

**This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)**

There was a positive response from the people in West Bridgford to our recent meeting. A number of issues were raised and further meetings are planned.

A particular concern was that the short length of canal linking to the River Trent at Lock 1 is in very poor condition. Clearly the canal towpath between Lady Bay and Morrison's is well used and appreciated. A number of people showed an interest in becoming members so it was a successful evening.

Further positive news is that the Rutland Arms (aka the Dirty Duck) is being refurbished and the new tenants hope that it will be reopened by June. A number of changes are taking place both internally and externally so this is great news for the society as it will increase the footfall at Woolsthorpe.

The trip-boat crews tell me that the actions by the weed-boat team have materially improved cruising speed (still not fast so don't panic!) along the top length. Currently the team have cleared the channel of weed all the way to Denton. As this is the bird nesting season no clearance of weed along the canal sides will take place until the autumn. If you haven't seen the canal lately and now that the sun is shining why not book a cruise and 'feel' the improvement!

There are still issues with leaks above Lock 17 and at Lock 18. The GCS teams have undertaken

some exploratory work at Lock 17 which has cleared a blockage in the French drain (between the lock and the cottage).



However, the source(s) of the two leaks above the lock are still to be identified. Experience has shown that once water is flowing the problem only ever gets worse so there is urgent work to be done here.

On a more positive note have you seen the progress in rebuilding Lock 15?

The concrete foundation is laid; concrete block walls are under construction and the first (lowest) course of facing bricks is being laid. Volunteers are being successfully trained in the various skills required including becoming fully qualified in the use of machinery to cut blocks and bricks.



If you think that you would enjoy the work there are five teams each of about five members operating, each for one day per week, and new recruits will be welcomed. Why not pop along any day Monday to Friday and see for yourself!

Thank you all for your continuing support for the society.

*Mike Stone*



**NOTTS & DERBY BRANCH**

Next event is TUESDAY, the 10th May, and is not at our indoor venue, but is at Staveley Town Basin on the Chesterfield Canal, where they will join members of the Chesterfield Canal Trust for a guided tour of the basin and the newly created lock. Meet at the Canal Basin S43 3XZ at 7-30pm.

On 11th June the 'Cuckoo' boat 'Dawn Rose', is being bow-hauled by teams of volunteers 4 miles on the Chesterfield canal. If you are interested contact

[nottsandderbys@waterways.org.uk](mailto:nottsandderbys@waterways.org.uk)

# The GRANTHAM CANAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE

Progress during the month.



Laying one of the screed bases



The first course of blocks laid.



Another new skill acquired



A new speciality - blockwork!

Many thanks to John Clark and Mike Stone for photos.

## Community and Events Diary

For further details, offers of help and dates of events near you, please contact Rosemary [communityandevents@granthamcanal.org](mailto:communityandevents@granthamcanal.org)

