

April 2012

Grantham Canal News Sheet

This latest issue of the Electronic News Sheet is for **anyone** who would like to be updated on GCS activities and progress. If this is the first issue you have received and you would like future monthly issues, please send an email to: Membership@granthamcanal.com stating your name, confirming your e-mail address and indicating that you wish to receive the News Sheet. Future copies will not be sent without your permission. You do not have to be a member but please consider joining. Details on "The Society" page on our website: www.granthamcanal.org

With a little luck his issue should come to you nearly on time! Ed

1. New Grantham Canal Website

The new Grantham Canal website www.granthamcanal.org is up and running. The website will continue to be refined and developed. Your comments, with ideas and suggestions would be much appreciated. Please send to: david.lyneham-brown@granthamcanal.com

2. Lock 18 Top Gate Replacement

I would love to be able to say that the new gates are in place but no we have been thwarted once again, this time by the weather. The paperwork is in place and in the correct order, the stop planks have arrived but appear rather short, the fencing and protective scaffolding is in place, the pump works but a 25 tonne crane in a very soggy field is a non starter. Disappointed is a bit of an understatement but we are so much nearer than we were last time.



The present top gates, then second hand being installed in 1993.



Safety fencing in place 2012. How things have changed in twenty years



Whilst we are on the subject of lock 18, some of our workparty have been working at Denton Weir to raise the cill with the Mk 2 version. Our previous attempt was destroyed in a matter of weeks. Until now a lot of the water from Denton Reservoir went straight over the cill and into the stream below. We have now raised the water level by 75mm for the whole 4 miles from the A1 to Lock 18. The rain has obviously helped but the normally dry byweir at lock 18 is working as it should and the excess water is staying in the canal. It has improved the situation for the boats, especially in the narrow, shallow section.

3. In with CART and out with BW

Most readers will be aware that BW is about to be transformed into a Charitable Trust. There is not space here to go into the details but the boating press has a lot to say on the matter. What do you think? Will it make any real difference? Views to the Editor please.



4. IWA EVENTS

Notts and Derby Branch

May 18th 2012

Guided walk along the Chesterfield Canal. Starting at 7pm from Staveley and finishing at the Hollingwood Hub, the new visitor centre. Leader John Lower.

June 15th 2012

Guided walk along the Cromford Canal. Meeting at 7pm at Cromford Wharf to walk to Leawood pump and back. Approximately 3 miles, leader Mike Kelley.

Further information about the walks can be obtained from Mavis White on 01636 671726.

There will be a summer break until October. Further events are listed below.

IWA Notts and Derby Branch

Programme 2012 - 2013.

Meetings held on the third Friday of the month throughout most of the year. Meetings are held at 7.45pm at Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 7HY, about 20 minutes from M1 Junction 24 up the A453. Further information about Meetings can be obtained from Social Secretary, Mavis White Telephone 01636671726.

Friday October 19th 2012. Talk with Slides on the update of the Foxton Incline Plane, by Steve Bowyer (Chairman of the F I PT)

Friday November 16th 2012. Talk with slides on the Inland Waterways and Wildlife by John Promfret, Chairman of the East Midland Region.

Friday December 21st 2012. Mini Presentation by John Wilkinson 'Crossing the Wash' in a Narrowboat, Followed by Christmas refreshments.

Friday January 18th 2013. Manchester Ship Canal by Rod Pearson. Review on the Manchester Ship Canal, with a few engineering issues that have cropped up.

Friday February 15th 2013. Annual General Meeting, Followed by a talk from Mick Golds, TBA.

Friday March 15th 2013. Work with WRG (Waterways Recovery Group) Working on two canal camps. Hereford and Gloucester and the Chesterfield by Steve Morley.

Friday April 19th 2013. St Pancras by Nigel Lowey. This talk is for anyone with an interest in History, World class architecture, clever engineering, or a great story.

