

DECEMBER

BRIDGE

2019



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The chamber of lock 14, Kingston's Lock, being brought back to life by the dedicated efforts of the Grantham Canal Society's volunteers under the leadership of the Canal & River Trust.

Photo by Bob Taylor



This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

We are nearing the end of our 50th year which has seen the Society achieve more progressive growth. Membership numbers are up; our income continues to grow thanks to the many supporters we have; another lock has been completely restored and our volunteers continue to restore another one.

We now must consolidate our position and review the state of our infrastructure and, where required, make sure it is 'fit for purpose'. **The locks restored last century (18 to 16) are in need of TLC as are our craft.** I am sure there will be 'milestone achievements' in 2020 but maybe not as many unless we can increase the numbers of volunteers. **Please consider if you could volunteer** and by so doing speed up the restoration of the canal. We do need more support so please come and enjoy working on the canal - it keeps you fit as well!

As we move through December the rain tipples down for a day; the temperature rises; the sun appears in a bright blue sky and the temperature falls again with ice covering the canal! Yes it is the season called winter which appears not to know what weather to deliver when!

Nevertheless the Society volunteers are hard at work delivering the results that are required to restore the waterway. Yes it is our busy season when maintenance doesn't interfere with birds nesting, protective swans, fish jumping, water nymphs appearing and bees collecting pollen.

Will we have too much water or not enough by next spring? Can we keep the weed growth at bay? There is much to be done

and little time in which to do it so our passengers may enjoy their cruises on *The Three Shires*.

Another winter task and one far less satisfying is the process of renewing the Societies annual insurance. In order to gain the necessary cover the insurers have raised the stakes on **Health & Safety**. There are so many situations where, through the quest for expedience, safety procedures are ignored. *However, those situations must now be a thing of the past.*

On a more cheerful note it is hoped to organise a New Year dinner before the end of January, probably on 30th, for volunteers and supporters. Further details to follow but, for now, pop the date in your diary!

*Finally may I wish you and your families a
**Merry and Peaceful Christmas
and a Happy New Year!***

Mike Stone.



**INLAND
WATERWAYS
ASSOCIATION**

**Notts & Derby Branch meetings take place at the
Clock Warehouse, Shardlow, DE72 2GL**

The next meeting is on **Wednesday 18th December from 7pm onwards**. We will have a talk from Mike Palmer, the Chairman of Inland Waterways Association's 'Waterway Recovery Group' (WRG). Mike will be talking about the work of WRG and its latest canal restoration projects including the just completed Inglesham Lock, Cotswolds.

Ahead of the talk by Mike Palmer, we will have a cold buffet. The menu for the cold buffet, at £7.95, per person is payable on the night. Anyone wishing to partake of the buffet, please email Graham Jeffery at nottsandderbys@waterways.org.uk by Friday 13th Dec. Alternatively, please feel free to just attend the talk which begins at 7.30pm.

COMMUNITY & EVENTS DIARY FOR 2019/2020

<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Event & Venue</u>
Mon 9 th Dec 2.00	Sleaford U3A Local History Group, Winchelsea Centre
Sun 22 nd Dec 10.30	Winter Warmer Walk – CRT/GCS Contact: Daniel.duheume@canalrivertrust.org.uk
2020	
Sun 5 th Jan 10.30 -4.30	Tony Jackson: Walk and Talk Warwickshire IWA
Thurs 23 rd Jan 10.00	Events Team Meeting
Thurs 6 th Feb 7.15	Talk: Rauceby WI, Village Hall
Thurs 13 th Feb 1.30 for 2.15	Edwalton Gamston U3A, Gamston Community Hall, NG2 6PS, nr Morrisons
Wed 26 th Feb 1.30 for 2.00	Grantham Breathe Easy Christian Centre NG31 9JE 21a Belton Avenue,
Thurs 5 th March 2.00	Radcliffe on Trent U3A, Grange Hall
Wed 11 th March 10.30	Vale of Belvoir Coffee – Bingham Bowls
Sun 22 nd March	Boat Trips, Depot Open
Mon 23 rd March 7.15	West Bridgford WI, St Paul's Church Hall, Boundary Road
Mon 6 th Apr 2.00	Cranwell WI
Sun & Mon 12 th & 13 th Apr	Easter Bank Holiday Trips, Depot Open
Wed 22 nd Apr	Grantham Probus 88
Sun 26 th Apr	Craft and Produce Fair, Woolsthorpe Depot
Mon 1 st June 12.30	Southwell Ladies Probus