or phone **07971 173069**

- Tues 10th May 7.30** Talk: Stubton & District WI, Dry Doddington Village Hall  
**Wed 11th May** Waltham WI visit including activities and boat trips. Help welcome  
**Thurs 12th May 7.30** Rangers Meeting at Plough at Stathern  
**Sat 14th & Sun 15th May** Nottinghamshire County Show, Newark Showground. Volunteer names to Rosemary asap to book wristbands
- Tues 17th May 10.00** **Education Explorers Meeting at Woolsthorpe**  
**Tues 17th May 7.00** Information Stand at Harlaxton Annual Parish Meeting  
**Wed 18th May 2.00** Bingham U3A, Methodist Church, Union St.  
**Sat 21st May 10.00** Harlaxton Wharf Community Group at wharf  
**Tues 24th May 10.00** GCHI Oral History/Research Group at Woolsthorpe  
**Tues 24th May 8.00** Talk: Derby and Sandiacre Canal Soc.  
**Fri 27th May** Carpenter's Shop preparation: clean up, displays and canal dipping  
 Volunteers and Cakes needed
- Sat 28th & Sun 29th May** Chesterfield Canal Festival and IWA Trailboat Festival.  
 Can anyone represent the society with the gazebo?
- Sun 29th/Mon 30th May** **Late May Bank Holiday Boat Trips - volunteers needed**  
**Sat 4th June** **11.00-12.30/2.30-3.30** Grantham Museum: Family Canal Needlecraft Workshop  
 Talk: Clothes of the Cut  
**Sun 5th June** information stand at Harlaxton Village Barbecue and short boat trips  
 11.00-4.00  
**Wed 8th June 7.30** Talk: Orston & Thoroton WI  
**Sat 11th June** Bingham Town Fair Help welcome  
**Sat 11th June** Harlaxton Village Gala - Can we manage to be in 2 places at once?  
**Sat & Sun 18th/19th June** Grantham Carnival Help welcome  
**Sat 18th June** Cotgrave Festival Help welcome  
**Sat 18th June 10.00** Harlaxton Wharf Community Group at wharf  
**Mon 27th June** Talk: Melton Belvoir Rotary Club  
**Fri 1st June** Canal dipping for museum event  
**Sat 2nd July**  
**11.00-12.30/2.30-3.30** Grantham Museum: Canal Environment Family Activities  
 Help welcome Talk: Why restore? - ecological impact of restoration  
**Sun 3rd July** Dysart Park Family Fun Day Help welcome  
**Wed 6th July 10.00** Initial planning meeting for Heritage Open Day - Carpenters Shop  
**Sat 9th July** Radcliffe on Trent Carnival Help welcome  
**Sat 9th & Sun 10th July** Rempstone Steam Fair Help welcome - names needed in advance
- Tues 14th- Sun 17th July** U3A summer school at Harlaxton Manor - 8 teaching sessions on Grantham Canal history, restoration projects, ecology and environment, canal crafts, etc. to include visits and boat rides.  
 Help welcome at Carpenter's Shop on Friday 15th.
- Thurs- Sat 4th -6th Aug**  
**10.30 - 12.00** Grantham Museum: Canal Themed Family Summer Holiday Activities  
 Help welcome  
**Wed 10th Aug 10.00** Discovery Day and Heritage Open Day Planning at Carpenter's Shop  
**Mon 15th Aug 7.30** Talk: Trefoil Guild West Bridgford  
**Tues 16th Aug 7.45** Talk Radcliffe on Trent WI  
**Sat/Sun 20th & 21st Aug** Great War Event Wyndham Park, Grantham Help welcome  
**Thurs 25th Aug 2 -8pm** Skylark Festival Holme Pierrepont Help welcome  
**Sat 27th Aug** Carpenter's Shop preparation: clean up, displays and canal dipping  
 Volunteers and Cake needed
- Sun 28th & Mon 29th August**  
**10.30-4.00** August Bank Holiday Boat Trips - volunteers needed for crews, trip management, refreshments and manning Carpenter's Shop displays and sales.  
**Sat 3rd Sep 10.00-4.00** Grantham Museum -Final exhibition round up family activities.  
**Tues 6th Sep 2.00** Tuesday Club, Grantham  
**Wed 7th Sep** Heritage Open Day Preparation at Carpenters Shop  
**Thurs 8th Sep 10.00** Canal dipping  
**Thurs 8th Sep 7.30** Talk: St Anne's Thursday Club, Grantham  
**Fri 9th Sep 10.30-4.00** Lincolnshire Heritage Open Day - Natural Heritage  
 Short boat trips at Woolsthorpe. Volunteers and CAKES needed

**Sun 9th October - DISCOVERY DAY**

## RANGER'S REPORT

March and April have seen the first signs of Spring.

Although the wet weather made the grassed towpaths

very muddy in places, the welcome warm temperatures of mid April have seen them begin to dry out nicely. Swans are reportedly nesting in a number of places along the canal and CRT have been out carrying out pollarding and other tree works.

Our problem with motorcycles using the towpath near Dove Cottage seems to have been resolved. As I reported previously, new dog waste bins have arrived and Tony Jackson is working to have them installed at the Grantham end.

We have a new Ranger, Mark Whitney, who will be working between Redmile and Muston Gorse Bridge. Mark is a keen canoeist, so you may see him on the water at times, rather than on the towpath! Ranger Colin Fox, who looks after the section from Trent Lock to Lings Bar Bridge, will shortly be leaving us. Our other Rangers too could always use more support. If you, or someone you know, might be interested in looking after the Nottingham end, or could spare some time elsewhere on the canal, please email me at [pdadford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pdadford@yahoo.co.uk) Finally a big thank you to all our Rangers who have now clocked up more than 1,000 volunteer hours between them in the last 18 months! A great achievement in helping to promote the work of the Society and maintain the canal.

