

This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

Where does the time go? It's nearly Christmas and I still have much to prepare. I guess that's the same for many of us! Certainly it is the 'busy season' for the GCS volunteer teams.

At Lock 15 one wall is up to full height; will the other be finished by Christmas? The teams are doing a great job so I hope so! Work is starting on the repairs to the leaks at Locks 17 & 18 this coming week. The GCS team are working on the leak above Lock 17 and a CRT contractor is undertaking the rebuilding of the drop-chamber at Lock 18. More pre-Christmas pressure!

The planning of future tasks at Locks 15 & 14 required a meeting last week and the weather was so warm we had it outside! Well it was much colder in the depot so we took advantage of the glorious winter sunshine!



I am disappointed to report that, despite your support, we didn't receive sufficient votes to be considered for an Aviva Community Fund grant. Better luck next time!

At the recent Society AGM one of the committee Jim Barker retired after 40 something years of service

to the Society. This is a wonderful contribution by a volunteer and we thank him for his commitment. Jim still intends to support work parties on the canal.

Three new members were elected to the committee and we offer them a warm welcome; they are Mary Noble, Mark Hubbard and John Trigg. There are still several posts to fill of which the most urgently required are a General Manager and a Volunteer Coordinator. Both jobs could each be shared by two people to reduce the workload. If you can help the society please contact me. We were delighted that our Patron, The Duke of Rutland, was able to attend and participate in the meeting. We hope to see him on the canal more frequently in the coming year.

Buy an Engraved Brick is a further opportunity to donate whilst providing a lasting reminder by having an inscribed brick, or bricks, which will be mounted into a display for all to view in future years. Once the works at Locks 15 & 14 are completed the display will be constructed near the towpath for easy access and viewing.

Away from the Lock 15 work-site there is still much activity. The weed boat has been at work near Woolsthorpe; the tractor mower now has a trailer for carrying equipment; equipment has been serviced ready for use and grass cut above Lock 17 in preparation for the work next week. In addition the Dirty Duck management have found a child's ride – Rosie & Jim – and donated it to the Society. It has now been put in working order and will hopefully be an attraction for very young visitors and form another income source for the Society.

The media tells us that young persons are finding it difficult to get jobs as potential employers require them to have gained some 'work experience'. If you or anyone you know wants to gain some experience – yes volunteering does meet that requirement – the GCS would be happy to meet them. Basic construction industry training will be given and, for those with the right aptitude, this could provide them with skills and qualifications sought by employers. They would also be helping to restore the canal so a win, win benefit for all.

Thank you all for supporting the Grantham Canal Society and I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Mike Stone.



NOTTS & DERBY BRANCH

Public meetings. Non IWA members will be very welcome to attend.