Early May Day Bank Holiday Trips to be confirmed in January.

Community and Education Update December 2019

Events for this busy year concluded with the Dirty Duck Christmas Market, which added another £50 + to the bank and we were able to chat with more people about the work of the society. The next morning, it was good to welcome a couple of new faces to the events team meeting. We have also had people taking out our developing mobile information kit to small events.

One more talk to round the year off, and a Winter Warmer Walk from Plungar to Dove Cottage in partnership with the Canal and River Trust Events team.

Next year's plans are underway. I have had a number of talks booked for some time.

Members of the Events Team are planning some different ventures for 2020 including a Craft and Produce Fair on April 26th. Members of the team have been enjoying a bit of research going round Christmas Markets to find crafters and producers. We have also met up with Daniel Du Heume from the Canal and River Trust Events Team to explore the possibilities of some other joint ventures.

Very best wishes for the Festive Season and the New Year to all Bridge Readers but especially to all the volunteers who have helped in any way with Community, Events and Educational Activities in 2019.

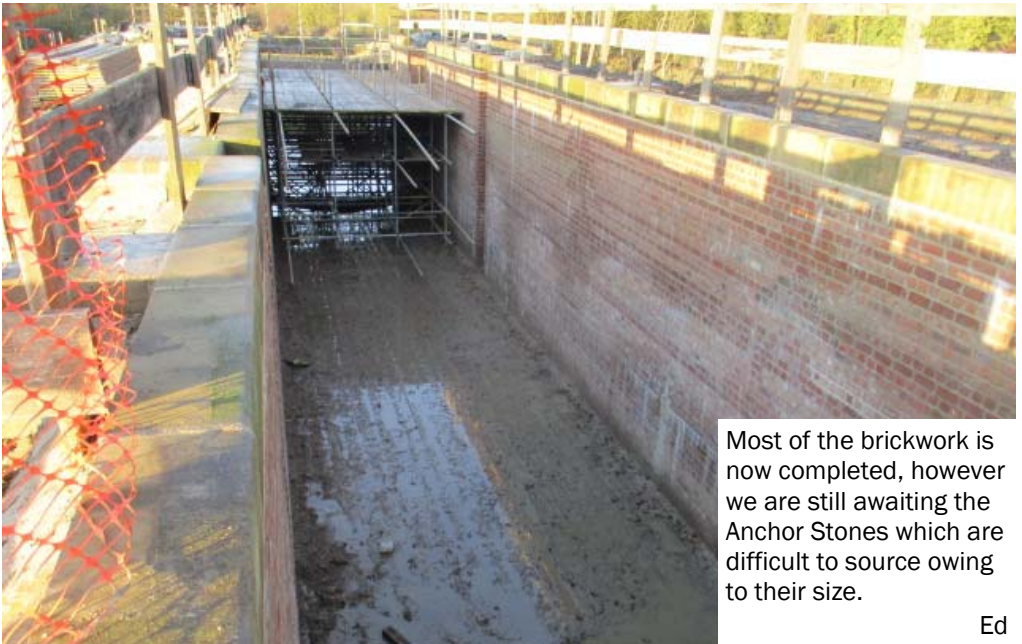
Rosemary communityandevents@granthamcanal.org

Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative at Lock 14



The scaffolding being removed from Lock 14 on December 2nd

Photos by John Clark



Most of the brickwork is now completed, however we are still awaiting the Anchor Stones which are difficult to source owing to their size.

