



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

For those of you that don't know (and why should you?), this is the 'posh' name for our bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to restore locks 14 & 15 and hopefully 12 & 13 too.

Things have moved on rapidly. Mike Stone, Michael Oliver and John Brydon have been in deep discussions with Lucie Hoelmer and her colleagues from CRT, resulting in Part One of the bid, The Engineering Study, taking place during the second two weeks of February. The work involves installing a structure called a 'coffer dam' at the top & bottom of each lock to allow draining of the chamber.

This is an exciting development for the last time anything like this happened was in the early 1990's.

When, not if, these 4 locks are restored, we will be well on our way to Redmile.



Supported by

The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



2. LAPSED MEMBERS

Recently, some lapsed members have been invited to 'rejoin' GCS. The response has been good, with over 20 positive results and also some very kind donations, including one from USA. Thanks go to our lovely Mary Noble for co-ordinating and organising this exercise and thank you also to those who wrote letters of appreciation, apology, suggestions or complaint. I shall included some of the comments in next month's 'Bridge'. We are all busy people and some of us forget to pay our subs (by 'us' I mean the 'committee', as well as members), so if you have not already set up a standing order, please consider doing so. It saves a lot of time, effort and follow up costs.

3. ANY IDEAS?



Whilst working in Lock 18 during the top gate replacement last November we discovered the tool pictured (left). It wasn't there when we restored the lock in the early 1990's so where has it come from and what was it used for? We don't expect anyone to know how it got there but someone must know its use. It obviously had a shaft and presumably a handle. From its recovered location it could be for canal, railway or agriculture use. The workparty are stumped on this one, so if you know, please drop the Editor an email. (Address is at the bottom of the last page.)

4. NOT THE GRANTHAM CANAL



Mike Stone and I took a trip in mid November last year to have a look at some work being done on Wychnor Lock on the Trent and Mersey Canal. The lock had been drained to investigate a paddle culvert blockage and as we have a similar problem on Lock 17 at Woolsthorpe, we thought it would be interesting to see how CRT tackled the problem. Both of us were surprised by the layout of both the paddles and culverts. The more observant of you will notice that the pictures above are of two different locks that we saw on the day. However, the principle is the same for both. Apart from these being narrow locks ie half the width but the same length of those on the Grantham one of the ground paddles is in a recess and at 90 degrees to ours. The paddle



can be seen raised in its frame in the photo on the left and lowered in the centre picture. In the right hand photo, instead of the water entering the lock from the sides when the paddles are opened, as ours do, these culverts drain into the lock chamber from the bottom of the cill. *(Now I understand why a boat behaves the way it does when a narrow lock is filled. It moves backwards first & is then drawn rapidly forward. Ed)*

When the lock was eventually emptied, the culvert was examined and the problem was obvious. A branch had been wedged in the chamber and collected weed and plastic bags. Mike mentioned to one of the staff that the last time he took his boat through the lock he managed to lose a windlass*. A few minutes of trudging up and down in about six inches of water and the offending tool was reunited with its owner. *(Personally I think that was the only reason for going!!! Ed)* It was an interesting day even though it was cold and wet.

** For those not familiar with a windlass, it's an L shaped key that boaters use to open the paddles to fill or empty the water from the lock. Each boat usually has at least two, until one drops in the water!*

I trust you all received the message that Redhill Lock open day was cancelled. I gather there were problems sealing the lock to keep the water out. A revised date has not been announced.

5. DONATIONS

**THE GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY WISHES TO THANK THE FOLLOWING
FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATIONS DURING THE LAST MONTH.**

THE NAMES ARE NOT IN ANY SPECIFIC ORDER BUT IF YOURS IS MISSING, PLEASE LET THE TREASURER KNOW.

Mark Bradbury	David Lyneham-Brown	Robert Prowse	Timothy Williams
David Cross	Geoffrey Manning	Godfrey R Owen	Michael Rowen
Eric Foxley	Keith Noble	Richard Sanderson	Mrs D Brown
Roger Hynes	Clyde Pennington	Anthony David Williams(USA)	Ralph Bellamy

6. LOCK 18 DONATIONS

The Committee have decided that we cannot risk losing the chance to purchase new bottom gates from our friends at Hargreaves, at a very generous price. We do need your help to pay for them though.

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.

7. OTHER WORK ON THE CANAL

From time to time there is some activity on the canal where GCS are not involved. In fact we don't usually find out until the job is either part way through or finished.

a. DREDGING



Some of the Western reaches of the Grantham Canal have been dredged recently. The Nottingham side of the site of the old Cotgrave Colliery has seen, judging by the track marks, a large excavator on the towpath working its way towards Bassingfield. It's very impressive but we could do with the machine at the Grantham end where we are desperate for some deeper, reed-free water.



b. Culvert 42



Culvert 42 at Cropwell Bishop was removed, presumably by CRT contractors at the beginning of January. As there is rarely any water in this section, even this year, what is the thinking here? We are told there is no money available to spend on the canal or does someone know something we don't?

8. CRAYFISH IN THE GRANTHAM CANAL

In 2012 crayfish were reported from the Grantham Canal near Kinoulton. Although a site inspection has yet to be undertaken by the authors, it is highly likely that the crayfish in question are the invasive North American signal crayfish, *Pacifastacus leniusculus*. Since it was introduced for aquacultural purposes in the 1970's this species has spread naturally after escaping from crayfish farms and unnaturally, i.e. by man's hand, throughout England, Scotland and Wales. It now occupies more locations than the native white-clawed crayfish, *Austropotamobius pallipes*. Besides being an aggressive competitor of the white-clawed crayfish the signal crayfish also acts as a vector for crayfish plague, a disease that is highly lethal to all European crayfish. Although it is still abundant in some areas, e.g. locally in the R. Leen (Notts) and the R. Witham (Lincs), the range of the white-clawed crayfish is declining rapidly, and it could become extinct in a few decades time, although conservation efforts are being made to try and ensure this does not happen.

To help inform the public of the potential threats an educational leaflet has been prepared and can be accessed through the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group website (www.nottsbag.org.uk).

Also available as a PDF from david.holdich@ntlworld.com is a published work entitled: Holdich, D. M. & Jackson, C. (2011). The crayfish of Nottinghamshire. In: Species survival: securing white-clawed crayfish in a changing environment. (Rees, M. Nightingale, J. and Holdich, D.M., eds), 153-174. Proceedings of a conference held on 16th and 17th November 2010 in Bristol, UK.

The purpose of this note is to alert those working on the canal to be on the look out for crayfish in the Grantham Canal. If any are seen please contact David Holdich and send a photo if possible. Thank you.

David Holdich (Crayfish Consultant, Keyworth), Chris Jackson (Notts Biodiversity Action Group) (christopher.jackson@nottsgov.uk) & Richard Bennett (Canal & River Trust) (Richard.bennett@canalrivertrust.org.uk).



The signal crayfish (right) with red undersides to its claws and the white-clawed crayfish (left). Photo: David Holdich.

There is a wealth of interesting information on the website www.nottsbag.org.uk

Thanks to David Holdich for this article. Ed

9. IWA

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 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.

10. ALPACA'S NEAR THE CANAL



Not the type of animal you would normally expect to come across near the canal. (The brown one was just posing.)

11. HARLAXTON



We seem to have a constant job clearing trees which either fall over or lose branches on the canal whenever there are high winds. Some of them are rotten and lean over the canal. This one landed on the towpath just before Christmas and was reported by one of the local Rangers. It was dealt with by a CRT contractor.

Photo: Ralph Poore

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!!

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