Meetings 7.45 pm at the Poppy & Pint, Pierrepont Road, West Bridgford, NG2-5DX

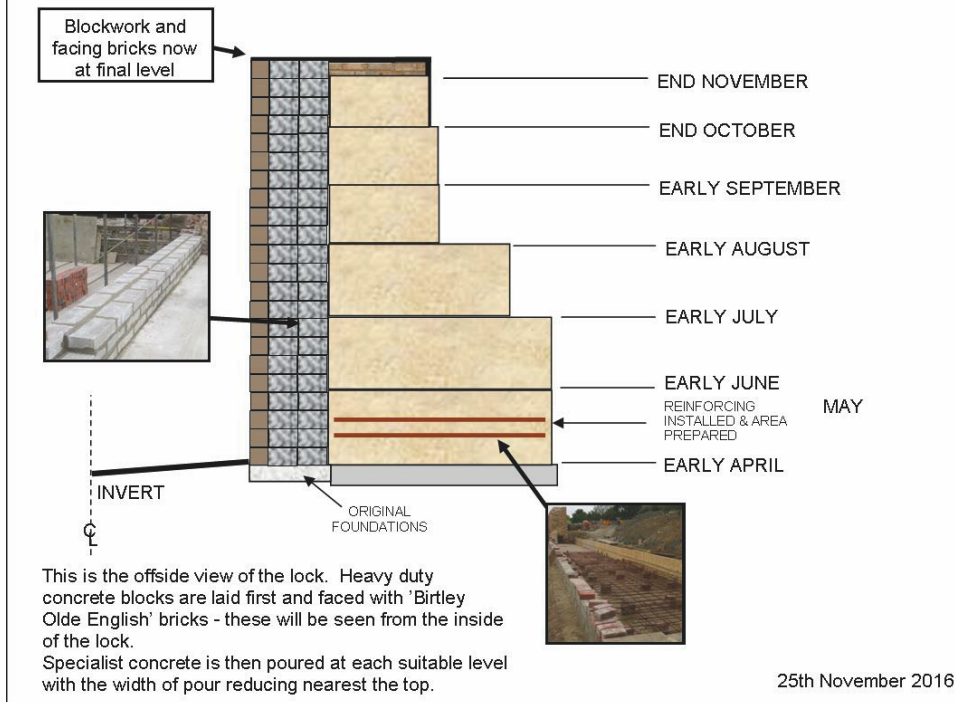
Thursday 12th January 2017, 7:45pm

For our first meeting of 2017 we will be joined by Stephen Flinders, whose talk is entitled *Stanton - Gone but not Forgotten* - a history of Stanton ironworks from the 1840s onwards. The Stanton Ironworks used to stand beside the Erewash canal and the now derelict Nutbrook Canal.

Further information from:
nottsandderbys@waterways.org.uk

The GRANTHAM CANAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE

ILLUSTRATION SHOWING THE PROCESS OF REBUILDING LOCK 15



The facing brickwork on the off-side wall has reached its final height, so no more bricks to be laid on that side. The near-side bricks need to be brought up to match the height of the off-side.



The last concrete pour!. Mark Owen has decided we don't need another one. The next level, at 1 metre narrower, will need such a small amount that the cost of hiring the pump could not be justified. All that remains to be done is to build up the block work courses behind the facing bricks.

Grateful thanks to John Clark for these photos and update info.

Talks and Events Diary

If you can help out with any events, please contact Rosemary on communityandevents@granthamcanal.org or 07971173069

2016

Sunday 11th December 11.00 – 4.00

Dirty Duck Christmas Market, Woolsthorpe, help welcome

Tues 13th December Talk: 7.00

Friends of Cotgrave Country Park, Cotgrave Futures Building

2017

Fri 27th January 8.00 Talk: Faraday Ladies, Grantham

Wed 1st February 2.00 St. Anne's, Radcliffe on Trent

Mon 13th February 10.00 Talk: Bracebridge Heath U3A

Tues 14th February 7.30 Talk: Radcliffe on Trent Methodis Ladies Tuesday Group

Sat 18th February 10.00 – 4.00 Grantham Museum 'Do Something New Event' recruiting and networking opportunity – help welcome

Tues 21st February 12.00 Talk: Radcliffe on Trent Probus

Tues 28th March 2.00 Talk: Keyworth U3A

Sun & Mon 16th & 17th April Bank holiday short boat trips – volunteers needed for crew, refreshments, trip sales, etc.

Wed 19th April 2.00 Talk: Sage Cross Ladies Club

Tues 14th November 2.00 Talk: Ascension Ladies Fellowship

Wed 15th November 2.00 Talk: East Leake Local History Society

The GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY

wish you and your families an enjoyable and peaceful Christmas and a very happy New Year



