

This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

As I write this the hoar-frost is reflecting the glorious sunshine and everywhere sparkles! It is not brick-laying weather but hey, there are many other jobs to do on the canal. The heavy gang – not their weight but the work they do – have now cleared the navigation to beyond Casthorpe bridge and have much improved both the width and channel for our regular cruises of The Three Shires. I hope the skippers and crew of The Three Shires appreciate the efforts of the gang who have worked throughout the winter. Great progress has been made in finding – yes that is the hard part – the leaks in the bank above Lock 17. The loss of water has been reduced considerably after excavation and packing with clay but there is, or possibly are, still leaks to find. We know from bitter experience that unless one completely stops leaks even the smallest trickle of water can, in time, become a flood.



What a difference a weir (or removal of it) makes! After a difficult time breaking the very hard concrete the weir at Lock 15 has finally been removed – revealing beneath it an intact fore-bay floor in very good condition. The paddle-holes are also in good shape so not too much work required there either.



One of the gate pivots was also discovered in its original position. Well done to all who were involved! Next task is the neighbouring wing-walls and the scaffolding will be removed to allow this work to proceed.

Spring is just around the corner and so the trip-boat crews are taking a Practical Crewing course in March. If you fancy joining their team then please contact John Trigg who will be delighted to welcome you.

Progress has also been achieved by the GCP (Grantham Canal Partnership) and their chairman, Michael Rowen, hosted a meeting at which all six Local Authorities were represented as well as CRT. This is the first occasion for some years that all Local Authorities have been present at the same meeting and confirms their interest in the future of the canal.

As for me I am reducing my day-to-day involvement in GCS operations and handing over responsibility to the expanded group of team leaders. The Society needs a General Manager 'type' person to oversee the key activities and reduce my time commitment – any volunteers? I will be a non-executive Chairman and concentrate on strategy and planning and the further restoration of the canal. No I have not gone away!

Mike Stone

Volunteer Coordinator

We are delighted to announce that three volunteers have agreed to fulfil the role of Volunteer Coordinator.

The team, lead by Christina Wallace includes Sharon Bide and Alison Fraser-Dale who will greet new volunteers and introduce them to the various roles GCS can offer.

They will follow each individual's progress until they have an established volunteer role. Whilst their Society main contacts will be with team leaders I am sure they will get to know existing volunteers as well.

Please make them feel welcome!



NOTTS & DERBY BRANCH

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

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

Thursday 9th March 2017, 7:45pm

We will be joined by Chris Madge who will give a talk on the Derby & Sandiacre Canal

Thursday 13th April 2017, 7:45pm

This meeting will conclude our indoor programme and will be a visit from Geoff Pursglove who will talk about the Ashby Canal, which has seen some restoration activity in recent years.

Further information from:

nottsandderbys@waterways.org.uk

The GRANTHAM CANAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE



The weir photographed at the time of the Trustees visit before any work commenced on lock 15.

Parts of the old paddles were used to reinforce the original concrete when it was poured.

What appears to be newspaper adverts imprinted into the broken concrete. It is thought that newspaper may have been used as packing when the concrete was being poured.



The inside of both the near and off-side sluices seem to be in quite good condition. The fore-bay floor also appears sound and may not require any remedial work.

The scaffolding will be removed soon to allow work to progress on the wing walls.



A proud team!

The reinforcing block walls were finished early January.

