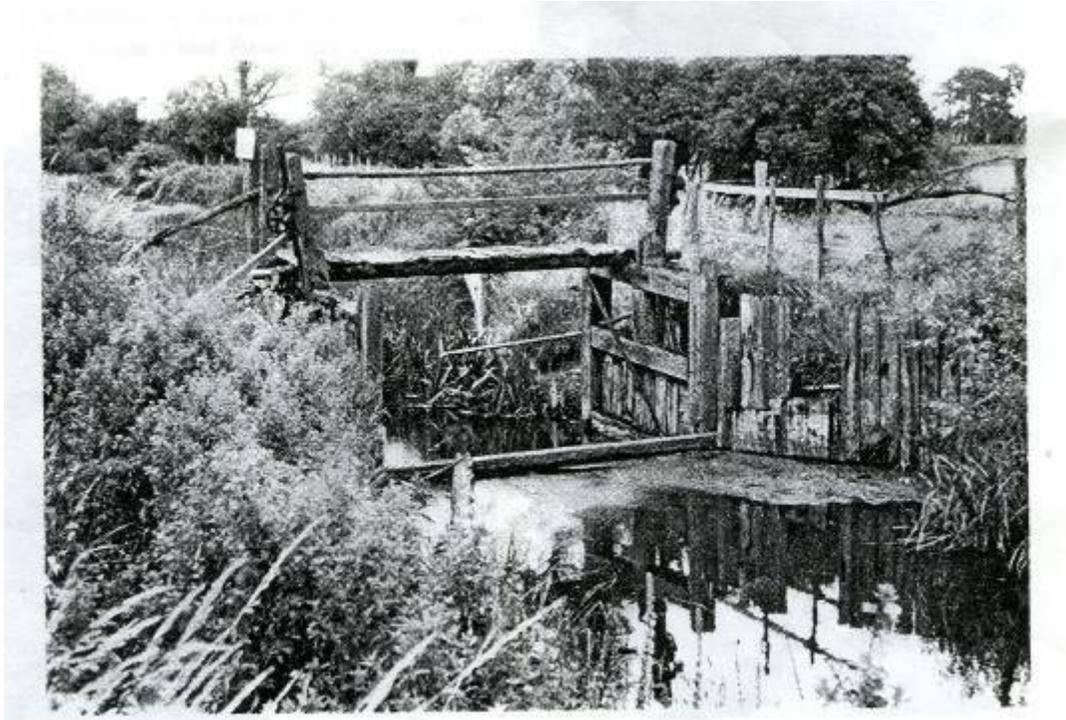
The barge could now bypass the mill, but, between mills, the rivers could still be shallow, and in many places forded by the local carts. Here, staunches would be built, perhaps only raising the water level by a couple of feet, and usually set open to allow the fords to be used, being closed only for the duration of a boat passing. For some fifty years, the staunch at Tempsford was only closed late at night so as to

allow the Great North Road travellers to cross the ford during the day. The first road bridge there was not built until 1736, with the staunch itself finally removed in 1972 when the Upper Great Ouse was being restored. On the other hand, at Orton Staunch, on the Nene, with its three mile pound to be filled, a day-long wait was typical. The staunch could also be used to aid the movement of a craft downstream – for the opening could allow a flash of water to lift a boat over shoals, hence the term “flashlock”.

In the East Anglian region, staunches were the standard method of raising boats. Staunches were built on the Great & Little Ouse navigations in the 17th Century, with boats reaching Bedford and Thetford, respectively. The Lark had fourteen staunches from 1700, and the Stour thirteen after 1705. From the 1750's, the Nene had twelve, the Nar ten, whilst the Ivel had three, with others to be found on the Lodes.

Over time, the design of the staunches became more sophisticated, evolving into three main types: plank staunches, gate staunches and guillotine staunches. Plank staunches are exactly that, a series of planks inserted into stop grooves, with the last one being built, as part of the modernisation, on the River Lark, in the 1890's.

Gate staunches varied from simple rimer types, reputedly built on the Ivel, to single (Lower Avon) or double gates with paddles. Tuddenham Mill Stream Staunch, seen



Tuddenham Mill Stream staunch, looking downstream. The footbridge is modern

here in 1969, was built as late as 1890, and consists of two mitre gates that meet at 90°, each with a single paddle operated by the standard River Lark rack and pinion gearing. At St Ives, the gates had a more traditional “canal” aesthetic.