Your comments, news items or photos are always very welcome

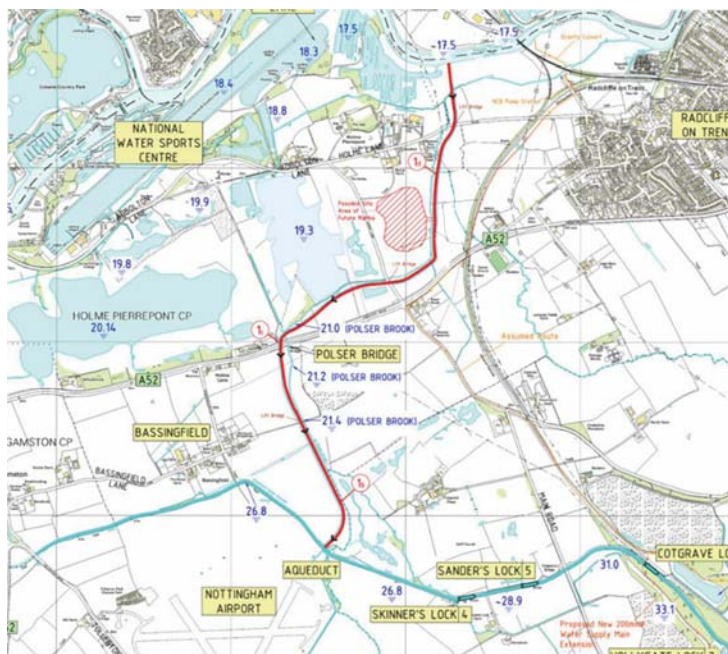
To contact us please send your email to:

bridge@granthamcanal.org



CHARITY No: 507337

Trent Link Strategic Keystone of the Grantham Canal



The matter of the Trent Link is a subject often raised in both canal circles and among the wider population in the canal corridor. It is difficult to overstate the strategic importance of the Trent Link.

The amputation of the canal at the river has left

an isolated 33-mile ribbon of water whose inaccessibility is a significant deprivation of the national waterways network. Unsurprisingly, attention has turned to the Link on a number of occasions in the last 50 years but good intentions and some imagination have yet to be translated into effective action.

MINK ALERT!

Cotgrave Country Park

There is a mink problem in the canal within the park and wildlife numbers are down quite a lot. FoCCP (Friends of Cotgrave Country Park) are working with CRT and Brackenhurst College on a project to try and rid these pests from the park.



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=561988>

To satisfy that curiosity a new section has appeared on the GCS website at <http://www.granthamcanal.org/trent-link/>

The history and background of the need for a new link is covered as are the various attempts to stir action. Currently a new, integrated strategy for the whole canal is being worked on and the Trent Link will obviously feature strongly in this process. No surer sign of a fully restored future for the canal will be seen than when the funding is in place and the first sod has been cut to reconnect the Grantham to the national waterways network.

Have a read and send your questions and comments to the author David Lyneham-Brown at david.lyneham-brown@ntlworld.com

DISCOVERY DAY 2017

Season's Greetings and Thank You to everyone who has supported events throughout 2016.

Discovery Day was particularly successful, much enjoyed and well attended by the public. Valuable funds have been raised to support our work in maintaining and restoring Grantham Canal. Such events are a vehicle for raising awareness and recruiting volunteers for the wide range of jobs we do. Discovery Day is greater than the sum of its parts gaining us recognition locally and nationally. We have already been asked by the waterways press the date of Discovery Day 2017, but have been unable to confirm this because Tony and Rosemary intend to take some time off during the summer. In order to put on an event of this nature, a small organising group is needed to divide up the immense work load such an event entails. Volunteers are needed to take on key roles e.g.:

- Communicating with stall holders
- Organising entertainments
- Organising refreshments
- Organising activities
- Site and traffic management
- Liaison and Publicity, etc.

We would like to hear from people willing to take part in this organising group, so a meeting can be set up early in the New Year. Please be proactive in coming forward.

Unless people offer to help now, Discovery Day 2017 will not happen. Rosemary and Tony are looking forward to hearing from you

email communityandevents@granthamcanal.org

**01476 978896 or
07971173069**



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



BUY A BRICK CAMPAIGN



GRANTHAM STORE
Charity of the Year

Buy A Brick

Campaign

**EVERY £1 DONATED WILL BUY A BRICK
TO HELP RESTORE FOUR LOCKS IN THE
WOOLSTHORPE FLIGHT ON THE
GRANTHAM CANAL**

To donate please visit our website:
www.granthamcanal.org
and click the tab "Buy a Brick"

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

Sainsbury's

The **Buy a Brick** Campaign has raised over £5000 so far this year which is a great achievement and full credit goes to all those volunteers who have helped man the stand and raise awareness of the canal.



Full credit to Terry for his hard work in coordinating everyone's efforts.
(Now where was he from?)

