

July 2012

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

Apologies for the erratic arrival time of 'Bridge' in recent months. I really don't know where the time goes! One blink and the next issue is due out and it's not helped by this lovely weather, holidays and the distraction of the Olympic Games. Well done to all the British teams and everyone who made such an effort to make my visit yesterday such a memorable occasion. Smiles and greetings everywhere, humour from rail staff, smiling soldiers in uniform and willing patience and assistance everywhere with an amazing atmosphere that is not felt by watching the tv. Now where was I.....Oh yes it will soon be September, let alone August!

1. Lock 18

After all the excitement of seeing the new lock gates being installed and the lock full of water once more you can imagine our disappointment when Tony Jackson reported that the bottom gates were not swelling up as they should and were in fact letting more water leak out of the chamber each time he filled it. Tony had volunteered to fill the lock each day but became concerned when he could see daylight through the timber (red arrow). We had a hurried meeting and noticed that the T plates had moved from their recesses (green arrow) We reluctantly decided it was too dangerous to use the gates and that we should contact Hargreaves, the gate manufacturers for advice. Several options were suggested but we await a visit from Nigel Lord for his expert opinion.

**2. Donations for Mudlark**

As reported in last months issue we have set up an account with "Virgin Money Giving" which allows anyone with computer access, who wishes to help us, to make a donation to GCS at any time and for any amount. At present we are trying to pay for 'Mudlark' and have gratefully received donations of £215 via this method. In total we have £3273 in the 'Mudlark Fund' so we are just over half way towards our target of £6,500. 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.

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

3. More photos of Lock 18 Top

Photos from other GCS members as promised last month,, starting with Alan Turner's.



The next four are from Derek Bolton



And Mike Stone's



First two from Ralph Poore and the remainder from Tony Jackson



Sincere thanks to everyone who sent photos. Hopefully it won't be too long before we can show a boat in lock 18 once again. Ed

4. HERITAGE OPEN DAY

Lincolnshire
Heritage Open Days 2012
Trade and Travel

Carpenter's Shop



Photograph: Bernard Jessop

Thursday 6th September 10.00am-5.00pm

Behind Rutland Arms (Dirty Duck), Woolsthorpe by Belvoir, Grantham, NG32 1NY

Exhibition, Walking Talks and Boat Trips

Grantham's canal improved 18th Century Trade nationally via Nottingham. The Carpenter's Shop served Woolsthorpe Locks. Three are restored; volunteer restoration of another four will allow further navigation.

Explore heritage via display in the original building, guided walks looking at restored and derelict locks or narrow boat trip.

To book boat trips, lasting about 1 hour
telephone 07971173069

There will be a charge of £3 for boat trips

Grantham Canal Society Discovery Day Sunday 7th October 2012

5. DISCOVERY DAY

It is not long until Discovery Day on Sunday 7th October. Last year's event was a stunning success thanks to Rosemary and her team. Everyone's help and support would be much appreciated once again.

6. 'Wollaton Hall' to be sold to fund Grantham Canal Restoration!

The surprise news is that historic 'Wollaton Hall' is to be put up for sale to help pay for the restoration of two 200-year old East Midlands canals! Well, not the actual Elizabethan masterpiece on the western edge of Nottingham but the name and number plates from the 1940 Great Western Railway steam locomotive named in its honour.

Peter Stone, Secretary to the Grantham Canal Partnership for the past 7 years, has treasured the plates since purchasing them from British Railways in 1962, when locomotive number 5999 was withdrawn from service and scrapped. But transport historian Peter is also a Trustee of both the Friends of the Cromford Canal and the Grantham Canal Society and, right now, feels that the societies' needs are greater than his own. So the solid brass numberplate and brass and steel nameplate are to be sold at an auction of 'Railwayana' taking place at Derbyshire County Cricket Ground on 8th September and all the proceeds split between the two canals. As the name and number plates from the other side of the engine are owned by the City of Nottingham and displayed at the Hall, this is a unique opportunity for private ownership of such artefacts!

Both canals were built in the 1790s by local engineer William Jessop and played major roles in the growth of trade in the East Midlands. The 17-mile Cromford Canal, which ran from Cromford and Pinxton to join the national inland waterway network at Langley Mill, was vital to the development of the industrial revolution.

By contrast, as most readers will know, 'our' 33-mile Grantham Canal ran from the then market town of Grantham, through the Vale of Belvoir, to join the River Trent at Nottingham and served an essentially agricultural community. Both canals are now best known for their towpath walks through stunning scenery – but leisure boating is once again possible on the 4 miles of the Grantham between the A1 and Woolsthorpe and the purchase of 'Mudlark' and restoration of the Woolsthorpe flight of locks will accelerate progress.



Meanwhile, in Derbyshire, the FCC is striving to re-introduce a trip boat service from the historic Cromford Wharf.

Peter – who, with his wife Chris, has just re-located to the New Forest – says 'the restoration of both of these beautiful canals is gathering pace but there's an enormous amount to be done, requiring much more money. Each of the charities promoting the conservation and restoration of the canals has exciting plans for extending navigation, implementation of which are currently delayed by lack of funds. Hopefully, my gesture will help and I hope that many others will also subscribe money or volunteer their time for these outstanding causes.'

GCS members and supporters are urged to spread the word about the 8th September Auction. Such events are a fascinating day out and the Grantham Canal Society will benefit to the tune of 50% of all the proceeds of the 'Wollaton Hall' sales + Gift Aid!

