

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

WOW! What a difference a month makes! There were pictures last month of steel reinforcing waiting for a concrete pour. Look at the pictures on page 2- two pours and several courses of brickwork later! Our teams are doing a fantastic job and they were joined last week by the first 'camp' of Waterway Recovery Group (WRG). Last week's deliveries went very smoothly (Thanks to Newark Concrete, part of the Tarmac Group).



If those volunteers on site can lay enough blocks and erect a lot of shuttering we may have a further pour next week. Now the site is beginning to look like a lock!

A member of CRT staff, Phil, has trained the GCS teams in several construction 'arts' and we are most appreciative of his skills and patience. As Phil has moved to other work we now need to put his training into practise.

The WRG team have not only laid blocks & bricks but also tackled the skilled task of removing 'failed' bricks in the remaining old walls. These will be

replaced by the bricks recovered from the initial dismantling of the walls and cleaned by the weekly GCS teams over the winter. The Society greatly appreciates the support of WRG in this exciting project.

We were fortunate to have a visit last month from John Dodwell, one of the Trustees of CRT. John has been very supportive of the work of the GCS and liked what we were delivering at Lock 15. He set us a challenge - to complete the work before his next birthday! I am confident that the GCS will do that!

Remember the very heavy rain in June? You may have seen that it inundated *Osberton*, our weed-boat causing it to sink. The boating team have re-floated it and at present it is 'drying out'; well it would be if it stopped raining! We hope to return it to operations by next month.

Thank you, dear Readers, for supporting *The Three Shires*, our trip-boat. This is the Society's only regular external income stream and so is very important to canal restoration. The number of bookings has increased recently but there are still some vacant days so why not book your outing right now?

Now some sad news. Ralph Poore, a regular and stalwart volunteer and a member of the Society committee passed away recently. He will be missed by us all and we offer our sympathies to his wife and family at this difficult time.

Have you put October 9<sup>th</sup> in your diary? This is **Discovery Day 2016** centred on Woolsthorpe which we plan will be bigger and better than ever. It will of course feature our unique Duck Race, believed to be the only one on a canal in the UK - we know there are many on rivers!

Looking further ahead there is much work to be done in the coming autumn i.e.

after the bird nesting season. We need to have a major purge to clear weed growth from the canal; remove vegetation growth on the structures at

Locks 12 to 14 so that they can be fully surveyed; craft have to be maintained; install facilities for the less mobile in Woolsthorpe depot; attend talks to and meetings with other groups which continue throughout the winter and, in case you thought I had forgotten, we have to finish the rebuilding of Lock 15! There is always something to be done and not enough people to do everything so ..... If you are able to spare a little time to help us please contact us at [volunteer@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteer@granthamcanal.org).

*Mike Stone.*



**NOTTS & DERBY BRANCH  
SPONSORED BOAT PULL**

Four IWA volunteers set off with rain in the air on Saturday 11th June to pull narrowboat Dawn Rose from West Stockwith Basin to Shaw Lock on the Chesterfield Canal. Two were in harness pulling the boat with the others cheering them on and awaiting their turn to take over. The sun came out, the boat moved forward and they were off. The Pull proved more arduous than many anticipated as the towing path was only cut about a metre wide with the line dragging through the extensive vegetation between the path and canal. Bearing in mind the problems of lifting the towing line over moored boats (and anything else on the roof!) and the snagging, completing the 4 mile Pull in three and a half hours was quite an achievement. IWA are grateful to all the volunteers who took part and very appreciative of the £230 raised during the event.



Their next event is at 9.30 am on Saturday 16th July at Derwent Mouth Lock, Shardlow where volunteers will operate the Lock on behalf of passing boaters for a donation towards the WRG Van Appeal. They hope to raise about £200 and are looking for more volunteers to help on the day. Training to operate the Lock will be given and if you are interested in helping out please send an email to:

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

# The GRANTHAM CANAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE

After the first concrete pour on the 8<sup>th</sup> June considerable progress has been made to Lock 15 - Woolsthorpe Middle Lock.



Many hands needed for this heavy & tiring work



Despite being hampered by heavy rain on a number of occasions the walls steadily grew.



The gate recess is coming along nicely.

**waterway recovery group**



The next concrete pour was on 7<sup>th</sup> July and with 19 volunteers from WRG and our own GCS volunteers the work went very well & a credit to the organisers.



WRG summer camp volunteers lend a mighty hand to rebuilding the walls.



Grateful thanks to John Clark, Dave Cross, Ian Wakefield & Mike Stone for the photos & updates.



