

# THE EASTERLING

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## THE NORTH WALSHAM & DILHAM INQUIRY

As reported briefly in our last issue the appeal made under the Water Resources Act 1991 (as amended by the Environment Act 1995 and the Anti Pollution Works Order 1999) by the Old Canal Company Limited against the decision by the Environment Agency to serve a notice dated 19 April 2012 to stop all dredging work on the North Walsham and Dilham Canal has not been successful and the notice was confirmed with extensive modifications.

The main issue was whether the notice and the requirement to stop dredging were reasonable and necessary to safeguard the ecological potential of the canal between Ebridge Mill and Bacton Wood Mill at map Ref TG 30792 30083 North Walsham.

In 2003 a flood defence consent had been issued to Mr. Ashton in accordance with the plans submitted to carrying out works to clear all trees and saplings on canal banks, clear undergrowth, and dredge canal sides to build up banks. One of the requirements was that vegetated margins were to be retained along both sides of the river channel. No work was carried out at the time as Mr Ashton did not then own the canal and the consent expired in 2008. Following a meeting in May 2010, the EA sent a letter to Mr. Ashton in August 2010 stating that flood defence consent may be required for dredging the canal depending on the nature of the work. This though was not a permission to dredge which took place between May 2011 and January 2012.

The EA's evidence was that before the work was carried out the channel was "recovering". Deposited silt had consolidated, forming berms and become vegetated. The narrower channel of the waterway (1.5 to 2 metres) encouraged a faster flow, enabling the channel to become self-cleansing and reducing the need for maintenance. The diversity in flow was important for the creation of in-stream

features such as riffles and scour pools which provided habitat for various life stages of invertebrates and fish. The shallow sloping margins provided habitat for a variety of species both flora and fauna. There were a number of trees on the left hand bank and the mill pool at Ebridge was very silted and reeds were established. These characteristics represented the 2009 baseline condition.

Further the EA consider the widening and deepening of the channel has led to changes to the hydrological regime by reducing flow velocity and diversity and increasing water levels. The probability is that the need for maintenance will increase whilst structural habitat diversity will be reduced. Loss of marginal habitat, increased siltation and short term degradation of water quality will lead to a reduction in biodiversity in general.

This represents a classic case of the owner of a navigation, set up under an Act of Parliament, carrying out duties to “make and maintain” the waterway but coming into conflict with subsequent criteria for that waterway that effectively overrides and negates the Act. It is not clear exactly when the EA’s assessment of the 2009 baseline was carried out and if it was agreed with the then owners of the canal. At that time the water level in the pound varied considerably depending on the operation of the paddle at Ebridge Lock.

Whatever, it would be totally impractical to reverse the effects of the dredging and many would argue its effects are going to be beneficial to bio-diversity after the initial disturbance. We would hope that non-confrontational discussions between the parties involved will lead to a mutually acceptable way forward. With its very long connections with the canal EAWA will give support in any way it can towards resolving this matter. Our view continues to be that after initial disturbance caused by dredging the environment will benefit and this will also apply to a wide variety of other interests.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions to the Association will become due for renewal on 1 July and in an effort to cut down on postage costs we are including this reminder in the hope that we shall not have to send out a large batch of individual notices later on.

The minimum subscription remains at £5 and should be sent to the Treasurer, Alan Faulkner at 43 Oaks Drive, Colchester, CO3 3PS. Many members already pay considerably more than the minimum and many others pay by Bankers Order which removes the need for annual reminders such as this. Not only does this save us having to bother you each year but it makes life simpler for you as well. Alan will be happy to supply order forms for completion on request.

And we would take this opportunity of reminding members that Life Membership of the Association remains available at £100 or at the reduced rate of £50 for pensioners.

## HERE AND THERE

**NEW DIRECTOR:** We are delighted to announce that David Tomlinson was appointed to the Council at its meeting in Mildenhall on 11 April. David has a long standing and encyclopaedic knowledge of the waterways and was very active over the restoration of the Stourbridge Canal many years ago. He has been an EAWA member since January 1963, is a generous financial supporter and has attended several of the work parties on the North Walsham & Dilham Canal. Apart from EAWA he supports many other restoration societies and his widespread knowledge will be of great benefit to the Council.

**BOSTON BULLETIN:** The February 2013 (No.34) issue of this publication has an interesting seven-page feature about the waterways in its area. The next few items are based on this bulletin and thanks are due to our member Dave Carnell for alerting us to this feature.

