

February 2013

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

1. GRANTHAM CANAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE

When things move, they move very quickly! The survey of locks 14 & 15 have been completed.



Photo (left) shows part of the 'Coffer Dam' mentioned last month. This type consists of a tubular metal frame which rests on both banks and a huge plastic sheet which is laid against it. The sheet, yellow in the picture (right), also covers the bank on each side of the canal. There are uprights to keep the whole structure in place but as can be seen, something that is relatively simple easily retains the half mile pound.



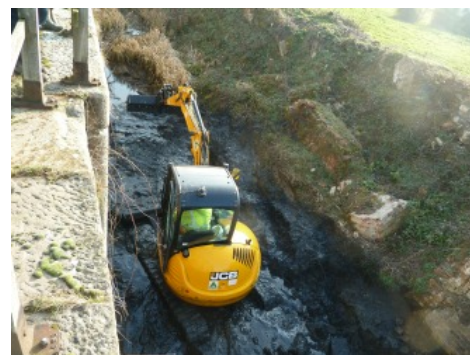
(In the early 1990's we had to import lorry loads of clay and use an excavator to build our coffer dam AND remove all the silt by hand. Ed.)



This is how to catch fish! (above)

Freshwater mussels seem quite at home on the Grantham Canal (right)
At least the big one was happy, once.

Is the young 'fisherman' walking on solid silt or on the brick floor (invert) of lock 15? (left) The last boat used the canal in 1929, so as far as we are aware, these locks have not been de-watered for at least 84 years, probably nearer 100 years.



Now, why have we never been allowed to put a mini excavator in a lock chamber?
Is it "One rule for?"



These two core samples were taken from the towpath side wall of Lock 14 for engineers to study the construction of the wall and the buttresses that support it.



2. YES! **THIS REALLY IS THE GRANTHAM CANAL**

PRESS RELEASE

Issued: 13 February 2013

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

What: Stand on the floor of a drained lock on the Grantham Canal as engineers inspect its historic brickwork ahead of a potential restoration

When: Thursday 14th February, 2.15pm

Where: Parking near Stenwith Bridge, NG32 1EA

Contact: Stephen Hardy, Canal & River Trust communications manager, 07920 077190

ENGINEERS TAKE A CLOSER 'LOCK' AT CANAL RESTORATION

A project has got underway to look into the potential for restoring two historic locks on the Grantham Canal.

A partnership of the Canal & River Trust, the charity responsible for the nation's waterways, Grantham Canal Society and South Kesteven District Council are investigating the potential for restoring locks 14 and 15 near Woolsthorpe.

The partnership is working together to gather information for a Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application to restore the currently derelict locks back to their former glory.

The 200 year old locks are on a section of the canal that is not usable for boats and have no gates. A feasibility study is currently taking place to establish the costs for restoration that would form part of the HLF application. As part of the feasibility study the locks are this week being drained to enable engineers to inspect the locks in order to assess the works required. Draining the water out will allow engineers to carry out a detailed survey of the lock walls and remove silt and debris from the brickwork floor so that it can also be inspected.

If the partners can demonstrate that the restoration is sustainable then it would extend the length of the canal available for boats from Grantham in the East to Stenwith in the West. The Stage 2 application will be submitted in June and the partnership will be working together in the run-up to build a detailed proposal for the works.

Tony Harvey, head of enterprise for the Canal & River Trust said, "We're delighted to be working in partnership with Grantham Canal Society and South Kesteven District Council on this exciting project which we hope will ultimately bring all stakeholders and interested parties together to help to sustain a restored canal that may be used by boats. There's a lot of hard work ahead but by combining our shared experience, knowledge and passion for the canal I hope we can work together for the good of all those that care so deeply about its restoration."

Mike Stone said

The Grantham Canal runs from Nottingham to Grantham and was largely closed to boating in 1929. A stretch of canal from Woolsthorpe to the A1 near Grantham is now once again navigable and Grantham Canal Society runs boat trips there enabling visitors to enjoy the scenic canal from the water.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales. We are among the largest charities in the UK, maintaining the nation's third largest collection of Listed structures, as well as museums, archives, navigations and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that our canals and rivers are a national treasure and a local haven for people and wildlife. It is our job to care for this wonderful legacy – holding it in trust for the nation in perpetuity and giving people a greater role in the running of their local waterways.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

I've printed the Press Release in full as it's the first time for many years that we have seen something in writing that indicates any real commitment to restoring the Grantham Canal by its owners! Long may it last!