5. THREE SHIRES

We do our best to make a trip on Three Shires a memorable one and with a newly trained crew on their first official cruise, I think we can honestly say, "Well done". Fiona, who skilfully organises the bookings for us, has received the following:

"Hi Fiona

Just wanted to say what a great day we had. My partner really enjoyed the trip.

I wanted to say a special thanks to the crew.

They made us most welcome and Mary was fantastic she even got a birthday cake a really nice touch.

Oh an it only rained on us for 5 mins all day :)

Ps the Grantham canal book would sell in many places in west bridgeford I reckon. We bought one!

The library, coffee shops etc

Kind regards

Glenn"

Thanks to Glenn, who has taken the time to write. We are delighted that you and your partner had a good time.

6. Meet The Committee

This time it's my turn. Ed



I grew up in Essex but spent most of my teen years in Dorset. My father worked for British Railways as it was then, so we did all our travelling by rail from London to the Isle of Wight, where my Aunt had a hotel and later my grandparents bought a bungalow. Happy days! Out of the blue we started going to Bournemouth and back for the day, house hunting. How I hated that! Eventually my parents bought a property and I used to travel all over the Southern Region with my father. While he was working I got on with the serious business of train spotting! After secondary school I went to Teacher Training College in Surrey so as long as I can remember it was backwards and forwards on the Southern Region which my delight still had steam engines running until 1967.

Where am I going with all this? Well, somewhere between Woking and Basingstoke, on every journey, I used to look out for a lock chamber, from which were hanging, *just*, a set of lock gates complete with balance beams. I had no idea about canals, having never seen one but was somehow fascinated by these gates. Six years teaching in North London and it was time to move and find somewhere that the future Mrs W & I could afford to live. Fate brought us to Cropwell Bishop in 1973 and we discovered the Grantham Canal. I attended a few GCRS (Grantham Canal Restoration Society) committee meetings in Bingham and in the early 90's it was time to get involved with some practical work. I became one of 3 joint workparty leaders and with a lot of help, we managed to get locks 16, 17 and 18 restored in time for the 1st Trail Boat Festival in 1994. Unfortunately, some time later my health deteriorated and I took early retirement from work and my involvement with the canal became less and less.

Eventually, feeling better I took over as leader again and then was asked to manage the top section from Woolsthorpe to Grantham, where the two boats run. What a brilliant job. The various members of the team are superb. Not always the same group of colleagues but everyone joins in with a willingness that is heart warming. I get the chance to train future skippers and crew whilst we are working, which takes me back to teaching once again.

During our time at Cropwell Bishop we had a 'Caraboat' (it's worth a look on the internet) for 10 years, during which time we 'invested' in 2 lovely daughters and then later, bought a narrowboat called Poppy which we still have, some twenty six years later. A bit of welding here and there, a new gearbox with some flexible engine mounts fitted, constant painting and hull blacking and we are still going strong. Well, the boat is but I have my doubts about her crew. The grandchildren love Poppy just as their mother did, especially when making bread but they are not really old enough to help outside yet, but I know a teacher....

Being retired means there are not enough hours in the day. How does that happen? If you receive an email from me at 2.00 am, don't worry, I'm probably still trying to finish "Bridge".

7. Creation of "Wild Flower Margins"

GCS have initiated a programme to improve the wildlife habitat, by approaching riparian owners to release small area of grassland for the creation of wild flower meadows to enhance the corridor with banks of flowers to attract bees, butterflies, moths etc, linking with The Royal Horticultural Society and Britain in Bloom.

One project supported by the owner Cherry Bishop at Hickling Basin has been completed by the combined contributions of Hickling Parish and Rushcliffe Borough Council, GCS, and Naturescape, (Langar Wild Flower Farm).

The wharf meadow and area around the warehouse have been renovated with many hundreds of plugs, hand planted by GCS volunteers. The perennial flowers are local, over 15 different species, and will self seed to produce an increasing spectacle of colour for years to come. The habitat created will enhance the wildlife habitat attracting many flying insects, and small mammals.