Many thanks to John Clark & Dave Cross for the photos and write up



Talks and Events Diary

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

2017 Bookings

- Mon 13th Feb 10.00 Talk: Bracebridge Heath U3A
- Mon 13th Feb 7.30 Discovery Day Planning Meeting, Urban Hotel, Grantham Contact: Ian Simmons
iansimmons@icloud.com
- Tues 14th Feb 7.30 Talk: Radcliffe on Trent Methodist Ladies Tuesday Group
- Sat 18th Feb 10.00 - 4.00 Grantham Museum 'Do Something New Event' recruiting and networking opportunity - help welcome
- Tues 21st Feb 12.00 Talk: Radcliffe on Trent Probus
- Tue 28th Feb 1.30 School visit
- Wed 8th Mar 2.00 Talk: St Anne's Catholic Church, Meeting Room, Radcliffe O.T.
- Mon 20th Mar 12.45 Talk: Grantham Rotary, Urban Hotel, Grantham
- Events Team Training Day 10.00 Carpenter's Shop, Depot, behind Dirty Duck, Woolsthorpe by Belvoir
- Tues 28th Mar 2.00 Talk: Keyworth U3A
- Mon 10th Apr 7.30 Rangers' Meeting, Plough at Stathern
- Sun & Mon 16th & 17th Apr Bank holiday short boat trips - volunteers needed for crew, refreshments, trip sales, etc.
- Wed 19th Apr 2.00 Talk: Sage Cross Ladies Club
- Wed 26th Apr 10.00 Talk: Harrowby Lane, Methodist Church, Grantham
- Sat & Sun 3rd & 4th June Grantham Steam and County Show (contact Chris Cobb)
c_j_cobb@msn.com
- Sat 17th June 11.00 - 4.00 Cotgrave Festival
- Sat 24th June 11.00 - 5.00 East Bridgford Village Show
- Sun 2nd July Dysart Park Family Fun Day, Grantham
- Sun 9th - Wed 12th July U3A Summer School at Harlaxton Manor
- Thurs 24th Aug Skylarks Festival, Holme Pierpont
- 12.00noon - 6.00 pm
- Tues 5th Sept 7.30 Talk: Waltham WI
- Wed 20th Sept 2.00 Talk: Burton Lazars Village Hall
- Thurs 5th Oct Talk: Nubourne WI
- Sunday 8th Oct DISCOVERY DAY
- Thurs 12th Oct 2.30 Talk: Bottesford Friendship Group
- Tues 17th Oct 7.30 Talk: Hough on the Hill History Society



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

bridge@granthamcanal.org





LOCK GATE CONSTRUCTION

Click on the video link below to see what's involved in the construction of lock gates, you'll be amazed!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD5wtd36NHc>

HELP OUR FUNDRAISING BY DONATING... THINGS!

We have the contacts to raise money for the society from certain donated items.

Do you have any of the following which you would like to donate?

- Stamp collection
- Cigarette Cards
- Model railways - 00 and N gauge
- Beer mats
- Beer pump clips
- Good quality pottery and porcelain
- 12" vinyl LPs, singles and CDs
- DVDs
- Rocks & Minerals

If so email David on

david.lyneham-brown@granthamcanal.org

or ring on 07970 858458

WE WILL DISCUSS WHAT WE CAN TAKE AND SELL FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS EVERY LITTLE HELPS!

Community and Events Update

The meeting to plan for events and Discovery Day 2017 was very well attended and a good number of people stepped up to take on jobs. Hooray!

Ian Simmons is fronting the Discovery Day Team this year. Please get in touch with him with ideas and offers of help. The next meeting of the team is on **Monday 13th February at 7.30 at the Urban Hotel, Swingbridge Road, (next to the canal) Grantham. NG31 7XT.** Contact Ian at iansimmons@icloud.com Chris Cobb is organising event bookings, but needs a lot of help putting up, manning and taking down the events gazebo and stand.

Please contact him if you can offer any support in the important task of promoting the work of the Canal Society. As well as the bookings he has already made (see the diary), can you take information boards, leaflets and guidebooks to local events near you from coffee mornings to country fairs, all helps get the word out there. Chris's email is: c_j_cobb@msn.com (if you aren't clicking on the link, it is c underscore j underscore cobb) Working on the information stand does require some knowledge and familiarisation with the equipment. Some knowledge can be gained by joining Rosemary and Tony at the Grantham Museum 'Do Something New' event on Saturday 18th February, which will at least be in the warm. A more detailed Events Team Training Day will take place on Saturday 25th March at the Carpenter's Shop, Canal Depot, Woolsthorpe, starting at 10.00. Bring packed lunch or we could patronise the Dirty Duck for a lunch break. Let Rosemary know if you want a rough timetable and intend to come.

Rosemary will be shadowing Claire Cavendish, Canal and River Trust Education Co-ordinator (East

Midlands and North East) for school water safety sessions. Promoting the Grantham Canal for future generations is important. Working with children and vulnerable adults does require safety certification. Get in touch if you are interested in joining this team.

Reminiscence and Research work needs 'rebooting'. I am waiting for a date for a joint activity with the Friends of Cotgrave Country Park. Look out for a date soon. Again, **please get in touch if you are interested.**

Rosemary

communityandevents@granthamcanal.org

**07971 173069
or 01476 978896**

To All Society Members

Part of our agreement with the Heritage Lottery Fund is that we help them assess the effectiveness of our Lock 14/15 project and to this purpose they have asked us to complete a short survey.

This includes the volunteer programme and how it has worked. At this stage in the project they wish to collect baseline information from the GCS membership.

Given the generosity of the HLF could I ask you all to complete the survey - it is only 4 questions and our help/co-operation will stand us in good stead when we seek funding for future projects.