Guillotine staunches usually consisted of a shutter or clough raised vertically out of the water by chains. That at Bone Mill, on the Nar, (left) was raised by the operator climbing the ladder and turning an iron wheel to open the gate. On the Nene, there was a single roller, operated by crank handle, to raise the gate. However, on Bottisham Lode

and the Little Ouse, the most progressive designs were to be found. Here, two transverse rollers were mounted on two massive wooden uprights, fixed into the staunch walls. The lower roller was usually rotated by a large spoked wheel, up to 13ft in diameter. The

boatman would “walk” this wheel in order to lift the gate. (Spot him in the photo!)



Brandon “Staunch” in 2006.

And a mystery picture from the EAWA Archives – is this a River Lark staunch, or one at the entrance to a side lode? A church spire can be seen on the horizon which may give a clue. Any thoughts to the editor please.



Unlike mitre gates, guillotine gates could be opened against a head of water. Today, a more contemporary design is found incorporated into many of the Great Ouse and Nene systems’ locks, so that the lock may be used for flood control during the “strong stream” months. Although now pound locks, many of these structures still bear their original nomenclature. For example picture(left) shows



THE LITTLE OUSE STAUNCHES (Part One)

By Ivan Cane & Alan Faulkner

Our Association has had a long standing interest in the restoration of the Little Ouse River from Brandon up to Thetford and this was re-ignited recently by the receipt of three pictures of some of the staunches on the river sent in by our new member Doctor Roger Butler. There were no locks on the river; instead a distinctive feature was the series of eight staunches to overcome differences in the water levels.

At each site the river was divided into three sections by two islands; on one of the channels stood the staunch comprising a vertical lift gate supported by two tall uprights, whilst the other two channels housed several sluices and a fixed weir. The foundations of the structures were of brick with the uprights of massive 12-inch square oak timbers braced at the top by an oak cross member giving 16-feet of headroom above the top of the brickwork, this height being dictated by the need to raise the gate high enough for boats to pass underneath.

Also fixed at the top of the uprights was a winding drum and immediately below a small driving shaft that was geared to the drum, the shaft being fitted with a large wooden wheel. The door of the staunch, nearly 14-feet across and 5½-feet in depth, was hung from the drum by chains and moved up and down in between the brickwork and the upstream side of the uprights. There were ladders on both sides of the staunch linked by a light footbridge to enable the river to be crossed and the boatmen stood on the latter to operate the winding wheel to raise and lower the gate.

The sluices alongside were of similar construction but not so high as no headroom was needed for craft to pass underneath. They controlled the flow of the river, particularly in flood times and were raised and lowered by inserting a bar into a convenient hole in the winding drum to provide the necessary leverage. And alongside the sluices was the weir set at such level to allow excess water to pass.

Thetford Staunch No 1: O/S 86088320. Situated 900 yards downstream from St. Christopher's Bridge in Thetford. Rebuilt by J. & W. Gathergood in 1835 at a cost of £781. The remains were subsequently incorporated into a flood control structure in about 1960.

Thetford Middle Staunch No 2 (Abbey Heath): O/S 85098435. Situated 1 mile 1540 yards downstream from Thetford. Rebuilt by Burrell & Son of Thetford in 1827, cost not known. The remains of the staunch were obliterated by the erection of a gauging weir in 1961.

Turfpool Staunch No 3: O/S 85448565. Situated 2 miles 1320 yards from Thetford. Rebuilt by J. & W. Gathergood in 1834 at a cost of £781. Both islands have now been removed and there are some brickwork remains on both banks.

Croxton Stauch No 4: O/S 84688701. Situated 3 miles 1320 yards from Thetford. Rebuilt by Burrell & Son in 1830 at cost of £800. Both islands have been removed and there are some remains of brickwork on the south bank. The site is now crossed by an arched-steel footbridge carrying the Little Ouse Path.