**BOSTON BARRIER:** This multi-million pound flood protection scheme has moved a step closer to formal approval. On the 13 February a formal presentation was made in London to the Environment Agency's Large Project Review Group and to representatives from DEFRA. The business case was well received and attracted positive feedback. It is hoped the LPRG will recommend the business case for approval resulting in it being forwarded to the Environment Agency's Chief Executive for his blessing. Once the business case was approved, which could be in August this year, the project will proceed to delivery stage with no financial approval being required unless the programme exceeds the £90.2 million approved value. Construction could then begin in July 2016 with completion in November 2018. Apart from the major flood protection benefits the scheme will enable the water level between Boston's Grand Sluice and the new barrier to be controlled and this would be a major to the navigation of this stretch which, of course includes entry into the new Fens Waterways Link. The article includes a map showing the route of the new link through to the river Welland, its projected route from the Welland near Crowland through to the river Nene and possible new routes in the Middle Level.

**BLACK SLUICE PUMPING:** The effect of the very wet weather last year meant that over a six-month period the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board, which has 61 pumps at its 34 pumping stations, moved 10 billion gallons of water into the South Forty Foot Drain of which no less than 7 billion were during December 2012 and January 2013. Teams of pump men worked round the clock for two weeks over Christmas and the New Year to achieve this truly impressive amount.

**COWBRIDGE LOCK:** A routine inspection by the Witham Fourth District Internal Drainage Board of this 1940s structure in 2011 revealed deterioration largely due to metal fatigue of the superstructure and of the guillotine lock door. Remedial work was called for that would involve shot blasting the entire metal structure, with part to be replaced, removal and overhaul of the worn lock operating components, replacing the door and the counter weight, renewing most of the upright supports but leaving what remained in the stonework in situ, replacing the cross braces, fitting a new guillotine, and repainting everything. To achieve this, the lock was dammed at both

ends, scaffolding was erected and the dismantling and reconstruction work began using a 27-tonne crane.

The only access to a suitable lift site on the island adjacent to the lock meant having to cross part of Boston Golf Club and parking the crane on the 8<sup>th</sup> tee. Luckily the island is owned by the Board and rented to the club. Heavy duty plyboard mats were used to ensure minimal damage to the grass and the tee. The lock was pumped out, fish and eels were rescued, scaffold was erected and dismantling began. The superstructure was transported to the Board's main depot for shot blasting and repainting. Steel fabrication could then begin on a new 4½-tonne guillotine door and a new counterweight was created. Everything could then be re-erected. New uprights and cross members were fitted and the new guillotine installed with the counterweight being connected up by chains. Eight months and the best part of £70,000 later the lock was fully open and ready for the 2013 season.

It is worth noting that the Board receives no funding towards leisure activities but has always encouraged the use of its waters and this makes the work that has been carried out even more commendable. The lock is available from May to September.

**BRAYFORD POOL:** Despite the winter weather Drakes Dredging removed over 1,300 cubic metres of material from the site of the Lincoln Boat Club's moorings and floating pontoons and services have replaced the old moorings.

**RIVER SLEA:** Sadly the annual boat gathering at South Kyme had to be cancelled due to a sandbar and accompanying silt which blocked boat access below Taylors Lock. An unsuccessful attempt was made on the Thursday (2 May) before the Bank Holiday weekend by narrow boats *Ida-way* and *Nell* aided by Environment Agency staff running water through the lock chamber. Both boats became firmly stuck across the channel. Initial efforts to free them failed but success was achieved by an EA Landrover fitted with a winch. *Ida-way* tried again later but was not successful having to be towed off on the end of a 60-foot rope by *Nell*. Despite this the village festival went ahead over the weekend, boat crews having to travel there by car from the river moorings to attend the various events. The annual Boat Service at St. Mary's Church was well attended as were events in the village.

**GREAT OUSE:** Strong river flows had a major delaying effect on some of the works on the river planned by the Environment Agency. As a result the fitting of treadmills at Castle Mills, Willington and Roxton locks was barely completed in time for the Easter weekend. Brownhill and Hermitage locks have had new floating landing stages installed, the work again being delayed until well into April due to the state of the river. Meanwhile essential maintenance work has been carried out by Atkins on the Chinese Bridge at Godmanchester, whilst Stretham Ferry Old Bridge has been repaired by Jacksons, and the railway bridge at Queen Adelaide downstream from Ely is currently being refurbished over a six month period.

The extreme weather conditions last winter caused flows in the Hundred Foot River to stay high and this has been a major factor in the entrances to Denver and Salter's Lode locks getting blocked with silt yet again. In March over 700 tons of silt was

cleared from the entrance to Salter's Lode and the machinery then moved on the start dealing with an estimated 5,000 tonnes of silt just downstream of Denver Lock.

