

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 "Contact Us" page on our website: GranthamCanal.com

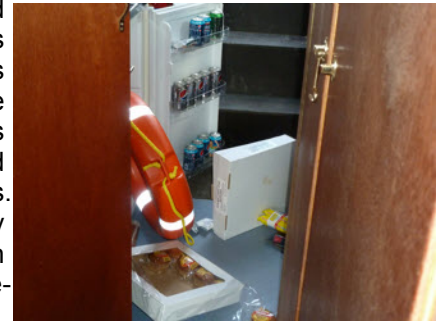
1 The Trip-boat:

May we thank all of those volunteers who crewed *The Three Shires* during August. It has been a busy period and we could not have met the demand without the individual contributions of the small band that make up the boat crew and administrative team. Thirteen trips were made in August and at the beginning of September, we already had bookings for eight more. The income from this source is very important to the society. We have received a lot of positive feedback from customers which indicates that we are meeting the expectations of the passengers. Indeed some of the business during the month has resulted from personal recommendations from those who cruised in June / July.

That was the good news. The bad news is that *The 3 Shires* has been broken into 3 times during September. Different methods of entry were used on each occasion.



The first attack was reported on Sept 3rd when bolt croppers were used to cut the locks and mooring chains. The picture (left) shows the boat as found, close to the towpath at the entrance to Lock 18. Food and drinks cans seemed to be the target for this attack and fortunately no actual damage was obvious. With some spare locks, kindly supplied by John A Stephens Ltd and a bit of fishing with a Sea Searcher magnet, the boat was secured again. Or so we thought!



We were advised of the second attack 3 days later. This time, both boats had been targeted. Different tactics were used this time. Nearly every lock, on both boats were literally smashed off. How they managed to do this without damaging any of the paintwork is a bit of a mystery. Were they being careful or was it just luck? This time the remainder of the food and drinks were taken plus the brass tiller arm and a few other items. We thoughtfully provided a couple of waste bins for them to take the goods away. As can be seen in the photo (right) they kindly shut the doors and hatches with the remains of the locks! Of course these incidents were reported to the police and at one stage we had one PC, two PCSO's and a Scenes of Crime Officer on site. Who said you can never find a police officer when you want one? Nearly £100 worth of new locks for both boats and we are all secure again. Or so we thought!



The 25th September was a workparty day for clearing overhanging branches around the Bridle Bridge and we noticed one of the small front aluminium panels was missing on *The Three Shires*. On closer examination a second one was bent. These panels replace the windows when the boat is moored. Someone, who was quite slim, had entered the boat and the majority of the replacement food and drink was gone! Again, fortunately the damage was minimal. The panels were straightened and replaced and once again the boat is secure. Or so we hope!

Our unwelcome visitors seem quite versatile in their methods of entry so are we dealing with three different groups / individuals? We will probably never know. Until we can fund the replacement of Lock 18 top gates and move both boats it seems, sadly, they are both vulnerable to attack.

Our website has a page which shows the dates *The Three Shires* is available for bookings. Winter cruises are a possibility as the boat does have central heating. Just go to www.granthamcanal.com/boattrips/availability.

If you missed the launch and first trip of *The Three Shires* on the 28th April, a professionally produced 14 minute DVD is available for a donation towards new lifejackets for the skipper and crew. Please contact the editor.

2. Workparties

Simon Gent, our direct contact at BW, asked if we could help out at Butterley Reservoir where weed had taken a dramatic hold. The weed boat which normally resides on the 'Grantham' had already been moved there and 5 of us spent a very tiring day pushing barrow loads of weed uphill. We must be mad!!



Workparties took place as usual in August and on the 23rd and 25th September with more overhanging tree clearance on the navigable section. We collected 3 boat loads using Centauri over the two days in September. We are looking to purchase a power pole pruner to allow us to reach the branches close to the bank, where the boat cannot get near. This is a small chainsaw on the end of an extended shaft but of course we need training before we can use such equipment. A recent enquiry resulted in a quote of £1500 to train and certificate six of us to meet BW standards. Obviously finding that sort of money is out of the question in the current financial climate so we are looking elsewhere!

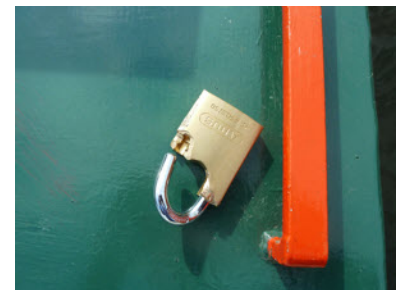


I think we need a bigger boat!



Can we have the weed boat back please?

Unfortunately during the second attack on The 3 Shires, most of the locks on Centauri were also smashed and some of our equipment stolen. A couple of ratchet loppers and a JCB cordless hammer drill, which is not usually on the boat, went, along with a small adjustable spanner and a half empty tin of stern tube grease (why?). In some ways they have done us a favour as the replacement loppers are much more efficient but at what price?



Training: Bob Terry, Ralph Poore and Yours Truly have been invited by Simon Gent to attend 2 x 1 day training courses on trimmers and power hedgecutters at the end of September. These courses are run by BW and involve no cost to GCS. Hopefully, we will all pass the assessment element which will allow us to use this type of equipment on the canal, saving so much time and effort. Look out for a report on how we got on next month.

BITM are back with us at Mann's Bridge, Cotgrave for a working weekend, removing trees on 16th and 17th October. For insurance purposes, only paid up GCS or IWA members are welcome to join us. However you will be very welcome to become a member on the day. Contact Ian Wakefield on 0115 9892128 or Leigh Hood on 01400 281648 for details.

3. Derek Bolton has very kindly sponsored a competition to identify correctly the subjects in his photographs to be published in October's edition of 'Bridge'. The winner will receive a £5 Boots Gift Voucher.

4. The Chairman's plea has been answered! A volunteer has come forward with an offer to take over the role of Hon. Treasurer from Jim Barker, although nothing can be finalised until the AGM. Please contact the Chairman if you have any questions or you also wish to be considered.

Editor: A enjoyable year for me, writing 'Bridge' and only this 12th issue missed the deadline of the end of the stated month. What started as a 'one off' issue for members has acquired a life of its own and pops up in some unexpected places! I hope you enjoy the content and my thanks to those who have been kind enough to send in your comments. To my fellow contributors, your help is greatly appreciated, for there is only so much I can do on my own.

Photos : Ian Wakefield

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