Now I hear some muttering in the background along the lines of, "Why didn't he tell us this was happening?" Well to be honest, it all happened rather quickly and as you will have seen, the Press Release, was, just that, a Press Release. You will be quite glad you didn't go when you hear it was cancelled three times and for a few of us it involved at least two extra trips and for me nearly 72 extra miles. That's two more gallons (ok! 7.5 litres) of diesel donated to the Canal. Perhaps I should have handed over a few thousand pounds 20 odd years ago and had a nice quiet retirement.

No! I'd rather be out with the gang.



Lucie Hoelmer from Canal and River Trust doing her piece to camera for BBC East Midlands News.

(Not exactly in the bottom of the lock but the engineers did try!)

Yours truly (right) being interviewed by the delightful Carla George from Radio Lincolnshire



Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on your point of view, nobody wanted to see or hear what I had to say but Lucie was on a roll!

Thanks to the young lady who was passing with her parents and took my photograph with Carla. I don't often get in the frame!

Ed.



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3. HARLAXTON

You may remember that in last month's issue, with my Workparty Hat on I wrote the following: *"We now have another tree down, right across the canal, just the other side of Harlaxton Bridge which is visible in the photo above. We have spent one day on it so far but it is awkward to remove as a lot of the heavy timber is under water, which makes it difficult to find, let alone cut up but we have not been beaten yet!!"*

Well, I spoke too soon. Before the workparty had the chance to have another attempt at this tree, someone from CRT decided that, although they still have no money to spend on the canal, it was a good idea to employ two contractors for two whole days to do the job that we do for nothing!! The tree was not on the towpath, only in the water and obstructed nobody, except GCS boats. Perhaps the co-operation fostered by the Lock Project will filter through one day. I hope so.

Ed

4. WHAT IS IT?

Only one suggestion arrived - *The "tool" is a nail clipper?* Nazim Karimjee. Thanks for that suggestion Nazim. (*'Woolly Mammoth' springs to mind!*). Perhaps I should have shown some idea of scale! The tool is about 600mm long and the two 'arms' are fixed although that's not clear in the photo.

Come on someone. What is it please!



5. WATERWAY STAFF VOTE FOR MAJOR CHANGE IN WORKING PRACTICES

Canal & River Trust bank staff have given a resounding vote in favour of new flexible working hours. 88% of union members supported the introduction of 'annualised hours' which will see customer services teams working longer hours in the Summer, when the waterways are busiest, and construction teams working longer in the Winter, when the majority of repairs are carried out.

Operations director Vince Moran welcomed the vote saying: "This is an important move for the Trust and I have been really pleased by the positive way our workforce and the unions have embraced the changes. The strength of support they have shown underlines their deep commitment to the historic waterways in our care. Annualised hours will mean a better service for our customers and visitors, and greater efficiencies in how we care for the waterways."

Jane Ellis from Unison and Phil Allman from Unite, jointly commented: "The trade unions recognise that both parties have moved barriers to allow the workforce to achieve a yes vote on this ground breaking agreement, and especially supported by senior officials from both the trade unions and the Trust."

The changes, which come into effect from May 2013, will see Trust staff working hours which suit the operational needs of their area, rather than a standard, Monday to Friday, 37-hour week. This will mean that an individual's 1,931 working hours will be distributed across the year as needed.

Apologies if the above text came from another publication. It arrived on my computer via a GCS member.

Ed.

6. FINANCE

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Society's executive committee would like to thank everyone for the generous donations recently received. These donations will be going towards the £35,000 required to manufacture and install new bottom gates at Lock 18 (Woolsthorpe top lock)

Also, there are very many regular instances of members donating significant amounts of voluntary time and effort - far too numerous to identify individual heroes, but you all know who you are.

On top of that, it is very important to recognise that every member plays a part in the successes of the Society. Just being a member supports us in our financial endeavours to meet statutory and routine running costs. Membership numbers do count towards our ability to obtain matched funding when applying for grants, so please continue to support the Society, and do consider volunteering your various skills!

A Grantham based member, Mary Noble, has accepted the position of Membership Assistant and has been instrumental in regaining many lapsed members to the Society.

A recent mail-out exercise to some of the lapsed members highlighted a communication issue, where by those members unable to provide an email address are unaware of events within the Society. Monthly postage and printing costs would exceed an individual's annual membership fee and so that is why the Society cannot regularly write to these members. One answer is to at least double the membership fee - but we don't want to do this. Another answer is to request members to provide stamp-addressed envelopes for the year (a book of 10-stamps would suffice). Another answer is to provide a printed bi-annual copy of the Society's 'Bridge' newsletter, but this would not be in colour and would not be able to include everything that had happened within a 6-month period.