**Paul Dadford (Head Ranger)**



*We welcome Louise Lambert who has agreed to contribute a regular article for Bridge to help 'spread the word' along the canal.*  
Ed

## Round & About

Welcome to this my first column in Bridge, bringing you news about what's happening in the villages along and near the canal.

I moved to Barnstone from Rearsby (in the Wreake Valley) at the end of last August, so this will be my first full summer in the Vale. Not that it's unfamiliar territory I should add; I've been a frequent visitor here with my family for some time. Over the years we've had a fair few strolls by the canal, attended the occasional village festival and enjoyed no end of delicious meals in some of the excellent pubs here.

Talking of pubs, four days after moving into our new home, our 'local', the Unicorn's Head in **Langar**, was damaged in a fire and had to close down. We were so immersed in emptying boxes, we hadn't even got round to thinking about popping down there for a drink, let alone anything to eat! It is still undergoing extensive repair work and all being well should be re-opening at the end of September. If you want to find out what's been involved in restoring this 18<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed building, visit

[www.langarbarnstone.com/update-on-unicorns-head](http://www.langarbarnstone.com/update-on-unicorns-head).

Finding other good dining pubs nearby while our nearest eatery was out of action didn't take long. One of them was the Nags Head in **Harby**, which has a traditional olde-worlde village pub atmosphere (it dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century) and a very varied menu – including the longest list of burgers I've seen in a non-burger establishment! It's less than 10 minutes' walk from the canal, so well worth a detour if you find yourself at the **Langar Bridge (43)**; and if the weather's fine, there's plenty of seating in the spacious garden. Why not drop in on the Spring Bank Holiday Monday (**30 May**) when there'll be a barbecue and live music laid on plus an outdoor market.

The summer fete season is upon us. Dove Cottage's summer fete will set the ball rolling on **15 May** (1.30-4pm) with lots of activities and entertainment in and around the hospice building, which is on Canal Lane, just outside **Stathern**. For more information, go to [www.dovecottage.org](http://www.dovecottage.org).

And on **11 June, Harby** will be holding its village fete at the village hall and on the Leys. It starts at noon and goes on till late, with fun for all the family plus live music. For more information, call 01949 860112.

If you know of any events taking place near the canal in June/July, let me know via the editor and I'll be happy to give them a mention next month.

*Louise Lambert*

[www.the-write-words.co.uk](http://www.the-write-words.co.uk)

**ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY?**

We really need all the support we can gain in order to carry out the restoration of this beautiful canal.

Visit [www.granthamcanal.org](http://www.granthamcanal.org) FOR DETAILS



Your comments, news items or photos are always very welcome

To contact us please send your email to:

[bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org)

The  
**Grantham Canal**  
Society  
CHARITY No: 507337

## COMMUNITY & EVENTS ROUND UP

Grateful thanks to all the 'fort holders' while we were away. Noses back to the grindstone. I would like to flag up a couple of meetings that may be of interest to a number of members.

**Tuesday 17th May 10.00 at the Carpenter's Shop, Woolsthorpe Meeting with Claire Cavendish, Canal and River Trust Education Co-ordinator** to discuss recruitment and training of education volunteers and develop resources.

If you interact with the public as boat crew or Rangers, this may be of interest to you in particular.

**Tuesday 24th May 10.00 at the Carpenter's Shop Woolsthorpe Meeting for anyone interested in joining our Oral History/Research Group.**

Further info from Rosemary [communityandevents@granthamcanal.org](mailto:communityandevents@granthamcanal.org) or 01476 978896 or 07971173069



A new 'toy' for the Depot - with grateful thanks to John Trigg

**We are looking for a person with some financial experience to take over the position of Treasurer for the society. Stan feels that time has come to hand over the responsibility to a younger person so will be retiring at the next AGM. If you are interested please contact the Chairman on [chairman@granthamcanal.org](mailto:chairman@granthamcanal.org)**

## BRINGING THE NEXT GENERATION CLOSER TO THE CANAL

In March Chris Busby, who works for CVQO (a military charity – [www.cvqo.org](http://www.cvqo.org)) brought a group of students from the Stamford Welland Academy in Stamford and Casterton School, for a session at Woolsthorpe as part of their BTEC Level 1 in Teamwork, Personal Skills and Citizenship course, a 12 week course.



