

Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Heritage Centre

No_1 4th February 2015

Since the last informal meeting of the Trustees in January 2015, a lot of work has been carried out on the site and so I thought that it would be of interest to issue this first Bulletin of progress.

In order to make the site suitable for grazing, it has had to be fenced off from Rectory Farm for the first time. This has involved the erection of over 170 yards of post and wire fencing. This work took place over 3 Wednesday mornings assisted by Philip Hollowell and his helper, Craig shown below.



Because we do not want to open up the official entrance onto Billing Road (for security reasons), I have obtained temporary permission to access the site via Rectory Farm and Glebe Way, Cogenhoe. For this reason, we have also erected a 10 foot steel gate in our new fence so that we can come and go with vehicles but still keep our land stock-proof.



The other problem with the site has been flooding and damp patches caused by broken drains and blocked ditches on Rectory Farm and in Deacon's Orchard to our south.

In order to deal with this, we have had to engage Bob Whyman from Earls Barton who has brought his digger for two Saturdays. The first day was spent cleaning out a ditch on Rectory Farm – alongside the old railway line. Last week, as well as discovering a 15KV underground power cable, we installed a new culvert under a gateway next to our land which has enabled us to scour out a short gully in Deacons Orchard and feed this into the Rectory Farm system – away from our land. The work in Deacons Orchard had to be done by hand and was very hard work.



That work has helped to dry out the top and eastern boundary of the site. The other problem is on the western boundary with the Arrowsmiths. Here, the ditch had not been scoured out for many years. It was completely blocked, making our land so wet that marsh grass was beginning to take over as can be seen in these photographs of Philip and Craig pulling out the old fencing so that the digger could get in to do its work.

Winching out the old fencing and undergrowth. The marsh grass can be seen in front of the tractor and Deacons Orchard is in the background.



Finally, the digger was able to get into the top part of the ditch and start removing the detritus which allowed the drains to start running again. Conditions were so bad that the digger became stuck three times and had to dig itself out. However, that part of the ditch is now running freely and the land is beginning to dry out.

Further down the ditch, large willow trees have taken root and are blocking the free passage of water into the river. Some of these will have to be removed but in other places, the ditch may have to be diverted around them. It is hoped that one more session with Bob will finish that part of the job. The next task being a large bonfire!



So far, using second hand materials and mate's rates, the work has cost less than £500.

I will keep everyone posted of developments and, of course, if anyone wants to help, let me know.

Steve