Idle Chatter?

## 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 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

**Sat 10<sup>th</sup>/Sun 11th Sep** Harby Country Show Help welcome – names in advance  
**Tues 13th Sep** Talk: Foston WI  
**Thurs 22nd Sep** Flintham Ploughing Match, Hawton

**Sat/Sun 24-25th Sep** John Deere Celebration at Langar  
**Sun 25th Sep** Northern Canals Meeting at Carpenter's Shop –catering help needed .

**Fri 7th Oct** Talk: Railway and Canal Historical Society East Midlands Branch  
**Sat 8th Oct** Discovery Day preparation including Canal dipping Volunteers and cakes needed

**Sun 9th October DISCOVERY DAY**

**Mon Oct 10th** Talk: Ashby Canal Association  
**Wed 12th Oct 2.15** Talk: NFOP Grantham Branch, St John's Church, Grantham



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)



## RALPH POORE

Sadly Ralph died on 16th June and his funeral took place at Barrowby Church on 30th June.

Donations to the Brain Tumour Society or make a cheque to Robert Holland Donation Account and they will forward.

Below is one of Ralph's photos



Robert Holland's address is:  
14 St Catherine's Road, Grantham,  
NG31 6TS



In our May edition we were pleased to announce the kind donation to the society of this splendid mower.

Sadly it has been stolen from Woolsthorpe Depot by some pretty determined thieves.

The mower details are:

1980 Westwood Gazelle fully refurbished mower serial no.  
80W6 000158, fitted with a Briggs & Stratton Quantum 55 petrol engine No. 128802 1950BI

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

Dave Booth Mr & Mrs Altham  
Ken Sharpe Mr Wallis  
Steve & Anne Swann

## PLEASE CAN YOU HELP

We need dinner plates and glasses for Sept. 25<sup>th</sup> when we are hosting the Northern Canal's Meeting in the Carpenter's shop. We also need volunteers to help at this event. Please contact Mary 01476 566578

## Community and Education Update

You'll see from the diary that most weekends are busy with events this month. Even with 2 teams now running some weekends, we still don't get the word out to as many people as I'd like. It would also be good to get a few more people involved in the events team.

### Discovery Day Sunday

**9th Oct 10.00 – 4.00.**

**This is our own major awareness and fund-raising event and we really do need a lot of help and support in the following ways:**

**Cakes - Raffle Prizes - Tombola prizes  
loan of gazebos - barbecue - signs  
Run World War I Field Kitchen  
put up structures, marshals, runners and greeters and much more.**

If you can't get to the next planning meeting **Wednesday 10th August at 10.00 am in the Carpenters' Shop, please get in touch with Rosemary or Tony.**

### Lincolnshire Heritage Open Day – Natural Lincolnshire Friday 9th September 10.00 – 4.00

Displays and Canal Creatures will be featured in the Carpenters' Shop and boat trips, refreshments will be run in a similar way to Bank Holiday events, so skipper and crews, trip managers and runners, activity and exhibition interpreters and refreshment servers and bakers are all required. Booklets are now out for this initiative. We are at the back under Woolsthorpe by Belvoir. There is an error in saying that booking is essential. It isn't!

**Education Explorers** – A few volunteers have already signed up by going to the following link and persisting to reach the dialogue boxes where you can specify on the Grantham Canal at the end.  
<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer/opportunities/OPP0004266-explorers-education-volunteer-grantham-canal>

Two events Tony and I may not be able to cover are:

Thurs 22nd Sep

**Flintham Ploughing Match, Hawton**

Sat & Sun 24th & 25th Sep

**John Deere Celebration at Langar**

If anyone can help out with these, please let me know and I will apply.

Please be proactive and get in touch if you can join in with any of the above.

Rosemary

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

and Tony

[anthonykjackson@btopenworld.com](mailto:anthonykjackson@btopenworld.com)

## Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal

by James Faulconbridge

### Wildflowers - July

July is the month when the highest number of different plant species can be found in flower in the UK – this count includes the familiar wildflowers as well as less obvious species like grasses, rushes, sedges and trees. The canal towpath is a great place to spot a range of wildflowers in July.

The translucent blue flowers of meadow cranesbill are one of my favourites – many people will recognise this by its similarity to garden geraniums; indeed this species is a wild ancestor of several of the ornamental varieties.

The yellow, pea-like flowers of meadow vetchling scramble amongst the long grasses alongside their cousin, tufted vetch, which has densely packed purple flowers which look rather like an overgrown lavender.