The young people were shown the canal, how a lock works, (getting to move the lock gate) and how local residents, including their families could come and enjoy the area.



After lunch, in smaller groups they walked the canal creating questions that could be used by future visitors as part of a development of family quiz sheets.

At the end of their course, they have a presentation day. Chris Busby said "I do want to say thank you so much for what you did at their celebration event the students spoke to their parents about the volunteering day ... they actually did enjoy it and gained a good insight into canals and their history"



Julie Henderson

## Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge

### Solitary Mining Bees

If you keep your eyes to the ground as you walk along the towpath in May, you might spot small, circular holes in the earth which are often the nesting burrows of solitary mining bees. Many of these mining bees appear early in the springtime and are important pollinators of early flowering trees such as cherries, apples and pears.

There are at least 15-20 species of Mining Bee which can be found around Leicestershire, and many more across the UK as a whole. Some are quite large and similar in appearance to the honey bee, whilst others are much smaller and are easily overlooked. Some species are quite distinctive, such as the Ashy Mining Bee with its ruffed grey-white collar, or the fox-red Tawny Mining Bee, whilst others are difficult to identify to species level without a microscope.



Early Mining Bee next to its nest burrow.

Each species has its own preference for their nest sites but many choose bare earth. Some nest communally with each individual having their own nest chamber inside a shared entrance; others are solitary or form loose aggregations where the habitat is suitable. The female bees excavate the tunnel, lay their eggs inside the hole, provision their young with pollen as food for when they emerge, then seal the hole up again. The young bees will hatch and develop over the summer and emerge in the following spring.

Denton Reservoir is one of the best spots along the Canal to see these little bees – hundreds of Ashy Mining Bees nest in holes within the worn paths.

## Full of Eastern Promise!

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw Norwegian, Roald Amundsen charting a way through the Arctic Ocean. He had navigated the elusive North West Passage where many notables before him had failed. This knocked a good bit off the much longer, but noticeably warmer route joining the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

If this name sounds familiar, it was he who beat our very own hero 'Scott of the Antarctic' into second place in their race to the South Pole. Scott so wanted to claim this accolade for the British Empire – and as we know, he and his team lost their lives on that fateful return journey.

As tough and as driven these intrepid explorers were, I suspect even they would have balked at the endeavour which lay before the crew of narrowboat Soliloquy.

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 1993 the crew, comprising of 4 brave men, 2 children and a woman, provisions stowed – sailed from Denton Wharf with the sole aim in navigating through the notorious Harlaxton Cutting and, if humanly possible, reaching the A1 Embankment Massif.

They overcame shallowness. They overcame a stalled engine when debris jammed the propeller. They cut off many overhanging branches which impeded their progress on this epic adventure.

Thwarted by the last 50 yards due to it being heavily silted, they nevertheless proclaimed success! There followed an interval of jollity aboard the good ship Soliloquy - the East West Passage was proclaimed passable! Gradual realisation they couldn't turn around, served to stem any remaining tears of joy.

Some tricky reversing and manoeuvring eventually had them pointing homewards, with reawakened spirits short lived, when the heavens opened on their return journey. Visibility reduced almost to zero, stair rods pelting relentlessly on the roof; the noise inside the cabin must have been deafening! The men and, understandably, the children, should know, because they were all inside – having abandoned the helm to the only woman on board. Four men two children and one brave woman disembarked at Denton Wharf.



Photo: Bernard Snell

With three locks restored, Casthorpe Bridle Bridge raised and Lincolnshire County Council removing the low level Casthorpe Road Bridge – we were ready to host the 1994 National Trailboat Rally – a momentous milestone!

**More volunteers = more momentous milestones. Volunteering takes on many forms - any cake bakers out there?**

Visit [www.granthamcanal.org](http://www.granthamcanal.org) and say I'd like to help.

**Tony Jackson**

With thanks to Village Link for publishing Tony's articles about the Grantham Canal.