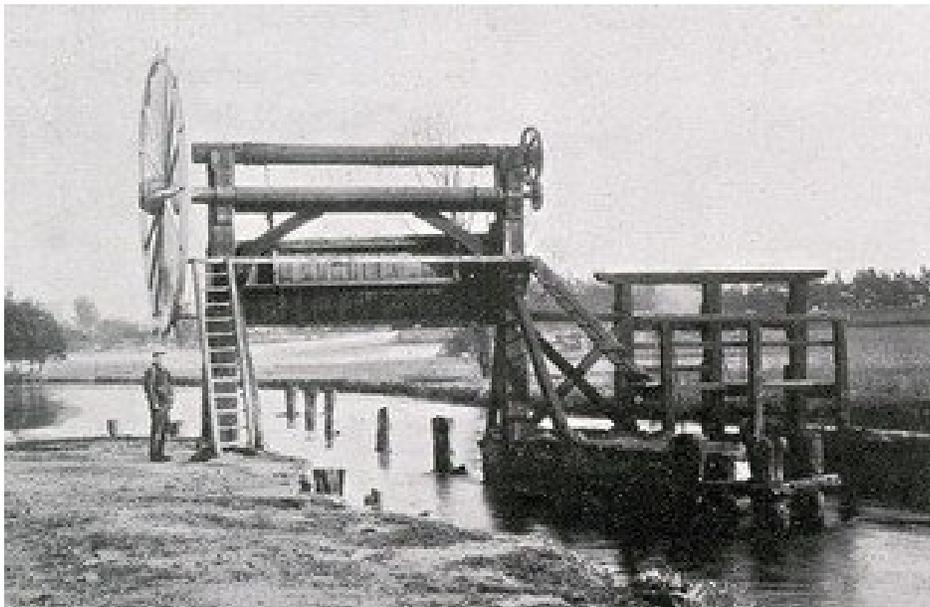
Santon Stauch No 5: O/S 82528728. 5 miles 440 yards from Thetford. Rebuilt by Burrell & Son in 1831, cost not known. The two uprights and the winding wheel were still in situ in 1950 but these have now been removed leaving hardly any trace.

Brandon Stauch No 6: O/S 77848667. 9 miles 220 yards from Thetford. Rebuilt in 1827 by Mr. Beeton, cost not known. The stauch was replaced by a lock built by the National Rivers Authority at a cost of some £280,000 and opened on 27 July 1995 – it can accommodate boats up to 41-feet in length and 13¼ feet wide.

Sheepwash Stauch No 7: O/S 75808700. 10 miles 1100 yards from Thetford. Rebuilt by Burrell & Son in 1830, cost £800. The remains of the stauch have been completely removed from the river.

Crosswater Stauch No 8. O/S 67708570. 16 miles 880 yards from Thetford. This stauch was outside the jurisdiction of the statutory navigation which covered the river from Thetford down to the White House near Brandon Ferry. It is thought it was built soon after Denver Sluice was re-erected and it was entirely removed in 1917.

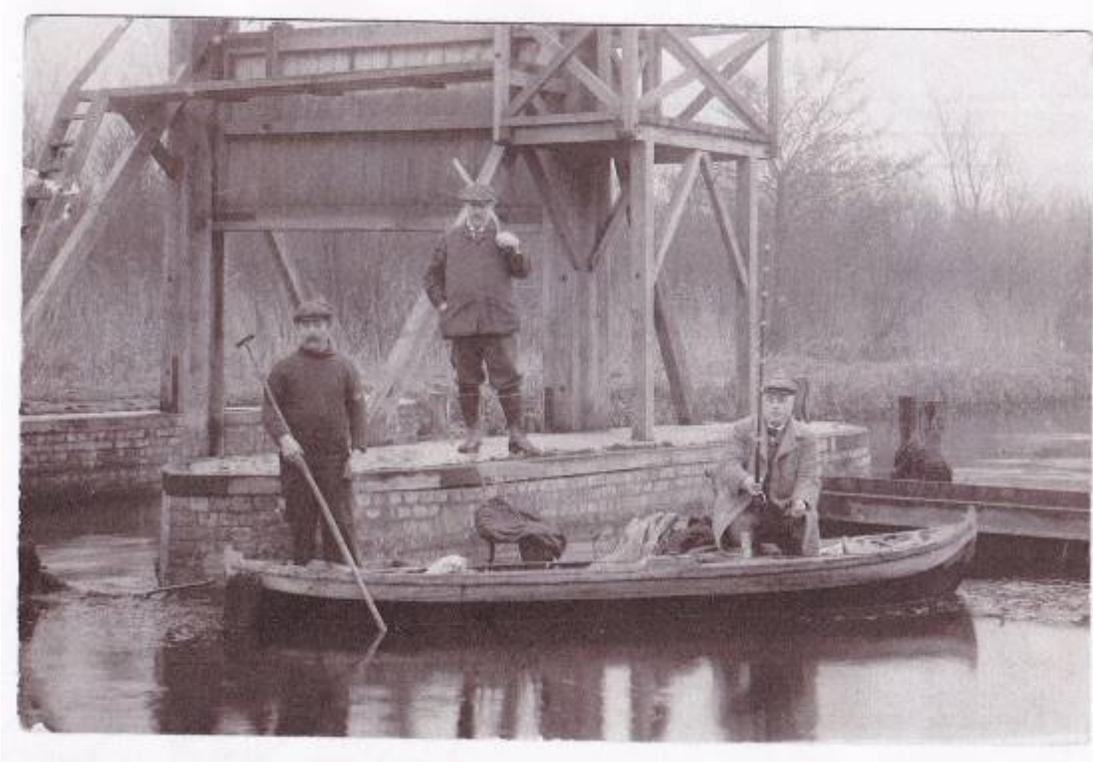
There were minor differences between the stauches. For instance, Croxton was not operated by a large wheel but by a handle, the man standing on the platform and an extra train of gears being required. The width between the uprights also varied Santon's were 13 feet 4 inches apart, Thetford Middle and Brandon were 13 feet apart, but Sheepwash was only 12 feet one inch apart.