Our Member Brian Holt reported on 19 March. *"On our way to the boat we called in at Denver Sluice to see how work was progressing. The work is well on with a reasonable channel cut through the sandbank in line with the lock mouth. We were hoping that once they reached this stage they would start locking boats through but it seems we are going to have to wait until 28 March at the earliest. Both the floating landing stages are floating once again, but to dredge in front of the lock they have breasted them up and moved them downstream, so they are effectively blocking the access channel to the lock. The tide looked pretty full where we were there with only the top of the bank visible so it is hard to say what the underwater profile is at the moment.*

*We continued on to the boat and proceeded to load up having discounted a trip to Brandon Creek this time. We pushed off to moor at March for the night. The only things of note on the way were someone hedge hopping the power lines and a few kingfishers whizzing along the river bank. About an hour later we pulled into the newer moorings by the park as they tend to be quieter at night than the town moorings. March now boasts a gym in the park with a gym trail consisting of green pipe structures where you can do pull-ups etc. There is very little progress in the new Middle Level Watermen's moorings other than a boundary fence, a flag pole that is not upright and a rather nice brick based plaque."*

**CAMBRIDGE:** The "war" between rival punt companies in the city shows no signs of being dying down. Beyond the calm waters there is an undercurrent of threats, vandalism and simmering rivalries. So bad has the situation become that the river bailiff who has to check boat registrations, tackle illegal moorings and generally monitor the bye laws feels so unsafe he has asked to be provided with a stab vest. Increased hostility is being displayed to him and other staff who have to patrol the river banks. Downstream at Ely Cambridge University has its boathouse on the Island of Babylon but it has now acquired a site further downstream alongside Queen Adelaide Way and much nearer where most of the rowing practice takes place and where plans have been drawn up to erect a new boathouse.

**CHELMER & BLACKWATER:** In February 15 Waterway Recovery Group volunteers from all over the country worked on a 500 metre stretch of the navigation between Wave and Hall Bridges at Heybridge. Overgrown brambles and branches were cleared, opening up and widening the towpath and allowing it to dry out ahead of the local council resurfacing it. Overhanging branches of the off-side of the navigation that were catching on boats were also removed. Several of the volunteers were taking part in their gold Duke of Edinburgh Award and received training on the safe use of tools such as petrol powered brush cutters.

On 18 November last year a blue plaque was unveiled outside the former Springfield mill house honouring the contribution that the miller Joseph Strutt had made to the nation's Olympic Games heritage. In 1801 Strutt had written *"The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England"* and this is thought to have led to the founding of the Much Wenlock Games in Shropshire in 1850. In turn these games were visited

by Pierre de Coubertin who was so impressed that he went onto found the Olympic Games in Paris in 1896.

**WEST MERSEA:** *Dawn*, a former Thames stackie sailing barge that was built in 1897 to transport straw and horse feed from Essex farms to London now has a new home at West Mersea. She is in the care of a not-for-profit charitable trust which funds her upkeep with charter trips along the coastline for up to 12 passengers. She was restored from almost unsalvageable disrepair in 2007 with the aid of a £1m National Lottery grant.

**RIVER GIPPING:** High water levels have delayed progress installing the new sluice gates at Baylham and attempts to construct a temporary coffer dam were not successful. Instead it is expected the work will now be carried out in the summer when water levels should be back to normal.

Meanwhile work has started on re-instating the by-wash at Pipp's Ford. The by-wash channel is in fact the old river bed and will need to be fully functional when navigation is restored over this stretch. Likewise the weir that controlled the water level has been removed and this will need to be reinstated at a later date. The original bridge has long since disappeared and has been replaced with a rubble causeway partially blocking the old watercourse.

The plan is to replace the old bridge, remove the causeway and open up the full length of the river. A design has been prepared for the new bridge that will be on similar lines to the Mathematical Bridge over the Cam at Queen's College, Cambridge and timber is being sourced so it can be prefabricated. Last winter trees that had grown up through the old bridge abutments were removed and the rest of the abutments are being carefully demolished saving as many of the old bricks as possible for the rebuild. Once the site was cleared a new concrete base has been provided for the new abutments and for the weir.

**WESTBRIDGE ARM, NORTHAMPTON:** The February Newsletter of the IWA's Northampton Branch tells the story of the branch's involvement with promoting the use of this branch of the river Nene. In 1984 the branch started to press for the arm, which was badly silted, to be dredged. To publicise the position a token cargo of coal and potatoes was loaded into a small boat which was then towed over the reeds and the rubbish to beyond the Westbridge. The cargo was then presented to local pensioners and this all led to the arm being dredged to improve drainage. However the Environment Agency does not count it as a Recreational Waterway as it was not included in the Anglian Water Act. Because of this any boat upstream of the river's junction with the Northampton branch of the Grand Union Canal does not need a licence and a number of boats are now permanently moored there, albeit some have been abandoned and sunk. The arm has a long history of navigation and used to serve a series of businesses including a foundry, two breweries, a timber yard, the gas works and many others including some sited on short branch canals.

**RIVER STOUR:** Towards the end of last year a new footbridge was erected across the river at the former Langham watermill replacing a structure that was put up in

1968 but had become unsafe. In turn the 1968 bridge replaced one erected in the 1930s but which had been washed away when the river was in flood.