To access the survey click on: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/THMGQ5H>

then complete and send. Any problem you encounter please let me know on david.lyneham-brown@ntlworld.com

I hope not to hear from you!

Thanks for your efforts

David Lyneham-Brown



Your comments, news items or photos are always very welcome

To contact us please send your email to:

bridge@granthamcanal.org



Discovery Day 2017

Sunday October 8th is the date for this year and Ian Simmons will be organising it as Rosemary & Tony are otherwise committed. I am confident that he will get strong support from members and volunteers for this, the Society's unique and prestigious event of the year.



Where else has a Duck Race been run in a lock by-wash?

Mike Stone

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

Mrs A.E. Clarke, IWA Raffle,
Mr & Mrs Altham, A.W. Ambrose,
Miss Climpson, Mr & Mrs Burdett,
Miss J Baum, Mrs Fisher, Mrs Noble,
J Addison, Miss M Death
T Shuttlewood, Maids of Clifton



New Towpath Ranger

The GCS welcomes **Charles Cook** who has volunteered to be our new Ranger on the **West Bridgford** length of the canal. Please can our local supporters make contact with him?

COMMUNICATION



A little bird told me - "Any business needs Marketing". Companies spend oodles of cash on it. So what do you do if your organisation doesn't have a budget for marketing?

The restoration of our canal relies upon the existence of the Grantham Canal Society - without us - it won't happen. We are the engine which drives it.

Whilst we go after funding for projects, the society itself relies solely on goodwill to survive and function.

I prefer the term 'raising awareness' to that of 'marketing', particularly in connection to a purely volunteer organisation such as ours.

Fortunately, we now have Social Media. Our Twitter feed is well supported, with over 30,000 views each month - which is fabulous - and a huge thank you to all our 1,800 plus followers!

We're starting to make more use our Facebook page too - she needs a few more friends!

This is where you can help us enormously in raising awareness of the society and the work we do. If you use social media, please look in on us - more importantly - offer your support by sharing and re-tweeting!

Perhaps the easiest way to find our Facebook page initially, is to go to our website and click on the FB logo top right. Twitter feeds appear on the homepage - click on the Twitter logo next to the Facebook one - this will open it up to a full page.

Or the links, if you prefer:

<https://www.facebook.com/granthamcanalsociety/>

<https://twitter.com/GranthamCanal>

With a supportive Canal and River Trust, we need your help more than ever, in this new era of optimism for our canal.

Tony Jackson



Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge

February - Kingfisher

If the weather is mild, then February is the month in which kingfishers will begin their courtship.

Kingfishers lead a solitary existence in the winter - catching their prey can be hard as high water, poor visibility and the tendency of fish to move into deeper water all make fishing difficult. For this reason, a kingfisher will hold their own territory, often including waters not frequented in the summer, in order to maximise their chances of survival.

Once the first signs of spring begin to appear, pairs will court and share a territory once more, ready for the breeding season ahead. Kingfishers typically excavate nest tunnels in vertical banks, digging back 60-90cm and laying a clutch of eggs at the end. Through the summer, the pair can raise 2-3 broods in quick succession, spending little time with the young once they have fledged in their haste to start the next clutch.

February and March are excellent times to spot kingfishers along the canal - the process of forming pairs and negotiating territories makes them active and vocal. All this whilst the leaves are yet to burst on the trees makes it easy to see that flash of electric blue zipping low along the water. If you're trying to spot them on the banks, look on overhanging branches and think of their orange-brown chests as well as the typical blue of the backs - if they are facing towards you then this is what you need your eye in for!



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

The building of Denton Slipway

When the campaign rallies started to help the replacement of Casthorpe Bridge No 64, we could only launch small easily transportable boats from the towpath. At Denton picnic site was a cut out in the bank but not wide enough for trailable boats. We applied to BWB for permission to construct a wider and more shallow slope to enable larger boats to be launched from car trailers. This was agreed and we set about cutting the bank to the correct profile, laying 'Geotextile' groundsheet and covering with crushed stone. A rally was organised with many trailable boats attending and the flotilla set off to the old Casthorpe Bridge where the TV crews and many members and public were present. All went well until the recovery of boats at the new slipway. Some came out OK but others got bogged down and after many hours someone went off to find a breakdown recovery lorry from a local garage. This did the job but it was clear a much better slipway would be needed for future events.