Photo: Pat Morriss, Chairman of the Friends of the Cromford Canal, Peter Stone and Mike Stone, Chairman of the Grantham Canal Society, admire the locomotive plates in front of historic Wollaton Hall.

7. Article from 'Waterways World'

Waterways World

The new Canal & River Trust has announced that Google will be one of its first partners when it launches on 12th July, according to a story first published in the Guardian today. Soon, Google Maps will be updated to allow users to plan journeys including bridges, locks and more than 2,000 miles of canal and river routes.

The project is being launched with the Canal and River Trust, which begins its stewardship of the nation's waterways on 12th July.

Tony Hales, the chairman of the trust, said: "We are delighted that these exciting partners have come on board as we launch. This is a huge vote of confidence in the Canal and River Trust and recognition of the important role it will play as the guardian of one of the nation's environmental treasures."

Ed Parsons, a geospatial technologist at Google UK, said of the project: "Canal towpaths offer green routes through our towns and cities, and by working with the Canal and River Trust we're adding towpaths to Google Maps and encouraging people to discover their local waterway."

8. Where would we be without Tony Jackson?

'We need to talk' – now that's a phrase to put the fear of the Almighty into any man, or, at the very least, to send him scurrying off to his shed for a few hours. It usually means serious trouble - but talking can be beneficial, as I discovered some months ago, when I stopped to talk to an angler along the canal. We had the usual preamble, which went something like this:

'Doin' any good?' I asked.

Concentrating intensely on his float, and without turning his head, he said. 'Some little uns. Had a whopper, but it got away.'

Not being sure whether to offer my commiserations, I played safe, and asked. 'Wot's it like for weed?'

There came the all too familiar reply. 'Somebody should do something.'

Coming to the defence of our workparty. 'We do our best. The boats help a bit, goin' up and down, and our workparty have dragged loads of branches out, they work ever so hard. I'm giving out leaflets for The Grantham Canal Society. Would you like one?'

'They'll nivver get it open.' He said with conviction.

I matched his conviction, in equal proportions, and said. 'Oh, they will!'

'When?' He said.

Fortunately, I have a stock answer for this. 'Have you got an easier question?' I asked

His next remark took me by surprise. 'I've got an original bridge plate, with number 64 on it....do you want it?'

After a contemplative pause – it hadn't been long since I last emptied my piggybank. 'Wot, like, you givin it away?'

'I paid a fiver for it. Some bloke in a supermarket car park was sellin' it, but if it's any good t' yer, yer can 'av it' Every bit the reply I'd hoped for!

The angler was Bernard Jessop (hope you didn't mind me having a bit of fun with the dialogue Bernard). Bernard would never talk like that – I would – but Bernard wouldn't, he's much too eloquent. I wondered if Bernard was any relation to William Jessop, Surveyor and Chief Engineer of the canal, but Bernard, having traced his family back to the 16th Century, didn't find our William. However, when I was a boy, I had my hair cut regularly at Jessop's Barbers in Grantham – Bernard's uncle.

It was like my birthday and Christmas come all at once – only, I hadn't actually got the plate yet – and being men, we didn't make any firm arrangements for handing it over. We 'bumped' into each other a few times after our initial meeting, but either, Bernard didn't have the plate with him, or he daren't take his eyes off his float ...or something.

There's more! No, it wasn't a buy one get one free offer! Not bridge plates, but photographs! Bernard took them in the 1940s, when he was thirteen years old – and developed them himself! They're of the Woolsthorpe Depot, and one, a picture of a crane, which might be of the wharf at Muston Gorse.

Eventually, and purely by chance, we 'got it together'. There was a chap fishing nearby, in the accompaniment of a young lady, who, naturally on these occasions, was surplus to requirements. As she was available, and I had my camera, she graciously complied with my request to take a picture. So we had an impromptu handing over ceremony – and, as I don't live at house number 64, nor do I have any immediate plans to move into a bridge - I accepted the bridge plate on behalf of The Grantham Canal Society!

We now have an original bridge plate, from the original Casthorpe Bridge. We need to have some discussion as to what to do with it. Bernard is a bit concerned that 'someone might take a shine to it', if fitted to the new bridge. Perhaps it could be fitted inside the Carpenter's Shop? I think Rosemary, our events organiser suggested this. However we decide to display it – it's a real treasure!

We owe Bernard a huge debt of gratitude for having an eye for a bargain, his public spirited generosity, skills in photography and developing the film (at such a young age too!), and for taking his eyes off his float, albeit fleetingly, to talk – thank you so much Bernard!

Tony Jackson

Please see the photos on the next page



Above; Bernard Jessop (left) hands Bridge Plate 64 to Tony Jackson.



Anyone recognise the site with crane?



Bernard's photos of the Carpenter's Workshop, partially surrounded by a high brick wall. The archway probably gave access to the rollers and winch used to haul the boat(s) from the water for maintenance. The wall remains, although much lower and the buttresses of the gateway are still there although the gap has been bricked up.

Is the boat the same one used for dredging which was shown in earlier issues? I suspect it is! Ed



Our Sincere thanks to Bernard, not only for his generosity in entrusting GCS with the Bridge Plate but for the priceless photographs he has allowed us to copy. Ed

9. ON THE TOWPATH



(left) Pictures taken at Lady Bay by Steve Foster

The Grantham Canal is only 33 miles long!

Picture by David Martin (Sustrans)



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.

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