On Sunday 12 May the River Stour Trust inaugurated "John Constable" as its new trip boat based at The Granary in Sudbury. RST Vice President Griff Rhys Jones performed the ceremony which was attended by an impressive crowd of well wishers. Another major event, the annual Sudbury to the Sea paddle, is due to take place over the 7/8 September weekend.

On 11 May last year Suffolk Member of Parliament Tim Yeo officially opened a green electricity project at Flatford Mill where an Archimedean screw has been installed by the Field Studies Council. The turbine has been fitted with a fish and an eel pass to allow them to have safe passage going upstream.

**B&MK WATERWAY TRUST:** The Trust's new trip boat is to be named after one of Bedford's most famous sons "John Bunyan". The name was chosen from among 22 submitted by members of the trust and the general public. So far 92 trips have been scheduled to take place between June and the end of September.

Meanwhile as a result of a planning requirement Covanta, a company planning a waste incinerator that would generate electricity at Stewartby, will be required to build a section of the planned waterway through that area which will include two bridges under roads that cross the line of the waterway. The company will give £3,375,000 to the two councils involved – Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council – to finance the work.

## **BROADS NOTES AND NEWS**

**BROADS AUTHORITY:** Kelvin Allen and Peter Warner were appointed as new members to the Authority in April. Kelvin Allen from Downham Market is the Regional Chairman of the Angling Trust and sits on many Environment Agency and Angling Trust committees. He worked for 32 years at British Telecom ending his career in senior management. Peter Warner served for 37 years in local government and retired recently from his post as Head of Planning & Business Services at Great Yarmouth Borough Council. He lives at Acle and is the Regional Chair of the East of England branch of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

**DREDGING:** The Broads Authority has been considering options about a possible increase in dredging the Broads. Currently some 50,000 cubic metres of mud are removed each year at a cost of some £1,340,000 but against this nearly 25,000m<sup>3</sup> enters the system annually. At this rate it will take over fifty years to bring the whole area up to the standard the Authority has set. Three options are being considered, the first being to maintain the status quo. The second would be to increase the volume to 60,000m<sup>3</sup> using the existing equipment more intensively but this would involve more staff time and running costs, with increased wear and tear and a higher contribution to reserves for the renewal of the equipment – in all a total of £230,000.

The third option could be to increase dredging to 100,000m<sup>3</sup> which would involve much greater investment in project planning, identifying and gaining permissions to

deposit the dredged material, whilst additional staff would be needed – in all an extra £218,000 annually. But the option would also require the purchase of additional plant; this would involve two long reach 360 excavators costing £180,000, nine unflotes at £90,000 for these new excavators and a concrete pump £30,000 – a total of £300,000. The existing equipment (4 grab cranes and 7 wherries) should then suffice although there would be increased maintenance costs. A cutter suction dredger might be needed at some sites but this could be hired, as new ones can cost £450,000. Maintaining the current dredging rate is likely to be the final decision.

**REED CUTTERS:** The Daily Telegraph (Thursday 7 March) featured a picture taken two days earlier of reed cutters Lewis Woods and Paul Eldridge on their punt loaded with bundles of reeds on the river Ant. The pair had taken advantage of a brief spell of exceptionally warm weather on that day to harvest the reed on the wetland marsh at How Hill.

**NEW PATROL BOAT:** On Wednesday 13 March the Broads Authority's new heavy weather patrol boat "*The Spirit of Breydon*" was launched from Goodchild Marine Services yard at Burgh Castle. Costing £115,000 the 33-foot long boat has been specially adapted to cope with the demanding conditions experienced on Breydon Water such as riding out 5-foot waves. The boat has a low wash hull and cruises economically at 6 knots but can reach speeds of up to 20 knots if required. There is accommodation on board for two crew members with room for six visitors if required.

The need for this new vessel became apparent when the authority took over responsibility for Breydon Water in June last year. The authority already had eight river vessels, all of which are maintained at the Burgh Castle yard, but none of them could reach the speeds deemed to be necessary for this particular assignment. In all some £300,000 is being invested to make the crossing of Breydon safer and more enjoyable for boaters. Clearer channel marking, new lay-by moorings for boats waiting to catch low tide, new gauge boards at bridges and a study of water flows to decide the future of the Turn Tide Jetty at the mouth of the rivers Yare and Waveney are all part of the package.

**NORFOLK BROADS DIRECT:** Paul and Barbara Greasley have been at the helm of this Wroxham-based business for ten years, during which time they reckon they have invested £5.75 million in 45 new boats (41 cruisers, 3 day boats and a trip boat) as well as carrying out major improvements to the boatsheds and moorings on the site. Their fleet currently numbers 59 craft, all with their names prefixed by "Fair" such as *Fair Senator* and *Fair President*. Mrs Greasley is Chairman of Broads Tourism and the couple has spearheaded the industry's move away from cheap and cheerful booze cruises to today's green and upmarket future.