So, what do we do?

Can you provide an email address, bearing in mind that the Society would not release it to the public, and would only use it to contact the individual member?

Your thoughts would be appreciated.

Ralph Poore - Hon Treasurer

7. LOCK 18 DONATIONS

The new bottom gates have been ordered from our friends at Hargreaves, so now we really **DO** need your help to pay for them.

Please have a look at the site: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/> (note there is no ' www '). This will take you to the home page where half way down on the right is 'Donate to Charity'. Enter GCS or Grantham Canal Society in the box which will take you to the next page with five other entries, each relating to the word 'Canal'. Ours is the first entry and you can read why we really do need your financial help. If you click on the DONATE box all will be self explanatory. At this point you don't have to make a donation but we sincerely hope you will consider doing so.

Thank you from all at GCS.

8. IWA NOTTS & DERBY BRANCH

NOTTS & DERBY BRANCH MEETINGS

The Notts and Derby branch of the IWA is organising a series of public meetings. We are hoping to attract lots of new faces to the meetings and have arranged a very interesting and varied group of speakers. Non IWA members will be very welcome to attend.

- We meet on the third Friday of the month throughout most of the year.
- Meetings are held at 7.45 pm at Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2-7HY, about 20 minutes from M1 Junction 24 up the A453.

Friday, March 15th 2013

Work with WRG (Waterways Recovery Group). Working on Two Canal Camps (Hereford & Gloucester and the Chesterfield) an illustrated talk by WRG's Steve Morley.

Friday, April 19th 2013

"St. Pancras" an illustrated talk by Nigel Lowey. A talk for everyone with an interest in history, world class architecture, clever engineering and a great story.

Extra Off site Events:

Friday, May 19th 2013

A visit to the Newark Heritage Barge Project. An illustrated talk and Tour with Les Reid on board the barge "Leicester Trader" on the riverside in Newark. The project aims to create a River Heritage Centre which is open to the public and can be used by schools, research students and other interested parties. Meet on board at 7.30 pm

Friday, June 21st 2013

A guided tour around the new Staythorpe Power Station by the R. Trent near Newark.
Meet at Power Station 7.30 pm

Further information about meetings can be obtained from Social Secretary :- Mavis White 01636 671726

The Inland Waterways Association
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Registered Office: Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HP5 1WA
website: www.waterways.org.uk

Important Information.

Since the calendar of events was published, Mike Snaith has announced that Sean McGinley, (Canal & River Trust Waterways Manager East Midlands) has agreed to be the presenter at the October meeting, so if anyone wants to ask any questions face to face, they will have a golden opportunity to do so. It should be a very interesting meeting!



9. TRAVELLERS SITE AT STENWITH

We have been informed that the site application for the Travellers Site near Stenwith Bridge went to committee and was turned down. There was no appeal submitted by the applicant and no more has been heard about it.

10. Weed Boat



The Grantham section of the Canal, up to the A1 is in desperate need of some weed clearance. We had hoped to buy The John Nuttall*, seen here undergoing repairs at Woolsthorpe some years ago, but as with all CRT craft, when no longer required, they are initially offered to the contractors and if there is no interest shown they are offered, at a price, to the local society's. Unfortunately the contractors decided to purchase this craft so presumably she will be going elsewhere. Our good friend Mick Carrington from CRT has promised to let us know when another becomes available.

In the meantime we struggle on!

*John Nuttall, recently retired, was an excellent BW Engineer and a good friend to the Grantham Canal & GCS.

11. FAMILY INFORMATION DAY

A poster for a Family Information Day event. The top half features a photograph of three children (two girls and one boy) sitting on a grassy bank next to a canal. The text is overlaid on the image. The bottom half is a black banner with white text. At the very bottom, there is a QR code on the left and logos for The National Lottery and the Heritage Lottery Fund on the right.

Your Grantham Canal
Family Information Day
Saturday 9th March 2013

10.00 till 12.30 Jubilee Church Life Centre Grantham
(Town Centre corner of London Road)

ALL AGES WELCOME TO FIND OUT ABOUT BECOMING GRANTHAM CANAL MAKE!
Have some family fun, find out more and have your say about the plans for your canal.

Supported by
The National Lottery
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

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For great film clips of some GCS activities please click on <http://youtu.be/J911AcqK-eY>

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