**The first boat rally I attended on the Grantham Canal** was at Hickling Basin in 1971. The main street and around the basin area was bedecked by bunting and banners, there was a marquee on the grass between the trans-shipment shed and the road and the rally was opened by the President, Sir Denis Le Marchant 5<sup>th</sup> Bt. A good collection of boats attended and were moored along the loading wharf quay, there was a very basic earth slipway in front of the marquee near the road. I took a 12ft power boat but soon found the dense blanket weed, etc. quickly clogged up the prop so only a limited amount of sail time was possible, even row boats had difficulty. Some canoes managed to get to the first low bridge, now replaced by a working swing bridge. Altogether the event was very successful in promoting the intended restoration of the Grantham Canal.

After the rally the committee decided a change of venue would be in order to promote the society to more people in the vale, so it was agreed the 1972 event would be at Stathern. A field on the Grantham side of Stathern Lodge Bridge chosen for its size and easy access, or so we thought. A temporary landing stage was built and the field cleared etc. Very close to the event date it was found that a small bridge crossing a stream in the field was too weak to carry large vehicles to the main area so panic set in and plans had to be changed. Luckily a local farmer, Mr. Kemp stepped up and offered a large field but closer to Harby. This was only accessible via a Green Lane to the left of Stathern Lodge Bridge and was in poor condition. Once again we were helped by Ian Jesson from Hose, he was demolishing some old property and offered us the bricks. We had the use of a Bedford lorry and were able to make a decent road down to the rally site, the public entrance was a fair distance along the towpath. Luckily the event went very well, the police told us that at one point they were overwhelmed by the traffic trying to get to the site. Boat trips were popular from Harby Bridge to beyond Lodge Bridge. Many boats of various sizes took part.

During 1973 we managed to negotiate with the then Trent Water Authority who owned the first lock and pound alongside Nottingham Forest F.C. to allow us to clear out the lock chamber and make the lock operable. This took many weeks but we were rewarded when eventually a trial boat locked through, the first for many years. We were then able to arrange for a rally using the lock and pound for boats that could navigate from all parts of the inland waterways. The main rally site was just downstream of the railway bridge and easily accessible from the towpath. The first boat through the lock was Elizabeth, a converted 70ft narrow boat, reputed to be the last boat to leave the Grantham before the final closure in the 1930's. Many boats locked through, including my own, and the pound was full of moored craft, there was a large silt buildup at the entrance but fortunately every boat ploughed through it with assistance. We did have problems with water supply, there was some restriction under Lady Bay Bridge which delayed water from the Radcliffe Road pound reaching the lock chamber. The rally was a huge success and showed what volunteers could achieve, given the chance.

Although we had further rallies, mainly campaign type, the trend was to join with the IWA at their National Events, a very successful one was at Trent Bridge along the Embankment to Wilford Bridge. In 1994 we held a National Trailboat Rally, organised by IWA, at Woolsthorpe. This was to celebrate the restoration of locks 16, 17, and 18, the removal of the railway embankment and rebuild of Casthorpe Road Bridge and Casthorpe Bridal Bridge to full navigable height. Not forgetting the new Denton Slipway built totally by volunteer canal members. Thanks must go to John Bayliss who organized both events. Many Wilderness Trail Boats attended and it proved to be once again another successful event.

**Mike Atherley.**

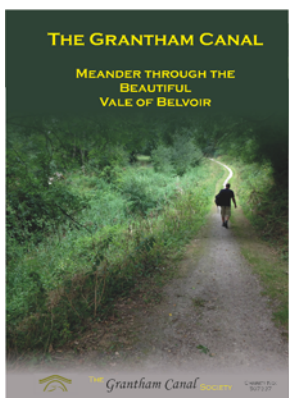
## West Bridgford Meeting on April 21st

The presentation was organised and delivered by Mike Stone and David Lyneham-Brown from the Grantham canal Society in order to boost the process of raising the profile of the Grantham Canal resurrection project at the West Bridgford, Gamston and Lady Bay end of the canal. Posters had been displayed around the area to advertise the event which was very well received by the 26 people who attended. Several copies of our publications were sold and some attendees turned up at the Depot/ Lock 15 open day on May 1st/ 2nd to see what's currently happening. We hope this will encourage more support from the Nottingham end in the future

### Our grateful thanks to the following who have recently made a donation to the Society:

Mr & Mrs Altham, R. Black, J. Colchester, Mrs Starbuck, J. Clark, D. Booth and K. Laing

### THE GRANTHAM CANAL GUIDE Have you bought your copy yet?



If you are looking for somewhere to park so you can enjoy a stroll along the towpath - its all in the guide. Also included are details of pubs, restaurants and cafe's

...so you won't have any trouble finding somewhere to rest up for a while. Ordnance survey maps provide specific details on local areas and, together with diagrammatic maps, help you to plan your route.