**PEGASUS BOATYARD:** The appeal against the granting of planning permission for the Pegasus development mainly on the grounds of the sheer inadequacy of the amount of space being reserved for the boatyard has not been successful. It seems the planners were now content with the height and general appearance of the new buildings when viewed from Oulton Broad and this outweighed the concerns about the boatyard.

**CLEAN-UP BARGE:** Norwich City Council has acquired a former May Gurney barge to assist in removing unsightly graffiti tags up and down the river Wensum. The barge cost £3,500 and the council's contractors NPS Norwich work from it and use special chemicals and high pressure jets to wash the scrawlings away from riverside structures. The barge is also being used to clear away weeds and other vegetation mainly between New Mills Yard and Pulls Ferry. These works should produce a major improvement to the appearance of the riverside walk.

**RIVER POWER:** A consortium is hoping to generate hydro electricity power from the river Wensum at the disused New Mills pumping station off Westwick Street in Norwich. The plan is to install an Archimedes screw under the pumping station which would turn as the river flowed through thus generating power for 100 homes. The Environment Agency, however, has claimed the scheme poses a potential flooding risk. The site has a long history of using the river; a corn mill was first built there in 1430 and in 1710 it was rebuilt to supply water in the city. In 1897 New Mills became an air-compressor station with three electric and two water-powered compressors – the compressed air was used to pump sewage out of the city. It stopped operating as a compressor station in 1972 but the machinery has been preserved. There were only two such systems in the country – the other being at the Houses of Parliament. The Norwich Society is involved in view of the great historic interest in the site.

**NORFOLK KEEL PROJECT:** Last September an old Norfolk keel that had been stored at Whitlingham pending restoration was found to have deteriorated to such an extent that made its repair highly unlikely. So it was deliberately destroyed by fire as what was considered by some to be the best course of action. Stuart Wilson, who has been actively involved in the developments on the Aylsham Navigation, is now investigating if it would be possible to construct a keel – suggested name "*The Phoenix*" – that would then complement the existing heritage fleet on the Broads. Stuart does not under estimate the problems but is seeking expressions of interest. If favourable his plan could be to set up a website and follow this up with arranging a public meeting. <http://www.facebook.com/#!/NorfolkKeels>

**RIVER WAVENEY TRUST:** On Sunday 17 March sixteen members turned out to attack the over-grown and much criticised state of one of the channels off the main river at Wainford Maltings. Five hours later a clean channel had been created and a week later a follow-up session saw the downstream section completed.

**STRUMPSHAW FEN:** Concerns have been expressed about the testing of high speed boats in a designated area of the fen, adjacent to the Royal Society of Birds reserve. This has followed on from two swans being killed by a boat travelling at high speed. As the swans are large conspicuous birds and views of the river on this stretch are unimpeded, the incident also raised concerns about the competence of the individuals manning the craft. There is also concern about the safety of visitors using the footpath along the river bank as waves caused by the wash of these boats can overtop the river bank and cover the footpath. And this wash can only lead to increased river bank erosion and also to the destruction of nests of great crested grebes, coot and moorhens. The RSPB's view is that boating and wildlife are not incompatible but the situation needs to be carefully managed to ensure visitors and

staff can use the area safely and wildlife is not harmed but the death of the swans in February is unacceptable and must not be repeated.

Speed boat testing has been permitted on the river Yare adjacent to Strumpshaw Fen for over 35 years but it is acknowledged there are important safety and wildlife issues. A review was undertaken in 2011 but was unable to reach any conclusions due to poor logbook recording of testing by boatyards. The yards view the Strumpshaw area as crucial for testing as it was not possible to test on Breydon Water for a variety of reasons. Most of the testing was for demonstrations to customers but some was for factory work testing. All in all this is a complex issue and more information is needed. To this end a new log book has been introduced in which boatyards will be required to record specific data and the conditions of trade-plates for the boats being tested have also been reviewed. The data collected over a two year period will then be reviewed in the summer of 2014.

**SALHOUSE BROAD:** The work to restore the reed bed and spit of land at Salhouse Broad using dredgings from the nearby river has been selected as a finalist for a prestigious 2013 Water Renaissance Awards. The techniques used were outlined in our last issue and have attracted huge national and international interest and could lead the way to future projects in the Broads.

**AYLSHAM MILL:** The future of a piece of land next to the historic mill at Aylsham has been the subject of a nine-year saga with the mill owners and the town council at odds since 2004. The owners have fenced off the land, which they do not own, to help them carry on with restoring the building and prevent it being used for parking and for alcohol and drug abuse. However the council wants to open the land up for public usage as it had been for many years past. It is hoped the matter can be finally resolved, one way or the other, at a forthcoming meeting of Broadland District Council.