Once again luck was with us with IWA and John Baylis providing detailed drawings of an RYA trailboat slipway. John helped us plan out the site and BW approved the works. Fortunately at the start of the project BW were dredging the canal in the Denton area so agreed to loan us the excavator at weekends so all we had to hire was a dumper and a water pump. Dave Smith was a very skilled operator of the machine and with guidance from John Baylis soon had the profile dug. It became obvious that sheet piles would be needed across the bank entrance to allow dry access

to the site and again John supplied these together with scaffold tubing etc. Dave installed the piling and we fitted a strongback beam tied back to the bank side to keep them upright. A small pump was required on the workdays to keep the water ingress acceptable. We set out the job in 3 main phases because of the quantity of concrete required.

Phase 1 was to lay a 3 x 4 mtr block of re-enforced concrete on the middle slope. This was laid on a crushed stone base with re-enforcing mesh cut to size on site. With suitable shuttering a 6cu mtr load of ready mix concrete was poured and then tamped to size by us. This job was mirrored over several weekends with phase 2 being the level bottom bit and phase 3 being the top section normally clear of the water level. The next major job was constructing the side walls. These were particularly difficult because of the erosion of earth during site visits and a tree to move took a lot of time out of the day. The making of re-enforce mesh and shuttering was very difficult but eventually a concrete pour was effected to just above water level and the job left to set. Dave drew the sheet piles and remaining shuttering and also dredged the entrance because we had to use clay to seal the piling just before his day job of dredging moved him to a new location.

A society member offered to lay the bricks up to normal level and then we could landscape the site and fit timber barriers and mooring bollards. A ground anchor was buried near the entrance hedge to allow anyone getting stuck could winch them selves out also at the request of BW, a lifting barrier, recovered

from a government dept site, was installed at the entrance.



A rally was held and several boats from the Wilderness Trailboat Club attended to test the new construction and the slipway officially opened by the BW area manager and Mel Crosby the GCRS Chairman. Many local dignitaries attended and this set the seeds for the Casthorpe Rd bridge being rebuilt and the 1994 Trailboat rally at Woolsthorpe.



Roger Cook, the following chairman had compiled a photo and build type album which was submitted to the RYA National awards at the International boat show in London and we won first prize, a Mirror sailing dingy and plaque.

Mike Atherley

1994 Trailboat rally
photographs by Bernard Snell

Round & About

Nature and the changing seasons never cease to fascinate me, and watching the bulbs emerging from the ground at this time of year is so exciting. I say 'emerging', but in the case of the small cluster of snowdrops in my front garden, they were suddenly there, looking so bright and pretty against the dark bark chippings I had spread over that bed last autumn. A previous owner had planted them and, as this is only my second winter here, I had forgotten they were there.

Of course, my little show of snowdrops is insignificant compared to the much more impressive displays to be found all around the country. In fact, there are two places nearby where you'll see them on a truly grand scale and in beautiful settings.

The gardens at Little Ponton Hall, an 18th century country house three miles south of Grantham, will be open for their annual snowdrop and aconite display on **Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 February (11.30am - 3.30pm)**. Admission is £5, children go free. Proceeds from the weekend will go to the Lincolnshire Down's Syndrome Support Group. These delightful gardens lie next to the River Witham and are not open to the public too often, so grab the opportunity while you can. You'll be able to buy the Hall's own home-grown plants while you're there, and also enjoy some home-made refreshments. Dogs are welcome provided they are kept on leads. For more information, including other opening times, go to www.littlepontonhallgardens.org.uk

If you don't catch that display, the one at Easton Walled Gardens, a few miles further south, will be open to visitors for a whole a week from **11 to 19 February (11.00am - 4.00pm)**. You'll see snowdrops in many areas of the gardens. Particularly striking are the massed drifts of them in the lower garden, a picturesque setting which overlooks parkland and the river. And look out for the rare and unusual snowdrops in purpose built beds near the tearoom. This 12-acre site, which forms part of the Easton Estate, has been owned and managed by the Cholmeley family since 1561. It includes meadows, a woodland walk, cottage and kitchen gardens, and orchards and is definitely on my list of places to visit this summer. The gardens will be fully open to visitors from **1 March through to 29 October**. Admission £7.25 for adults, £3.25 for children. For more information, go to

www.visiteaston.co.uk

Back in my, somewhat smaller garden, I'm keeping a close eye on all the crocuses and daffodils I planted last October. I'll be following their progress every step of the way!

Louise Lambert

www.the-write-words.co.uk



Snowdrops at Easton Walled Gardens
(from visiteaston.co.uk)

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



A "Ray of Sunlight" over the Grantham Canal

Photo by Ian Wakefield

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



Your comments, news items or photos are always very welcome

To contact us please send your email to:

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The
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CHARITY No: 507337