The guide is available to be purchased from our website on <http://www.granthamcanal.org/our-merchandise/> and only costs £7 inclusive of p&p

All our lives are better if they're a bit wild.

Can you go wild every day this June?

Do one wild thing every day for 30 days, and feel happier, healthier, and more connected to nature.

No matter where you live - from the urban jungle to Sherwood Forest - wildlife and wild places are all around, waiting to be discovered by you. Sign up to receive your free inspirational pack and encourage others to do the same.

You'll be joining thousands of people in the UK's month-long nature challenge - doing something wild everyday for 30 days.

Sign up now to take the challenge! [www.wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/30DaysWild)



### MEMBERSHIP CARD PRIVILEGES

Please note that a current membership card must be produced to qualify for a discount



**GURKHA SQUARE NEPALESE & INDIAN RESTAURANT** in Grantham  
20% discount from Sunday to Thursday inclusive

10% discount on Fridays & Saturdays  
There will be no discount during December

<http://gurkhasquarerestaurant.co.uk>

**Lock 15 - On going brick layers required** Lots of budding brick layers required for the foreseeable future, come along and learn this vital life skill and be part of something magnificent. Contact Mark on site. Please contact GCS for a discussion of the commitment involved or you could recommend someone to support this vital work of GCS.

**Coming months Saturday Work Parties:** (weather dependent of course), activities may change, check GCS website and Facebook for updates.

Date	Activity	Meet at	Time
May 14th	Navigation & maintenance of navigation	Depot	9 -4 pm
May 21st	Navigation & maintenance of navigation	Depot	9 -4 pm
May 28th	Event and Trip boat preparation.	Depot	9 -4 pm
June 4th	Navigation & maintenance of navigation	Depot	9 -4 pm
June 11th	Navigation & maintenance of navigation	Depot	9 -4 pm

Bring your lunch and a flask; wear work gear and steel toecaps. Bring your lifejacket if you own one please.

**Any questions and to tell us you are coming please.**

**Contact Details: [volunteer@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteer@granthamcanal.org) or [ian.wakefield@granthamcanal.org](mailto:ian.wakefield@granthamcanal.org) or send a text to Julie on 07762647874 or Ian on 07789 383266**

Personal life change means the volunteer coordination needs to be shared out between more volunteers, hopefully new people and not already overworked volunteers! Would you like to take on:

- Making telephone calls and talking to new enquirers about the range of volunteering in GCS?
- Hosting the GCS new volunteers induction session with Mary, membership? This involves showing GCS videos, talking about the canal and volunteering, answering questions and how to do the tasks safely. Time 2-3 hours once or twice a month.
- Maintaining volunteers spreadsheet with new volunteer enquiries and the roles they take on and linking volunteers to team leaders and work.

If your thing is organisational development and change I have been working with the executive on creating one streamlined mailing list, automated updating across the website, and creating volunteer team structure to accommodate the ever increasing work and numbers. All are in their infancy as changes. Anyone interested in supporting committee developing and embedding these changes please speak to Mike Stone or myself. **Time sheet reminder** -Recording ALL volunteer hours supports our funding of the HLF bid, please remember to do this. **Volunteer Call. Spring Bank Holiday Open Days and Boat Trips urgently need a confirmed group of volunteers, otherwise they will not run.** Please contact me to discuss how you can help out to ensure GCS maintains its reputation. The days are becoming more widely known and popular which is great. Email: [communityandevents@granthamcanal.org](mailto:communityandevents@granthamcanal.org)



Your comments, news items or photos are always very welcome  
To contact us please send your email to:

[bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org)



CHARITY No: 507337