



### 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](mailto: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](http://www.granthamcanal.com)

*Well, here we are, starting issue number 24, which means that 'Bridge' has run for 2 years. Where has that time gone? Sincere thanks to Angie for sending out each issue, for all the kind comments, the articles, photos, letters and odd corrections. Please keep them coming. Now I need to get on!*

### 1. Rob Foxton Film Show

A very entertaining evening, with a brief talk and original films on 16mm from Rob Foxton, ably supported by his son, Steve. We were privileged to see some footage that had Rob had not shown to an audience before. Some 37 of us watched the show and although the room didn't look empty it would have been nice to see a 'full house'. Rob's main interest is railway films which he often shows at the Palace Theatre, Newark, and he admitted he knew little about canals so was pleased with the help from the audience when it came to naming places, some of which now bear little resemblance to how they looked in their working days. Rob has offered to come again to show us more films so I hope those who had other engagements will be able to make it next time round. You won't be disappointed!



Steve Foxton & Rob Foxton (right)



Steve ponders for a moment



Steve explains how he became involved to Tony Pitman and Pam Wakefield

### 2. Society Stand

Pictures right & centre from Pam Pickett



*For the first time for many years the privately owned Wharf Warehouse at Hickling was open to the public. Here is a brief report from Rosemary.*

Thanks to Derek Perkins, Tony Pitman and Tony Jackson for helping at Hickling Scarecrow Festival on Saturday and Sunday. What a privilege to be able to open up that historic canal building and exhibit ourselves in there. People who had lived in the village from time immemorial had never seen inside and young people also respectfully expressed their interest in being able to see inside.

I have got to do my sums properly, but we probably took about £80. However this was far outweighed by the amount of interest and a few serious people took away membership forms. We will see. (Photo: Tony Pitman)

### 3. BITM Visit



Our good friends from WRG's BITM (Bit in the Middle, for those who may not know) are with us again on the 15th & 16th October for their annual assault on the large trees growing in the canal bed between Mann's Bridge & Hollygate Bridge at Cotgrave. We are so grateful to the team who come from far and wide, hence BITM, at their own expense to work on the Grantham Canal. For those of you who are not aware, the arrangement is, that GCS pays for the accommodation at Cropwell Bishop Memorial Hall plus the



cost of getting the vehicles and equipment from wherever they were last used. We certainly get our money's worth of canal clearance over the two days and it is nice to see so many familiar faces and catch up on what has been happening elsewhere. Our own workparty team will be there and if any GCS members wish to come and help, please drop me an email or give me a ring. Unfortunately we can only include GCS or IWA members who are over 18 because of insurance restrictions.

(Archive photos 2009)



#### 4. DVD



A few minutes rest for the crew at Denton whilst the interviews take place on the bridge



Tony Pitman being interviewed.  
Ed. waits his turn



Time for an informal H & S chat.  
In the background, Danny makes himself comfortable in the canoe as he films John Dunlop



Tricky moment in the shallows as we are filmed trying to 'round up' a log.

The 1st September was arranged for filming for a new DVD on the activities on the Grantham Canal. All went well. It was a lovely day and Ian, the interviewer & Danny, the cameraman seemed to enjoy themselves. Apart from filming the boats and the team working, they interviewed Tony Pitman, Bob Terry, John Dunlop, who happened to be canoeing past with a couple of girls and finally myself. The two guys were excellent, kept out of the way when necessary, had an easy going approach which put us at ease but they were very much on the ball. They filmed from 3 Shires, Centauri and the canoe!  
We had a working team of 9 including 3 new members, one of whom can handle a boat well.  
All in all, a successful day I think, helped by the lovely weather and a very tired working crew, most of whom were back on the following Saturday for some more 'punishment! Ed.

#### 5. Workparties



It's not often that both boats are out at the same time, but it happened this month with Mike Snaith and Brian White taking a party of visitors for a cruise, as we toiled away, trying to make sure there were not too many obstacles in the way. We have had several new members join the team recently and we are very pleased to welcome Martin, Bert and David. (Bert assures me that he doesn't always wear PINK Marigolds). There seems to be a never ending supply of branches and logs in the canal but hopefully we are getting near the end, although I gather there may be more that have fallen from a tree recently.

**Workparty dates are 3rd & 6th Oct, [15th & 16th October (BITM)]. Later in the month, 27th & 29th will be our official October workparties, if anyone has any energy left!**

## 6. Social Meetings

### GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY

invite you to a

### DISCOVERY DAY to inform, inspire and involve.

at Woolsthorpe by Belvoir Depot/Carpenter's Shop  
behind the Rutland Arms (Dirty Duck) Public House  
NG32 1NY

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011  
10.00 – 5.00

Activities for all the family  
Boat Trips starting at 10:00  
Celebration of volunteers

Sunday Lunches and Snacks Available at the Dirty Duck  
Light Refreshments Available in the Depot

Displays of Heritage, Volunteers in Action/Who does what, What's happening now  
Duck Race, Art, Craft and Photographic Displays,  
Mini-beast identification, hands on science activities,  
Fun and fundraising stalls, games, raffle, etc

Model boat making competition – design and made a boat from found materials

Some of the activities will be trialling examples from an Education Pack for Schools and Youth Groups.

Representatives of schools are invited to apply for one free ticket for a boat ride on the day, to explore the possibilities of using the canal and its scientific and historical environment as a curriculum resource.

