

The Man-Made Flood of Goxhill 2007

The village of Goxhill and the Land between the Humber known as Goxhill Marsh was a Flood Plain until after the enclosure in 1775, when it was broken up into small fields and drained with the open drain system of the era. All the drains and dykes were dug by hand for there was no other means, as the modern machinery we have today had not been invented.

The Drainage System was started at Goxhill Haven where the clew doors had been installed to control the water in and out of the Marsh, and the newly dug drains, (in many places using the gutters cut by the tide which previously had drained the flood plain) meandered their way to the village and beyond, with dykes on the field boundaries dug to drain the fields, as in the early days most fields would be pasture. Before wells and artesian bore holes were invented, ponds were dug near the dykes, in which to store the water for the livestock to drink, every farm-yard having one which collected the water from the building roofs. All these Drains, dykes and ponds also acted as reservoirs at time of abnormal rainfall, also much of the rain soaked into the soil. Many inches of rain could descend before any problems arrived.

Today, much of our Drainage System has been destroyed in the last 40 years, under what has been called progress. Many of the dykes and ponds have been filled in, both in the village and the fields, to make them larger, and so reduced are the reservoirs in the village where dykes have been filled in and replaced by drain pots of a small diameter, that there is no way they could hold the amount of water an open dyke does, and the water has to soak through the soil to get into it in the first place, which can take several days. Also, much of the open soil in Goxhill is now covered in concrete and tarmac which have insufficient drainage in times of abnormal rain.

Regarding the Sewerage system, it is quite adequate with few problems in normal weather - so why does it overflow in heavy rainfall? Because it has been abused by many builders who have wrongly connected the downfalls from the roofs of dwellings into it. Otherwise a rain fall would make no difference. *Maybe an oversight by the jobsworth.*

The village flooding can only be overcome by opening up all these dykes, which today is impossible because of all the underground service pipes which supply the dwellings, any of which can be Water, Sewerage, Gas or Electric. With

almost every other bucketful of spoil, a Mechanical digger would damage one of these, there are so many of them.

Regarding the modern way of cutting hedges and dykes with the Flail type cutters: they reduce the vegetation to pulp that falls to the dyke bottom and is not removed - and when the rains come, it floats and is carried by the water to the bridge at the field's entrance, where it blocks the pipe, stopping or reducing the flow.

So we have the suggestion that a pumping station at Goxhill Haven may be the answer. Well, what use would that be when the water gets cannot get there due to the obstruction of pipes at the bridges over the main drains. On the old drains at each farm and field there was a bridge with a brick archway as wide as the bottom of the drain, and as high, so the drain flowed without obstruction. In 1976 a new Clew (or Clough, as some of you may like to call it) was put in the Haven, which was much deeper, and in the following years the drains from it dug deeper still. When the excavator arrived at each of these bridges, the arches were ripped out and replaced with a round steel corrugated prefabricated pipe approximately 4 feet in diameter, which can only pass about one fifth of the of the original amounts of water. These pipes may be seen at the bridges on East Marsh Road and Neatgangs (Nipkin to locals) and Sykes Lane, which all water to the Haven have to flow through. When the tide goes out and the build-up of water subsides, the Clew is still only passing approximately a quarter of its capacity because of the obstructed flow on the modern pipes under the bridges.

There are two examples of the old bridges left , should anyone want to compare the difference from the new steel pipes which run alongside at a lower depth. Though they replaced the old brick arches, they were built in 1937. The first is under Chapelfield Road, where it joins East Marsh Road, and the other is where Horsegatefield Road joins east Marsh Road. A third one at the Haven end of East Marsh Road was filled with concrete 3 years or so ago. Any viewer down there might also note that many of the entrances to the steel pipes are covered with grass and briars which also stop the water's flow. These steel pipes should have been at least 8 feet in diameter if they were to properly replace the old brick arches.

Continued on next page...