Volunteers needed for help in the New Year.
Names to Terry Davies, 01476 419104. or
terence.d@ntlworld.com

ENGRAVED BRICK

YOU CAN BUY AN ENGRAVED
BRICK FOR AS LITTLE AS £25
& HAVE YOUR NAME, OR
THAT OF A LOVED ONE,
REMEMBERED

Just ask for a leaflet
or visit

<http://www.granthamcanal.org/fundraise>

MEMBERSHIP CARD PRIVILEGES



The Co-op are stating to all Members that for every purchase of

Co-op Own Label Products Members will receive 5% off the price as Dividend and in addition a further 1% will be paid to the Community cause nominated by the member who must show their membership card at the time of purchase. To choose their Cause Members must visit co-op.co.uk/membership. The cause being "Grantham Canal Society" of course!

Gurkha Square



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>

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE 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
FOR DETAILS

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

Mr & Mrs Altham, Mr NJ Lee, Stevens & Bromily, Mr S. Parkes, H.C. Holmes, Mr & Mrs Turner, Mr & Mrs Jackson, Mr & Mrs Pugh, Mrs Neal, Mary Browne, Antonia Browne & Tim Lindell

Sainsbury's Grantham store

Sainsbury's

invited many GCS volunteers and those from other Grantham groups to a Festive dinner in their restaurant this week.



Sainsbury's have been most supportive of our work and have, so far, raised over £5,000 for bricks for lock restoration.

Please support our Buy a Brick appeal and donation is easy at Sainsbury's Grantham, through our page on Virgin Money Giving website, using the Society's website or whenever the Society display stand is active – next at the Dirty Duck Christmas Market on Sunday 11th.

Text & Photos provided by Mike Stone and Ian Wakefield



Was this Santa's response to Mike's request for his help at Lock 15?



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

bridge@granthamcanal.org

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

THE WAY IT WAS

Before serious restoration began British Waterway's approached us to see if we interested in creating a series of picnic sites along the Grantham Canal. The first site was to be on Denton Wharf, next to Bridge 65, which used to serve local villages with products carried on horse drawn barges.



This site had a decent access road for cars but the parking area was very muddy and potholed, the rest being overgrown grass and missing border hedges. It was about 1/4 acre in total. Lincs C. C. supplied us with trees and hedge whips and we supplied the remaining items.

After design plans had been agreed with all parties approx. 40 ton of crushed limestone was used to create a car park and repair the roadway, this was the most energetic part of the job because we only had one small dumper and no other mechanised plant.

We divided the site into two thirds grass and remainder hard standing, BW required access to the off bank and a small storage area for clay so we had to fit gates and plant a new hedge to divide this section off. Several trees were planted and the field dividing hedge repaired with Hawthorn whips, the grass re-seeded where necessary and a

low wooded fence installed to stop cars parking on the grass. The bridge used to allow farmers access to their fields until closed due to weight restrictions. The canal edging was a dry stone wall which we rebuilt and a drain discovered that carried water from a ditch alongside the road. Several seats and two picnic tables were installed and the site was maintained regularly by us until BW took over this job. Wharf's were usually on the opposite side to the towpath so as to not interfere with passing boat traffic.



Another site was at Stathern , next to the winding hole and Bridge 45. This was a much smaller site and formed a triangle shaped area, it was generally used for farm waste but again would have been the local wharf.

The work was much less so we levelled a small part for car parking and fitted 4"x4" wooden posts to enclose this, cleared the rest and trimmed the small trees. There was a strong seat so that was retained. Again we maintained the site for several years.

More on picnic sites next time.

Mike Atherley.

Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge

Hedgerow Abundance

The habitats provided by the Grantham Canal are not restricted to its aquatic depths and lush marginal vegetation, but also includes the hedgerows and trees which line its towpath and provide a green corridor which snakes through the arable landscape.

One of the highlights of September has to be the abundance of sloes, blackberries, rose hips and haws which can be freely gathered to create jams, spirits and pies. But even the most diligent foragers along paths as well walked as the Grantham Canal will be unable to reach many of these berries – luckily the native inhabitants of the countryside are more than happy to take advantage!