Ed

The Society's AGM took place on Tuesday 26th November

The meeting was well attended and the Chairman summarised the activities and accounts of the Society during the 12 months ending March 2019. Full details of the trustees report & accounts can be found at

<http://www.granthamcanal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Report-Accounts-2019.pdf>

Jane Grylls was elected as Treasurer and replaces Stan Harbidge who resigned in February 2019. Stan was complimented for his excellent work. Tony Osbond was also elected a Trustee and has taken on the role of General Manager.

David Lyneham-Brown did not attend as he is recovering from a stroke. We wish him well for a speedy recovery.

Question time raised a number of points which included; silt removal, weed removal, continuity of building work and the condition of the navigable section.

'The Three Shires' skipper and crew requested that more effort be made to improve the navigable section so that short trips and longer cruises could be undertaken without difficulty.

Weed and silt removal are an increasing problem but, as the Chairman pointed out, dredging not only raises environmental issues but is extremely expensive. It also lacks the kudos enjoyed by construction projects and therefore misses out on funding.

The Trustees have to decide how to improve the navigable section whilst maintaining progress in the reconstruction of this beautiful canal. A difficult task but one that needs addressing.

Ed

Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge



Bridge December - Starlings

December sees the hedgerows along the canal alive with birds – mixed flocks of tits scoot from branch to branch in constant chatter, fieldfares and blackbirds pluck the autumn berries and starlings wheel overhead in evening murmurations.

Starlings can be found year-round in the UK, but September and October sees large influxes of birds moving from the colder climes of northern Europe. They frequently form large, impressive murmurations of birds and are regularly seen around Grantham, especially the western edge over the canal.

Before sunset is the best time to see these bouts of synchronised gymnastics as the birds move in unison, twisting and turning, and this behaviour increases in speed and complexity if there is a predator about. There are several theories as to why starlings perform this behaviour - they gather just before roosting, which they do communally, and so you see smaller flocks gradually join the largest flock so that the numbers grow and grow before they drop down to the trees and shrubs where they spend the night. This flocking together may allow them to exchange information on good feeding spots, or just help them to gather with the rest of the local starlings to maximise the warmth which multiple bodies bring on cold winter nights. There is also obviously safety in numbers when predators such as the Grantham peregrines are about!

Although these large winter flocks look impressive, starlings are a red-list species - populations in the UK have fallen 66% since the mid-1970's!

THE WAY IT WAS

By Mike Atherley



This month Mike recalls playing Long Alley Skittles ...

When I was 18 I joined a Long Alley Skittles team at a club in Arnold. This game was probably played in most counties in England but I never found one area who played it the same as many others. Some rolled the ball like bowls, some skittles were larger & some smaller. There were even balls of odd shapes. But the principle of the game was generally the same. We belonged to the Home Brewery League and like football the fixtures and game progress was published in the Nottm. Evening Post and we also had home and away matches. Quite a lot of the away venues were at Vale of Belvoir Pubs that sold Home Ales, that brewery covered a lot of the East Midlands. This was before I joined the canal society but years later I remembered them all while working on the canal.

The basics about long alley skittles were the alley's could be in cellars, sheds or in open court yards, not good for wet eve's, but had to be about 10ft wide, about 40ft long and have lighting. The nine skittles stood on an iron frame, about 4ft square, with round markers to locate the exact position of the skittles. The King skittle usually taller stood on the centre pad. The frame was diamond shaped and one corner faced the thrower. The skittles were about 15" tall with metal bands at the base and the balls were about 6" diameter, both made of oak, well soaked in linseed oil. Behind the frame was a trough to catch the fallen skittles and on the back wall was an old mattress or straw filled bag to cushion the balls etc. In front of the frame was a metal strip or white painted line, about 3ft away from the front skittle and the throwing position was 27ft from the front skittle with usually a depression to place one foot in. Along a side wall was a wooden trough sloping down to the throwers end to allow the balls to be returned.