**SOTSHOLE BROAD:** In a situation that has some similarities to the dredging above Ebridge, David Pooley, the owner of a broad at South Walsham has fallen foul of the Broads Authority over work that he has carried out. The case was reported in "*The Daily Telegraph*" on 21 May with a follow-up article on 23 May. Mr Pooley bought the broad in 2005 at which time it was inaccessible, contained a mere six inches of water and was devoid of life apart from lilies and reeds. He approached the Broads Authority in 2008 and they indicated they would help with some funding for improvement works he wanted to carry out. In the event the money was diverted to other schemes and in January 2010 Mr. Pooley started work, funding it from his own resources. Over a three year period the broad has been dredged to a depth of three to four feet, quay heading has been installed in one place and paths and board walks have been installed to provide access. As a result of all this the broad is now teeming with fish and there are water voles, otters and kingfishers about. Although private property he allows friends and villagers to visit the broad and it is open to the public for three weeks.

The Broads Authority's planning committee, however, decided that he had suburbanised the 60-acre beauty spot by building the paths and board walks and installing the quay heading in this isolated and unspoilt location and indicated it was

even considering prosecuting him. They fully supported the work on the broad itself but not the man-made features. This seems an unfortunate outcome to a public spirited project and we would hope it can be resolved amicably for the benefit of everyone concerned.

**RAILWAY SWING BRIDGES:** There is a possibility that the two unreliable swing bridges at Reedham and Somerleyton could be replaced. Consultants Mott Macdonald are carrying out a feasibility study on behalf of Network Rail and different schemes are being considered including replacement by lifting, swing or fixed bridges. The costs are likely to be substantial – merely refurbishing the existing structures in situ is likely to cost £17million for each bridge, new moveable structures built on the existing foundations would cost £40m, whilst fixed flyover structures would be far more expensive.

Because of the bridges unreliable record Network Rail has paid for de-masting pontoon moorings at both sites costing £72,000. Electronic signs costing £160,000 are also to be installed this summer indicating if the bridges are operating and how long boaters will have to wait for the next swing. Whatever happens any building project is unlikely to get under way for at least six years.

**MEMORY SPOT:** By David Stevens. *Monday 18 August 1969: We woke to a fine sunny morning and began cruising soon after breakfast. We cruised up the river Ant and stopped at Ludham Bridge for stores and water and then went on through Barton Broad and called at Barton Turf where we saw "Salty" again. We had sold her to a couple who lived in Norfolk. We then cruised on up to Wayford Bridge and found a pleasant mooring above the bridge. We had lunch at the Wood Farm Grill that was very nice indeed, well cooked and served. We rested and had a little nap after lunch and it began to rain a little. Nevertheless we decided to cruise on up the North Walsham and Dilham Canal at about 4.30pm. A very pretty trip, but the water is narrow and reedy. There were very few other cruisers here. We reached the head of navigation near the first lock and here the canal is very overgrown. We tried to walk to the lock but failed due to marshy land. We found the line of a railway track, but no lock so the children and I went in "Smartie" (the dinghy) and part rowed and part paddled up to the mouth of the lock where I took a couple of photographs to prove it. We retraced our steps to Wayford Bridge where we moored for the night.*

*Wednesday 20 August 1969: We left Wayford Bridge at about 11am and cruised to Dilham where we moored on the dyke and walked to the Cross Keys for a drink. Teddy Edwards is known here. L. A. (Teddy) Edwards was (and still is in 1997) a well known figure in the waterways scene and very much involved in the Inland Waterways Association. We had met him when he came to speak to the Stratford upon Avon Canal Society and we had put him up for the night. The children had a row in the dinghy but it started to rain again so we decided to cruise on to South Walsham. The main river is very rough and busy after the quiet of the river Ant above Wayford Bridge. We arrived at South Walsham Broad but could not find anywhere to moor at first. Eventually we stopped in Bondons yard and here we had no flies and there was a dry bank. It was a very blustery night.*

## TIMBERLAND DELPH:

By David Tomlinson.

Following the South Kyme Festival an impromptu chat amongst boat owners at the Tattershall Bridge moorings led to three narrow boats exploring Timberland Delph on their way back to Lincoln from the river Slea. Having eased through the entrance doors *Kyme* led the way followed by *Wigford* and *Nell*. The delph is wide and straight with a decent depth of water, but the high banks prevent any view of the surrounding countryside. We cruised to within 200 yards of the end where the delph joins the Roman Canal – Car Dyke, the last stretch being shallow and somewhat overgrown.

At 55-feet *Kyme* wined without difficulty and skipper Steve Hayes thought that a slightly longer craft would wind. The boats were able to moor against the bank with no need for gang planks. Following a welcome ‘cuppa’ and cakes we enjoyed an uneventful return journey to moor overnight at Kirkstead Bridge. It was a very satisfying cruise on 6½ miles of previously unknown waters to any of us.