Thetford Stauch, looking upstream.



Thetford Staunch, looking downstream



This is the third picture sent in by Doctor Roger Butler and it shows an intriguing fishing party making good use of one of the stanches, but which one?

More pictures of the stanches will be shown in the second part of this article that will appear in the June issue of *The Easterling* – Ed.

NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL

Volunteers from the Canal Trust have continued their remarkable work on the canal upstream of Bacton Wood and have reached the old railway bridge at Swafield and the road beyond. Their work effectively is creating a new canal and this has only been made possible by the active involvement of Laurie Ashton of the Old Canal Company and the ready cooperation of the two landowners.

After each session, Chris Black, the work party leader, produces a report setting out what has been achieved and these make interesting reading.

Sunday 11 October 2015: Work party at Pigneys Wood area of the canal – 12 volunteers attended. Good progress was made with all the objectives that included continuing the clearance of the north-west bank of the canal upstream of the footbridge, removing and burning the old tree stumps, stacking the useful timber as the chipper could not access this site, and burning the brash.

25 October: This continued with the work from the last session -16 volunteers turned out which was ideal as the big excavator was on site to pull out tree roots and the volunteers had to remove the piles of dead brash and cut trees down ahead of it.

8 November: Again continuing the clearance of the north west bank upstream of the footbridge where several small multi-trunked trees growing in the canal were felled, were sawn into manageable lengths for firewood with the remainder being burnt and leaving the stumps to be removed by the large digger at a later date. A silence was observed at 11am as this was Remembrance Sunday.

22 November: Despite wet and windy weather 11 volunteers turned out and carried on with the bank clearance work. Two fires were lit to burn the brash whilst timber lying in and beside the canal was sorted and cut into manageable lengths. The clearance made it possible to move the large machines all the way upstream to the old railway bridge on the Paston Way.

6 December: This was the first work party at the Paston Way length of the canal and it was given the task of clearing the banks of the canal from the railway bridge up to the road bridge in Swafield. The 16 volunteers were divided into two groups – one to start to tackle the dense amount of ivy growing on the bridge which was blocking access past it and the others to start a fire and sort out the useful timber and the brash from the bank clearance carried out by the Old Canal Company.

20 December: Another session at the Paston pound length of the canal where the 15 volunteers were again divided into two groups - one to tackle and burn the ivy growing on the old railway bridge and the other to cut down and burn a large area of bamboo growing beside the south-west side of the canal. The ivy proved to be dense and could only partly be removed as a long ladder was needed.

2016 work party dates are 10 & 24 January, 7 & 21 February, 6 & 20 March, 3 & 17 April, 1,15 & 29 May, 12 & 26 June, 10 & 24 July, 7 & 21 August, 4 & 18 September, 2, 16 & 30 October, 13 & 27 November and 11 December.



NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM CANAL PICTURES

Clearing trees and bushes from beside the canal at Pigneys Wood on 11 October. As a result the canal is re-emerging from years of neglect. (Alan Bertram)

A tug of war at the old railway bridge at the Paston pound length of the canal on 20 December. The old abutment was almost totally enveloped in years of ivy growth which was almost blocking access along the canal bank. The volunteers won !! (Alan Bertram).



Clearing the large bush of bamboo at the corner of Swafeld Staithe. (Ivan Cane)