The rules were that you had to underhand throw a ball so that it landed in the gap between the metal strip etc. and the front skittle. If it touched the strip or fell before it, it was a no ball. You had to hit the front skittle first before scoring could begin, any skittles knocked down before the front one were removed from the frame and were not scored. You throw three balls and if you were lucky to knock over all the skittles with the first or second ball you were allowed a stack up which could increase your score to a maximum of 27. There were usually two linesmen watching the throw and ball landing, one referee overlooking all the game and several stackers up who would replace the fallen skittles and roll the balls back to the start position. There were normally 10 players in each team with 3 games per match, each game was scored on a blackboard with the winning team scoring the most games. Top scorer and game details were also sent to the Home Brewery for their records. After the match the home side would provide a basket of sandwiches for all the players and support people.

It was enjoyable to travel to these remote locations but difficult without a car, usually poor public transport, so for reasons unknown Home Brewery decided to alter the venues to a more local source such as Nottingham city and towns within the urban area, could have been petrol costs or shortages or drink driving but at least it was quite a change. I did try to start up a Grantham team many years later and when I found some of the pubs in the Vale still had alley's but after several games the interest waned and that was the end. I don't know if games are still played locally but I did hear of a quiz team on the TV still played in the London area.

Some fabulous photographs on our Facebook page since the last copy of Bridge. Julie, Sarah, Sue, Debbie, Geoff and Peter have all given me the difficult task of choosing just one! At the risk of upsetting them – I'm going for Debbie's 'Magical Morning' shot, taken near Casthorpe. Thank you to Debbie, who's been out getting cold toes, delighting us with some early morning pictures of the canal recently.

It was good to talk to Karl too, as he paddled towards me out of the mist in his kayak, on his birthday too! He pulled over to the bank, and we both put the world to rights until mutually agreeing we were sufficiently chilled enough to be going our separate ways.

My favourite picture on our Twitter feed is 'Harlaxton Wharf', sent in by Estelle Slegers Helsen – newtraces.uk. The restoration of the wharf is a wonderful example of what can be done by a proactive community group. Funding sought, the wharf was transformed from its long term use as the village ash-pit, into this fabulous spot, managed by the group for its ecology – over 200 species of wild plants have been recorded – not bad on a north facing bank. Visit in the springtime, take your sandwiches and sit on one of the seats under the dappled sunlight – the sky full of birdsong – just chill! Now that's one of my New Year's resolutions – to do this more often!

Got a question about the canal, something you always wanted to know? Message me on FB. Looking forward to some interesting topics to cover over the Christmas/New Year break. So why didn't the canal follow the more direct route of road and rail between Nottingham and Grantham? Yup, we'll do that one – if I don't run out of ink! Ask away, we'll do 'em anonymously – so if you find you've asked something daft – it's just between you and me.

Wishing you a quacking Christmas me ducks!

Tony Jackson



What happens next?



Friday's team who worked to expose the counterforts. This enabled survey work to be carried out.



Stainwith
Lock 13

Woolsthorpe
Bottom
Lock 12

Many thanks to
John Clark &
Jim Freeman for
these photos

Ed

Lock 12 - Woolsthorpe Bottom Lock

Photographs below show a team of surveyors inspecting the lock

Unconfirmed findings are that the offside wall is bowed, there are cracks in the inside wall and the counterforts have separated on the offside.

However Lock 13 doesn't look too bad & appears suitable for repair after some tidying up.



Many thanks to Tony Osbond for these photos



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Winter warmer walk

Join us for a gentle walk along the Grantham canal and warm up with a free hot drink at Dove Cottage Tea Rooms.

Sunday 22nd December

10:30 am outside the Anchor, Plungar

Dress for the weather. Wellies recommended.

Members of the Grantham canal society will be joining to talk about their recent work to restore the canal for boats, while preserving it as a space for nature. Get out on the canal for some fresh air before Christmas!