Pictures (by courtesy of Steve Hayes) show the three boats moored at the western end of the delph; a general view looking back down the delph; and the very end of the delph where it meets Car Dyke.

The delph runs 3¼ miles westwards on a straight course from just south of

Kirkstead Bridge that carries the B.1191 road from Woodhall Spa to Martin over the river Witham, before ending up near Timberland village.

## **NORTH WALSHAM AND DILHAM CANAL:** Work party reports:

Bacton Wood Lock: 3 & 17 February: This continued the work of clearing downed trees and brash on the banks and along the dry canal bed upstream of the lock.

Royston Bridge: 3 March: This was intended to assist the Old Canal Company in the removal of a dangerous large tree growing adjacent to the Bacton Road and opposite the Wherry House. On arrival it was found the tree was already down and the 12 volunteers worked to cut up the larger trunks and branches and to load them up for removal from the site, whilst the smaller pieces were burned.

Briggate Mill Pond: 24 March: Intended to be a general tidying up before the start of the growing season but the weather intervened and no work was undertaken.

Honing Staithe Cut: 7 April: A general tidy up was carried out and several small branches fallen from overhanging trees were removed from the water. Work was carried out on the walk from the wooden bridge which is through a damp and marshy area. This was built up in places with any timber that was available and runs were opened up to allow water to drain towards the canal.

Honing Lock: 21 April: The area around the Environment Agency's water measuring station was tidied up and a large willow tree that had fallen across the canal and was blocking it below the lock was removed. Overhanging brambles were also cleared from the public footpath and four trees that had fallen from the adjacent land and were blocking the path were removed.

Swafield: 5 May: New ground was broken with an initial session on the legally abandoned part of the canal. Despite not being used for 143 years the two locks there were found to be in a remarkably good condition. They are now owned by Mike Starling who bought the relative stretch of the canal up to Swafield Bridge in 1982 and who is now keen to halt any further decline in the structures.

Mike gave the group a guided tour of the site before work started on clearing away years of invading growth in between the two locks and also starting to remove years of ivy from the lower lock's sides. Several trees are also growing in the bed and walls of the lock and it is hoped these can be removed in due course.

Royston Bridge: Several sessions are planned here for June – for instance on 2 June work will be concentrated on the quay heading at the Wherry Inn. This Association made a £1,000 donation partly to buy the materials for this work and partly to enable the work party's equipment to be repaired and replaced as appropriate. There will also be sessions on 16 and 30 June. David Revill remains the contact for all this – 01603 738648.

Members are reminded that the Swafield locks are on private property and thus there is no public access. Anyone wishing to visit the site should speak to David Revill.

## THE STAMFORD CANAL AND THE RIVER WELLAND

It is some time since we focussed on the long-closed Stamford Canal but further detailed field work by our member Steve Machin means we can now reproduce a revised Distance Table for the canal and for the River Welland.

Location	Ordnance Survey Ref	Miles & Yards
Stamford, High Street Bridge	03050693	0 0
Footbridge	03340692	0 316
Junction of canal and river east of Stamford	04140737	0 1337
Hudd's Mill Lock No 1 (top lock)	04230744	0 1487
Accommodation Bridge (access to Hudd's Mill)	04250749	0 1512
River Gwash crossing	04810762	1 352
Uffington Stone Bridge (road to Barnack)	06630697*	2 932
Copthill Farm West Lock No 2 (Copthill Upper Lock)	17200704	3 37
Copthill Farm East Lock No 3 (Copthill Lower Lock)	07740734	3 527
Copthill Turnpike Lock No 4 (West Marsh Lock)	08400775	3 1425
Tallington Village Lock No 5	09208080*	4 650
Tallington Crossing (ford – road to Bainton)	09230795	4 703
Tallington winding hole	09390799*	4 844
Tallington Horse Holmes Lock No 6	09850831	4 1513
Railway Crossing 9 (line from Peterborough)	09860832	4 1530
St. Andrews Lock No 7, West Deeping	10930873	5 1213
Winding Basin, West Deeping	10930873	5 1229
West Deeping Crossing (ford – King Street Roman Road)	11020875*	5 1301
Arm, West Deeping	11100872	5 1513
Eastfield Lock No 8 (Lammas Close Lock)	11800930	6 263
Molecey's Lock No 9 (Molecey Mill Lock)	12400982	6 1618
Greatford Drainage Cut enters from the north	12850990	7 105
A 15 Bridge (Deeping Bypass)	13020983	7 597
Thorpes Lock No 10 (Market Deeping Mill Lock)	13400993	7 985
Tongue End – canal rejoins the river Welland	13660992*	7 1355
Market Deeping Bridge (B.1524 former A5 Lincoln Road)	13870987	7 1566
Briggin's Lock No 11 (lock extant & footbridge)	14870959*	8 932
Deeping Gate Bridge (B.1162 road to Northborough)	15070950	8 1196
Footbridge	15130948	8 1249
Deeping Low Lock No 22, Deeping St. James	16450895*	9 1284
Railway Bridge (Peterborough to Spalding and Boston)	17530770	10 1478
Junction with the Maxey Drainage Cut	17730738	11 158
Junction with the Folly River	17980753	11 510
Junction with arm towards Borough Fen	21260951	11 1280
Junction with arm to Crowland	22971061	14 1750
Fen Bridge, Crowland (B.1166)	22951064	15 40
Four Mile Bar footbridge (near St. Guthlac's Cross)	25621527	18 1060
Spalding Southern Bypass Bridge (A.16)	23791924	21 950

