

June 2011

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: www.granthamcanal.com

1. Apologies

Oops! I must have had a senior moment last month. (Ed.) The Harlaxton Wharf BBQ is a week earlier than advertised. It is on **Sunday July 3rd**. We look forward to seeing you there.

2. Heritage Lottery Application

The Grantham Canal Partnership supported by the Grantham Canal Society hope to restore locks 14 and 15 using volunteers as part of a national waterway skill training initiative being developed by the Inland Waterway's Association, with an emphasis on learning waterway heritage construction skills.

At the time of going to press we have had no official confirmation whether the Bid was successful or not. We are all keeping everything crossed!

3. The Trip-boat:

Our delight with the performance of **The Three Shires** after the winter remedial work was short lived. The gearbox locked itself into forward gear, which made for an interesting return trip to Woolsthorpe. No reverse meant the equivalent of no brakes in a car! Unfortunately three trips had to be cancelled but the problem has now been resolved and the boat is back in action once more thanks to Pete Skerratt and Bob Rushby. Hopefully we will be able to accommodate those whose trips were cancelled at a later date.

We could do with a few more volunteers to crew the boat. It's not difficult, and if you fancy having a go, contact Mike Oliver: michaeloliver31@aol.com or tel 0163 681 4348

If you would like to book a trip, please telephone Fiona on **01949 850 999**. (Please note new boat timings and prices shown on GCS website).

Photo; Bob Rushby

4. Spring Photo Competition.

Once again, **Derek Bolton has very kindly provided £5 Boots Voucher** to the person who gave the most correct answers when naming the 'plants' that he photographed on his "Early Spring Walks". We had a wonderful response this time, a 300% increase in entries resulting in a grand total of 3. Shame on you!

However, someone deserved to win so congratulations go to, Linda Brockway, who hopefully will be at Harlaxton to receive her voucher on the 3rd July. Thank you to those who took the time to enter.

The correct answers were: 1) Sweet Violet, 2) Pussy Willow, 3) Blackthorn, 4) Lesser Celandine, 5) Coltsfoot, 6) Ground Ivy, 7) White Dead-Nettle, 8) Young Water Horsetail, 9) Red Dead-Nettle, 10) Arum "Lords & Ladies" 11) Garlic Mustard "Jack by the Hedge", 12) Cow Parsley.

Sincere thanks to Derek for organising the competition and providing the prize.

5. GCS at the Shows and Events

Rosemary needs additional volunteers to assist on the sales stand. Anyone interested who can spare even a few hours would be very welcome. If you enjoy talking to people you will quickly learn a lot more about the canal. You can contact Rosemary at Rhumaere@aol.com

6. Workparties

This months workparty dates are **Thurs 23rd & Sat 25th**, 9.00am at Woolsthorpe & for July, Thurs 28th & Sat 30th.



The workparty members have continued to remove branches and logs on the Top Section of the canal, using [Centauri](#). Each time, we return with a boat load for burning. This is all material previously cut down and subsequently thrown into the canal. It's a lesson learnt for next year!

The crews of the of [The Three Shires](#) have reported a large underwater obstruction near Harlaxton which we think must be a submerged bough from the large tree that fell across the canal earlier in the year. Hopefully we can deal with that in the next couple of weeks.

Vandalism continues to be an escalating problem. More coping stones have been dislodged and pushed into the water at Longmoor Bridge (62) and some of the brickwork has suffered the same fate. There is now some doubt if the boats will pass under the Bridge unless we can retrieve, from under the water, some of the material from the parapets. There have been reports of 3 lads on bikes involved in this destruction. Possibly the same group have been happily removing 18 copings from the edges of the by-wash at lock 18. These are in the lock approach. Both attacks will involve us in days and days of work to recover them, if we can, and replace them. The police have once again been involved. If anyone sees or indeed saw anything please contact Grantham Police on 0300 111 0300. Our contact is PC 637 Jessica Shipperbottom (01522 558 925)

Denton Slipway has also had some more unwelcome attention with a tree cut down and burnt, another stripped of its bark and now that the low fence has been further destroyed, the grass picnic area is being used as a race track.



Bridge 62 slowly being demolished



The York Stone copings - missing

Photos: Ralph Poore,
Bob Terry and Tony
Pitman



Denton Wharf

7. Social Meetings

Sunday July 3rd - Harlaxton Wharf BBQ (*3rd time I've mention it, so no excuses please! Ed.*)

Wednesday, September 14th - An evening of [Archive Waterway Films](#) given by [Rob Foxon](#). This is a rare opportunity to see some original footage of historic films on waterways.

The programme will include: A Cruise down the River Trent in 1930's.

There go the Boats. A 1951 film on narrow canals from BTC Film Unit.

Broad Waterways a 1959 film from the same unit.

The venue is: The Nottinghamshire Golf & Country Club, (formally Cotgrave Place), Stragglethorpe, Nottingham NG12 3HB Commencing at 7.30pm. tickets will cost £4.00. Light refreshments will be available. You are advised to book early as seating capacity will be limited.

To book your seat send your order with remittance by 1st September to:

Chairman, Grantham Canal Society, c/o 7 Crow Park drive, Burton Joyce, Nottingham NG14 5AS. Tickets will be posted to you.

8. Chairman's Prayers Are Answered!

A warm GCS welcome to Lyn Churcher who has volunteered to write & issue Media and Press Releases. This is late news so there are not too many details although I know this was Lyn's working background.

9. A good reason to have water in the canal?



Photos: Tony Pitman



Photos: Bob Terry

10. Correspondence.

Dear editor,

I have enjoyed the Bridge as usual. Thank you. My wife and I walked part of the tow path again last week and paused for a while to sit on Harry Peel's seat. As usual, when we come across such seats, enjoyed the moment and pondered the life of someone we never knew or, as far as I know, met. If you get chance please convey to Rosemary Sleaford that the provision of a chance to sit and think is much appreciated.

You asked about wildlife sightings along the canal. After lunch at the Dirty Duck we started back to Grantham but left the canal after Casthorpe Rd to walk the path south of Barrowby. After a hundred yards or so a creature ran across my path out of the crop field and into the hedge by the brook. It was soon followed by a second and I just managed to swing my camera up to catch a shot. I attach a low quality copy of that picture. It was larger than a squirrel and patently a lot heavier, running (not hopping) disturbing the grasses quite noisily. Their size, 18 to 24" body, and weight reminded me of a (unusually quick and slightly lost) wombat, or a huge rat though its tail seemed too curly. They had been invisible in the field but seemed quite willing to risk being sighted in their eagerness to get back to the brook...



though I heard no splashing. Any thoughts or other sightings. I have a larger file pic if you think it interesting enough.

Its possible something with which you, or your colleagues, are familiar so please excuse my curiosity.

Look forward to hearing from you,
Russ Hamer

Thanks to Russ for his email and photo. Well done for being on the ball with the camera. Was it a mink? We know there are some near Cotgrave. Has anyone else any ideas? Ed.

The website is having a bit of a makeover. Please keep checking but be patient if information that you want is not there yet. Just email or phone any one of us and we will do our best to help.

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