For more information:

Email daniel.duhaume@canalrivertrust.org.uk



Enjoy. Volunteer. Donate
canalrivertrust.org.uk

Making life better by water

Canal & River Trust is the charity that works with communities to transform their local canals and rivers, creating places and spaces that can be enjoyed by everyone, every day.

Charity No. 1146792

Shopping Online this Xmas?

I feel rather ashamed to be advertising Christmas related fundraising ideas in the September Edition, but as many of the national stores are now on the Christmas Warpath it would seem that Christmas has come earlier again and many of you may be already planning those purchases for friends and family. **Did you know that you could be supporting The Grantham Canal Society with every purchase you make?**



Debenhams



LAKELAND

Currys PC World



Go to <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/the-grantham-canal-society> and create an account – it is that easy! And furthermore, you can get a handy reminder on your browser which reminds you to donate to GCS every time you make an online purchase.

The Giveasyoulive platform supports all major retailers; Amazon, John Lewis, eBay etc. The retailers will give us a small percentage of the amount you spend.

Look out for the special offers – last year I bought my son a new phone and CarphoneWarehouse donated £20 to GSC as a Black Friday Special!!

So far we have raised nearly £800, so please sign up and don't forget to tell your friends and family to sign up and support us.



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Neil White

GCS Fundraiser

07934 025435

Support us whilst you shop!

No matter what gift you're giving, you could raise an extra gift for us for FREE! Click via @GiveasyouLive before you shop, and the retailer will pay us a percentage of your transaction as a donation, at no cost to you! Merry Christmas! > <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/the-grantham-canal-society>



Thank you to the Lions Club of Grantham for their generous donation.

The club have supported us in donating £200 each year over a five year period.

Pictured: Tony Jackson, GCS Events Coordinator, receiving the final payment of £200, from Phil Marshall, President of the Lions Club



📍 The Basin, Main St, Hickling
Melton Mowbray, LE14 3AH

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✉ relax@theoldwharf.co.uk

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Time to relax and unwind

TEAROOM OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK FROM 9.00 AM - 4.00PM



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Sunday 17th November, Task Day 10, was originally planned to complete the work we had previously started by painting the timber fence around Lock 2. Unfortunately, the weather had other plans. So after introductions and the usual H&S brief from Gareth we agreed to swing Plan B into action. This was to head down to the nearby Radcliffe Road bridge (Bridge 4) to tackle the weed and general detritus under the busy roadway.

Armed with a variety of implements the volunteers swung into action removing as much as they could. It was not possible to reach items on the far side so they will have to be dealt with on another occasion when the weed has died back. Working in the confined space under the bridge created several problems so the team was split up with some sent to clear part of the towpath and others clearing the steps adjacent to the bridge. Work was also started to restore the towpath to its original width.



Over the years the grass and weeds at the sides gradually encroach until the available width is reduced. To restore the width requires cutting back the overgrowth using lawn edging tools and spades. Trench spades are best as their narrow blades makes the job a little easier.

After a couple of hours of slog we decided to call it a day. Thanks were given to the volunteers for turning out and for their hard work. As always they did a great job and, hopefully, had an enjoyable time doing it. Thanks were also given to Gareth of CRT for providing the equipment and generally keeping us all safe and out of mischief.



Important News:

The Canal & River Trust would like us to help them improve the appearance of the Canal in general and for the Gamston stretch in particular. They would like to publish fixed dates for Task Days throughout the whole of 2020 so that people could plan their availability well in advance.

A regular programme of Task Days is to be issued soon which would be based on every other month during winter and every month during summer. Task Days would be arranged for Saturdays and Sundays.

Details will be issued using social media as well as by email. It is hoped that we will attract a greater number of volunteers on each occasion so that we can really make huge improvements to our lovely stretch of canal. Perhaps more importantly, we could keep it that way.

I really hope that, together, we can make this work. Looking to the future, I also see that other communities along the canal (Cotgrave, the Cropwells, Kinoulton etc.), may be inspired to do the same.