Junction with New River Drain (New River Outfall)	24522121	22 1700
Little London Bridge (linking the B.1172 and the B. 1173)	24292129	23 40
Railway Bridge (former Spalding to March line)	24442158	23 410
Southern junction with the Coronation Flood Channel	24502171	23 580
Footbridge	24642193	23 840
Site of former railway bridge (Spalding to King's Lynn)	24642195	23 880
High Bridge, Spalding	24862253	23 1620
Albion Street footbridge	25002278	24 120
Footbridge	25182303	24 520
Footbridge	25202308	24 560
West Elloe Bridge (A.151 - roundabout with next bridge)	25532355	24 1160
West Elloe Bridge (A.151)	25532355	24 1200
Fulney Tidal Lock	25812403	25 40
Northern junction with the Coronation Flood Channel	25912421	25 270
Spalding Northern Bypass Bridge (A.16)	26382527	26 260
Junction with Vernatt's Drain (Vernatt's Outfall)	28252936	29 10
Junction with the River Glen, Surfleet Seas End	28252950	29 130
Junction with Lord's Drain	29553077	30 490
Junction with Risegate Eau Drain (Risegate Outfall)	30373151	31 0
Fosdyke Bridge (A.17) replacing former moveable span	31873223	32 50
Greenwich Meridian	34553475	34 150
The Wash (District Council boundary)	36463538	35 920

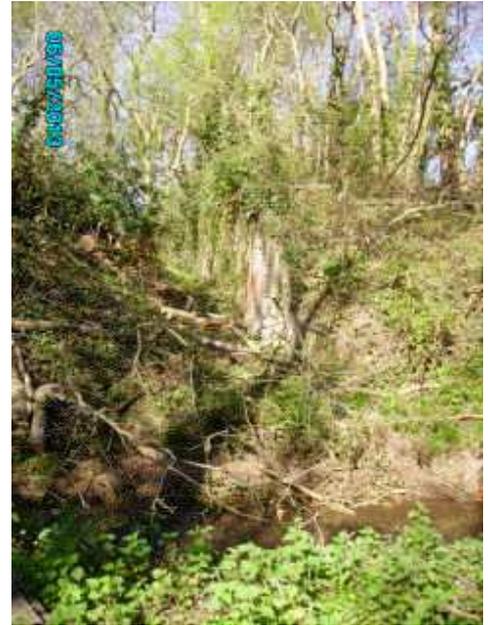
*Map references marked (\*) were measured with a global positioning device; most of the rest assessed from maps and a few of the lock sites have had to be estimated as they can no longer be traced on the ground.*

The Act of Parliament for the Stamford Canal was passed in 1571, being one of the earliest Acts dealing with navigation. No action was taken until 1620 when Stamford Corporation was authorised to build a 9½-mile cut leaving the river Welland at Hudd's Mill on the eastern outskirts of Stamford and rejoining the river at Market Deeping. Even then it was not until 1664 that work was started and was completed by about 1670. The arrival of the Midland Railway in Stamford in 1846 killed off the import of sea coal, one of the main traffics on the navigation, and the last lighter passed through the canal in April 1863. Much of the canal land was then sold off.

There seem to have been few thoughts of trying to restore the route through the Deepings. If restoration ever becomes a possibility it might conceivably be possible to use the Maxey Drainage Cut which bypasses the Deepings and most of the original canal section. This 5¼-mile long drainage channel was built in the early 1950s and runs in a direct line from the Welland near Peakirk almost due west to rejoin the river just south of Tallington. It is crossed by two railway lines – the East Coast Main Line from Peterborough to Grantham and the Peterborough to Spalding line - the main A.15 road south of Deeping Gate and five other roads.

This might well be just a pipe dream but some quite remarkable restorations have taken place elsewhere in the country and Stamford and nearby Burghley House would be most attractive destinations.

## NORTH WALSHAM AND DILHAM CANAL PICTURES



Pictures courtesy of Mary Black and Ivan Cane.

The top four show the lower lock at Swafield and the dramatic clearance that has already been achieved. The lower two show Royston Bridge which was culverted years ago and now offers only limited headroom. Meanwhile the canal has been cleared and our view looks downstream towards Bacton Wood.