Bindweed is the bane of many gardeners, but is in its element along the canal, scrambling through the hedgerows and up the bridges on spiralled tendrils to produce their distinctive trumpet-shaped flowers.

Down at the water's edge, a range of marginal wildflowers flourish. The beautiful Flowering Rush, with a head of star-shaped purple flowers, is found in several locations along the canal.

Another distinctive marginal species is arrow-head; the name derives from the arrow-shaped leaves but the flowers are quite unusual amongst our native flora in having just three white petals.

Don't overlook the common species either – hogweed (not the poisonous giant version but our smaller native version) is very common along the towpath, and has large umbels of white flowers which are a great place to spot bees, bugs and beetles.



Flowering Rush



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

## A walk along the Grantham Canal 1881

Grantham was crowded. Showmen from all over the country and continent had converged on the town for the Mid-Lent fair to be held on the following Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Their caravans filled the Market Place and the surrounding streets. Besides the showmen with mechanical exhibitions there were photographers, conjurers, shooting galleries, wax work exhibitions and marionettes. The Inns were packed to capacity and a troop of musicians from Germany were lodging in Welby Street.

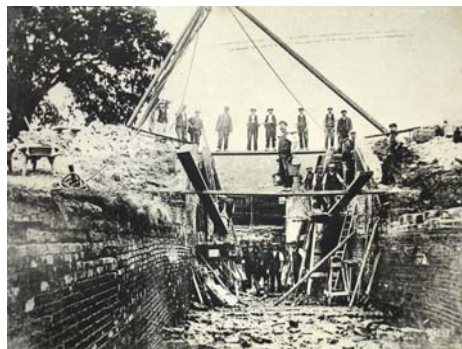


I was pleased to be away from all the hustle and bustle promised for the following three days. Having been offered employment in Nottingham I chose to take a few days and walk the distance alongside the Grantham canal. Wharf Road leads to the canal terminus. I paused at number 31 to seek advice from Mrs Mary Robinson, born at Barkston in the Vale and formerly a boatman's wife, her knowledge would be invaluable for my trip. Just time for a farewell drink in the last "Blue" public house, the aptly named Blue Boat. The widowed Mary Milner is now head publican, but needs to takes in lodgers to keep the Blue Boat afloat. There are three occupied cottages on the wharf; Mr Cotterell, agent to the Great Northern Railway and Thomas Musson a horse shunter on the railway. But of interest to me was Mr Caleb Page, canal inspector. I lingered to pass a few words and learnt some useful contacts for the journey ahead. I don't recall if there were any day boats at the wharf, but there were no living boats, the area was quiet compared to the frenzy in the town. The canal was peaceful as I passed the skin works and into the countryside. Harlaxton wharf in the cutting was deserted, piles of coal having been unloaded awaited delivery to local houses by William Towers the coal merchant. Even the fishermen had

abandoned the bank in exchange for festivities in Grantham.

At Woolsthorpe the first lock is found, but the second is of more interest, having a house alongside and an arched bridge at the tail. I spoke to a woman in the cottage garden. She said her name was Elizabeth Willis and her husband was a carpenter but was away from home. While her seven children played around the lock she spoke of their move from Grantham some four years ago. The children clearly enjoyed the freedom of the countryside and I could imagine the family remaining in this idyllic spot for many years.

Mrs Willis introduced me to her neighbour James Pacey a brickmaker who invited me to join him for a drink at the beer house kept by Benjamin Wright, here we met George Pearson, he lodged on the premises, with his wife and three children. Mr Pearson owned a barge and was the local coal dealer. He was making a trip towards Nottingham the next day and offered me free passage, so as the day was closing I accepted the offer of a meal and bed at Woolsthorpe Wharf.



It was an early start from Woolsthorpe Wharf. Mr Pearson had a motive in his invitation as he expected me to work the wide locks at the start of our trip. The boat passed Muston Wharf where the crane and tramway awaited the next boat with goods for Belvoir castle. Occupants of Muston Gorse Farm and the canal side cottage were busy with their early morning chores, while eight year old Fred Green could be seen making his way across the field to school at Redmile.

As we passed Bottesford Wharf, Mr Pearson spoke to Thomas Roberts who called himself a Wharfinger, but at 78 he wasn't up to much and neither was Thomas his son. At 25 'wharfingers son' was hardly an occupation at Bottesford

Wharf, quiet now, since the railway was far more convenient for the town.

We were soon at Redmile and still moored on the wharf were two living boats. No families on these coal boats, only the bargemen Henry Manderfield and Frank Newman with their mates, William Minkley and George Riley. They all looked a bit bleary eyed, perhaps for staying too long at the Old Wind Mill where William Harrison is the Licensed Victualer and butcher. As if that was insufficient they admitted to joining John Clower at the Peacock Inn for a nightcap.