Donations of prizes and saleable items most welcome.  
All proceeds towards the maintenance and restoration of the Grantham Canal.

More information from:  
Rosemary Gibson, RhuMaere@aol.com 01636 525526/07971173069

## 7. Tony's Favourite Place

### My favourite place.

I'm not sure I should share this with you, but I have a long time habit of doing things against my better judgement, and this is probably another of them. You see, I have a favourite place along our wonderful Grantham Canal, but I have a conflict going on within. Whilst I so want to share this place with you, I want also, to keep it to myself. But it's no good, my sharing side has won. I can't help it. So, like a child with a secret, I'm just going to have to blurt it out!

In my, or should I now say, our, enchanting and magical place. I sit, so there is a seat, not a particularly comfortable seat....let us say, it's a good for your posture kind of a seat, but a seat nonetheless. It's also a seat with a view. A magnificent view of Belvoir Castle, seen at its best when lit by the late afternoon sun. The castle, from this viewpoint is framed between Hawthorns on the opposite bank, their blossom, now a distant memory. I've often wondered if the positioning of this seat was by chance, or by design. Which ever, it is perfectly placed.

It is mid July, and the bank side is a riot of colour. Shocking pink Willowherbs, each vying to out do the other to be the tallest. Broad sweeps of mauve, as Vetches, with tendrils, clinging in their tangled climb. A random splash of yellow, as its near cousin, stronger, but less prolific, strives for the attendance of a passing bee. So delicate is the scent of Meadowsweet, its fuzzy, out of focus flowers, now past their best, but still determined to add a little subtlety and give contrast to the canvas.



Speedy Swallows mop up unwary insects, and if you're lucky, the electric blue flash of a Kingfisher, or, sometimes perched, showing off the splendour of its orange breast. Is there a better sight in nature, I wonder? This place is so quiet, that it is easy even, to be startled by the splash of a jumping fish. But soon, I hear the rumble of the lock gear, the clop of the horse, as she ascends the rise to the head of the lock, taking up the slack in the towing line as she goes. A girl, heaves the lockgate closed, and steps on to the back of the boat to join her mother. Bedecked with bonnets and with the fullness of their skirts, they look, in all but size, a mirror image of one another. Throughout the whole process, not a word is spoken. None was needed. They've done this same procedure many hundreds of times before.

The boatman, hobnail booted, and with a heavy, plodding gait, gives a little encouragement to the horse, and a quick, bird like nod of his head in my direction, in recognition of my presence. I reciprocate, as they pass on their way to the next lock in the flight.

You've guessed, I suspect, that the boat and its crew are all in my mind's eye. I observe them regularly at this spot, indeed I so look forward to seeing them, that I'm disappointed when they don't show up!

Those with some knowledge of this section of canal, will have roughly worked out where I'm idling my time away. The castle and the lock flight give it away. So, with almost satellite precision, I will tell you that I'm sitting on the, increasingly wobbly, seat above lock 13 on the Woolsthorpe flight.

Of course, in my imagination, it's always summer, and the sun always shines on my boating family. There are butterflies floating around their heads, and the air is filled with the scent of wildflowers. After all, we are the Romantic Canal! The reality, I know, was often different. Let's not go there!

Postscript: Sadly, between writing this, and sending it off, my seat is all but history. It's gone! Even a 'good for your posture' kind of a seat is better than no seat at all. Whether my seat is a victim of officialdom, who happened upon it, and noticed it had become a little infirm, or whether it has succumbed to the same lowlife who took it into their head to re-model the 'Stenwith Bottom Lock' sign, I don't know.

Anyone else got a favourite spot along the canal, and would like to share it with us? Now that I've lost mine.....I might come and 'muscle in' on yours!

Tony Jackson

## 8. Meet the Committee



Next is *Rosemary Gibson, GCS Sales & Marketing. Ed*

Born in Grantham, my younger sisters and I weren't named Frederick Charles after my grandfather, but Dad made sure we had boys toys for him to play with and I was driving tractors at 12. Grandpa's farm was adjacent to the canal between Harlaxton and Barrowby and, as children, we were convinced it was pronounced 'canowl'.

I didn't leave school until I retired a couple of years ago. Apart from Doncaster College of Education, the rest of my life has been spent in the three shires. (Incidentally, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire cover the ancient tribelands of the Corieltauvi on maps of pre-Roman Britain.) When people ask where I come from, I have to say all three counties, my house is in Nottinghamshire, narrowboat 'Jemima Puddle Duck', in Leicestershire and

birthplace in Lincolnshire.

Married for over 30 years to Roger, we had 2 children, Robin and Rebecca, who have given me 5 grandchildren between 18 years and a few months. A grandmother in my 40s, I climbed gates instead of opening them. I wasn't going to grow up. Roger died from prostate cancer at the age of 57. (Don't put off getting checked, chaps.)

In 2006 I struck up a friendship with Tony, 'an eclectic, unicycling, rockinghorse-maker'. How could I resist? He lives by Grandpa's farm, close to the canowl?

A keen needlewoman, with passions for history and archaeology, I have been pre-Roman Iron-Age woman (RhuMaere),

### Workparty location:

3rd & 6th Oct, Woolsthorpe - Dirty Duck car park (3rd). Top lock (6th).

15th & 16th October (BITM) - Cropwell Bishop then Mann's Bridge Cotgrave.

27th & 29th October Woolsthorpe.

Ring 07789 383 266 for more details

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.

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