The sweeter blackberries are often the first to disappear from the branches as a range of species will feast upon these. Blackbirds and other thrushes are notorious for their love of fruit, but alongside these garden familiars are a range of small mammals as well as insects such as butterflies and wasps. Badgers too have a taste for blackberries! Blackthorn is a member of the cherry family – it's spring flowers are vital for a range of early-flying pollinators but the September fruits are favoured by larger birds such as the thrushes in the autumn.

Haws – the fruits of the hawthorn – are particularly favoured by small birds such as tits but will also be enjoyed by thrushes, especially as the autumn moves further towards winter and other food sources become scarcer. Rosehips too are a good later resource once times get harder.



Mistletoe

Mark & Friends walk the Grantham

I've always had an interest in the canal, possibly stemming from a primary school project many years ago, therefore I was familiar with various sections of the route. Since then I'd become particularly familiar with the Nottingham end of the canal which I use for endurance training. Given the interest in endurance training I'd often thought how difficult would it be to do the whole canal in one go? On Saturday 8th of October with five friends for company we arrived at Old Wharf



Road in Grantham at 6am to put this to the test, aiming to walk the whole length to the junction with the Trent. The plan was to stay as close to the original route as possible. We got as close to where we believed the original Grantham terminus to be and then faced with a large industrial estate we turned around and headed in the opposite direction! Following the parallel main road, we picked up the canal off Earlsfield Lane and followed this to the A1.



As we re-joined the canal, the next stretch made a nice contrast to the somewhat unloved Grantham stretch. With no line of sight to any modern agriculture, walking through the drift seemed particularly

timeless and a feeling heightened by the early morning mist. We kept a decent pace enjoying the peace and soon arrived at Woolsthorpe.



Once we passed the locks and the ongoing building works the next stretch made for a pleasant morning walk and we came into Harby pleased with our efforts so far. We had a quick pit stop at the garage for



refreshments and set off for Hose after just passing another group heading the opposite way but also looking to walk the whole canal to raise money for cancer research. The afternoon leg would prove a little more challenging!



Our pace had slowed a little and we were taking a few more rest stops to regroup. We reached Cropwell 26 miles in and one of our group

decided to call time on his attempt after a valiant effort. The remaining five carried on through the overgrown Cropwell section, passed the locks, under the A46 and on to



the Cotgrave leg of the walk. This section we thought was particularly pleasant and the new footpath provided a welcome smooth surface for my increasingly sore feet! I wasn't alone with aches and pains and as we crossed the main road near The Shepherds we lost our second group member, after a very respectable 30 miles.



By this point I was beginning to ache and the stretch down the A52 seemed a very long one! Having crossed the main road and on a stretch I was familiar with, we pushed on as the light began to fade. As we rounded the corner into Lady Bay the end was in sight and having been languishing at the rear of the group I was very pleased to cross the last section of road and return to the canal for the last time. It was just before 7 when the remaining 4 of us reached the Trent, tired but pleased with our day's work. I recorded the walk with a GPS watch, including the initial diversions and visit to Harby garage we walked a total of 35 miles in just under 13 hours.

Mark Ingram

Thanks are due to the WRG BITM (Bit in the Middle) team who, with GCS support, cleared vegetation from Locks 12 to 14 ready for a condition inspection by CRT engineers. Another professional result by BITM who have supported the Society with work parties over many years



BiTM (WRG Bit in the Middle) at Woolsthorpe after a great job of clearing the top of locks 12 to 14. The previous day there were also 10 GCS members working alongside them.



Lock 14 - Kingston's Lock



Lock 12 - Woolsthorpe Bottom lock



Lock 13 - Stenwith lock

Many thanks to Mike Stone & Ian Wakefield for the text and Photos on this page.

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

or

lan.wakefield@granthamcanal.org

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:

www.granthamcanal.org

From January 2017 our monthly email will direct you to our website for an enhanced edition of Bridge which can be viewed on line or downloaded



A winged escort for Centauri.



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

bridge@granthamcanal.org

The
Grantham Canal
Society
CHARITY No: 507337