I left the boat here and continued my journey on foot. Peter Day was busy trimming the towpath hedge along the embankment. Born and bred in Redmile he worked as canal labourer on the navigation to keep his wife and four children at their Redmile cottage.

As I passed mill bridge I could see the turning sails of Richard Musson's post mill on the hill to my left. Folks in Redmile said he was a fortune hunter, having married the millers widow ten years his senior. But he had her sons to contend with, both working alongside him and no doubt eager to take over the business which they considered rightfully theirs.

To my right the new works of the Great Northern and London and North Western Railway still scarred the countryside. But the imposing station for the Duke of Rutland was well staffed with Mr Copley having moved from Bradford to take the station masters post. At 35 he could move on again if he made a success of this minor prestigious position. He was assisted in the running of the station by two signalmen. John Wilkinson had moved from Staffordshire and John Waller from Boston. With porter George Robinson they worked long hours serving train departures from 8am to 9.30 in the evening.

Pausing at Barketstone Wharf I advised Mrs Turner that the coal barge was on it's way. She replied that wood was their fuel at present as her husband John a master builder, had been laid off due to the recent bad weather. I pressed on to my intended destination for the night, Cropwell Bishop.

Ken - Redmile Archive

## THE WAY IT WAS

When the Society was first formed there was a great enthusiasm to get stuck in and restore everything but British Waterways would only grant us with an agricultural licence which only allowed grass and shrub clearance along the towpath and not building or engineering work. With nearly 33 miles to clear that was going to be no mean feat. Around villages and routes where footpaths used parts of the towpath the going was usually good and well maintained but some isolated bits like Harlaxton cutting was near impassable. We began to build up a large collection of tools, usually donated and BW gave some long Kebs and rakes to recover some floating weeds, etc. Carrying these items soon began to raise problems so work leader Nick Powell managed to convince the committee to purchase a double pony horse trailer which Sir Denis Le Marchant allowed us to store at Holme Farm, Colston Bassett, and then anyone with a suitable vehicle could tow it to site.



West Bridgford Council gave us two motorised Allen Scythes which, when working OK, cleared miles of bramble and long grass but had a bad habit of failing long distances from the trailer, so it was a hard push back. The fallen trees at Harlaxton were a great challenge, we only had bow saws but eventually someone brought a chainsaw and that made life easier. Recovering trees that had fallen in or across the canal took some effort, even small logs or branches had to be winched or towed out by a Landrover or similar. After many years the Society volunteers together with help from Waterway Recovery

Group, Lowdham and Whatton Detention Centres, Loughborough University and Local Scout groups managed to clear the whole length of towpath then BW installed access gates to allow their own team to mow the towpath with a tractor towed gang mower and flail.

Some weed and plants on and under the water were very difficult to recover from the banks, blanket weed is especially heavy but some areas were cleared reasonably successfully only to re-grow again in the following years. It was difficult to keep enthusiasm and numbers of volunteers busy after the initial surge of work, together with not being allowed to rebuild locks or bridges. So other canal based work was carried out, more about that in future stories, until BW gave us the go ahead to start engineering work about 1990.

Mike Atherley.

**Lady Elizabeth Le Marchant, widow of Sir Denis Le Marchant, (the Grantham Canal Society's first president,) passed away on 24th May 2016, she was 102.**



## OSBERTON'S DEMISE

The engine was completely submerged, being on the port (left) side as was the battery and the fuel breather. As everything is hydraulically driven from the engine, at the moment we cannot move any part of the boat.

We thought the engine would be full of water but that didn't appear to be the case until we discovered the sump contained more water than oil! A job to be done soon and then out with the injectors to make sure the cylinders are dry. The hydraulic tank is still full of oil so no problem there and the fuel is being examined to make sure it is pure diesel.

Hopefully we will give the engine a trial run next week and see if there is any mechanical or electrical damage. fingers crossed, we might have just got away with this one. Needless to say, modifications are under way to make sure this situation doesn't happen again!



## VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES



### WEEKDAYS AT LOCK 15 or



### SATURDAYS WITH ONE OF OUR WORKPARTIES

If you can spare some time to join one of our teams then please email

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

or

[lan.wakefield@granthamcanal.org](mailto:lan.wakefield@granthamcanal.org)



**She floats again - Well done!**



Your comments, news items or photos are always very welcome

To contact us please send your email to:

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CHARITY No: 507337