Wharf and Warehouse a few years ago and now.

Photos: Tony Pitman



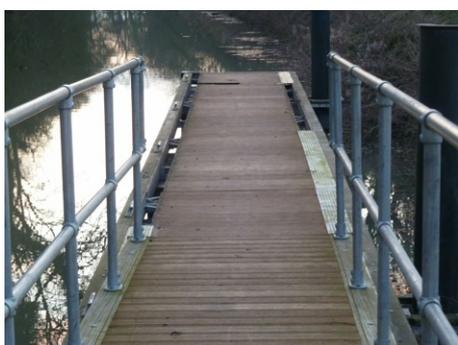
Volunteers, mainly GCS, planting hundreds of plants.

8. Workparties

The excellent workparty group(s) have been hard at work recently, getting rid of the rubbish we collected from the canal on previous outings, repairing work that we had previously done and which had subsequently been vandalised and repaired the pontoon at Grantham which had also been attacked by those with nothing better to do. We also tidied up and planted the wharf area at Hickling as you will have seen on the previous page! Thanks to Tony Pitman for overseeing that job. The scaffolding is now up round lock 18 in preparation for the new gates. We have been very fortunate with the weather although last weekends workparty had to be abandoned.



Denton overflow weir. Let's see the vandals destroy this one! Thanks to Adrian for the work and John Brydon for transport and engineering.



Damage to the plastic decking and theft of the aluminium cover panels made the pontoon too dangerous to use.



Ralph 1, Ralph 2, John and David did a splendid job of repairing the pontoon with non slip fibreglass cover panels . The opportunity was taken to add a non slip cover to the sloping section between the two levels. This damage plus the sloping cover cost GCS over £1000 to repair and our labour is free!!!! Photos above: David Cross

9. Something Different



John Brydon has kindly provided a mobile canteen (left) for the workparties to use but he refused to loan us 'Dobbin' to pull it. It was last seen on it's way back to Woolsthorpe, harnessed to one of the workparty after our lunch at Harlaxton Wharf, two weeks ago. If anyone spots it, please don't bother to tell us!

Photo: Tony Pitman

I have recently received several aerial photos from helicopter pilot and Grantham Canal enthusiast Richard Lloyd. The one on the right shows the Dirty Duck pub at Woolsthorpe. Many thanks Richard.

I was told by one of our lady workparty members, how the Dirty Duck got its name. Not how you might think. As there used to be a coal wharf on the site, all the water birds were constantly black, hence the name. Is that true?



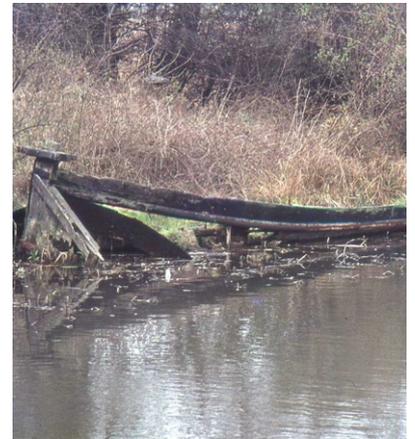
Aerial Photo taken by Richard Lloyd

10. Archive photos

Ken Brockway has sent this photo (right) from his collection, taken in the early 1970's. Ken says that the chap in black is Charlie K... from Grantham but he does not remember the name of the man in blue. Anyone have any ideas?



A few archive photos of the Grantham Canal taken by Ian Goodson in the early 1970's



Please let me know if you are happy with the balance of content in 'Bridge' and also if there is anything you wish me to include. Ed

Photos : Ian Wakefield unless credited otherwise

If you spot anything new or unusual on the Grantham, please contact the editor with photos if possible. Any questions and I will try to find answers.

The editor can be contacted at: ian.wakefield@granthamcanal.com