I would be happy to hear your views on this so kindly send them to Ranger Rob
Grantham Canal Society Ranger (Gamston & West Bridgford)

email: rob.cook47@virginmedia.com





Phil, David and John on the Friday crew tidying up at the Denton winding hole.



Above - 'un-doctored' photo of Lock 14 by Bob Taylor.

Pictured below - Friday's gang who cleaned the lock out!



This is what Lock 14 looked like before restoration commenced.



DONT MISS JANUARY'S EDITION OF BRIDGE WHEN WE FEATURE POLLY'S ACCOUNT OF CROSSING THE WASH IN HER NARROWBOAT!

Letters to the Editor!

(Thank you all - very heartening - Steve)

I really enjoy reading Bridge and look forward to it each month. I just read your comment on page 2. Perhaps you are not aware of just how wide the circulation is. I always issue it to the 30 or so volunteers who occasionally turn up to help at our Task Days. I would think others may also do this. I'm not that keen on using Facebook or Twitter.

I like the idea of lock gates made of recycled plastic. As a retired design engineer and CAD draughtsman I think I may be able to add some value to this idea.

Please keep it up Steve, you do a really great job.

Rob

I note your little insertion in the November Bridge about seeking a new editor. I must comment that I am very satisfied with the present editor, and as for a more innovative approach, if that involves social media I am dead against it as I avoid all such like the plague! In 't social media what Donald Trump uses to disperse his incoherent and offensive opinions?

I assure you that the reach of Bridge in its present format extends very effectively to Bideford in North Devon and is an inspiration to the Rolle Canal.

I am pleased to see that Navigation as far as Redmile village by 2026 is listed as an achievable target, and I would remind you that some ten, or perhaps twenty, years ago I promised that I have £10k set aside to contribute to ecological improvements along the offside of the canal upstream of Redmile winding hole. (I lived beside the canal at Jasmine Cottage, Redmile from 1969 to 1996). I wonder if the proposal and sketch plans that I submitted to the then canal manager at Newark are still in the archives.

I had my 80th birthday this year, so it could just be possible that you could claim my donation before I finally pass on!

Chris Hasall

Comment from a Facebook follower forwarded by Tony Jackson.

Talking of 'Bridge', I was concerned to see that small box on page 2 from Steve suggesting that the monthly newsletter may be defunct in its present format and that social media might be considered a superior way forward. Let me be the first, through Facebook, to say I certainly don't consider this to be the case. Whilst social media is far more immediate, in my opinion 'Bridge' does an excellent job of complementing Facebook (and Twitter, although I find twitting extremely frustrating) and vice versa (yes, I am a committed member of the Lone Ranger fan club too). I don't want to drag this out but you have my permission to tell Steve that jacking the role in ain't an option and that he is doing a fine job. Then give him a sharp kick up the you know where.

Tom

Another Facebook follower.

I agree. I really love following the social media updates, but I also look forward to the Bridge each month and thoroughly enjoy reading it. Please ask him not to give up!

Polly

Thanks for another brilliant copy of Bridge. It's forwarded to the rest of my family who all read it with interest and forward it one again, to colleagues in Grantham and Wellington New Zealand where it is quite a talking point throughout the office. I for one feel that the format is right and most volunteers working on the lock 14 project are of a similar age and viewpoint.

Newsletter beats social media hands down. Please keep up the good work.

Bob

Hello Steve, I saw in this months Bridge that you are considering not being involved in Bridge anymore. That would be a great shame, I enjoy reading it online each month and I think any move to use social media would preclude quite a lot of people from reading it. I use Facebook to a limited extent but the like of twitter is beyond me!!

Sue

Hi Steve, Don't give the Bridge Editor up! It's the best it ever has been, I really look forward to the next one in my in box. I suggest all your subscribers pass them on to friends and family, can't fail to develop a wider interested circle. Keep up the good work.

Colin.

Our insurers are requesting that, prior to renewal, all volunteers are reminded of the following points concerning *Health and Safety*;

- volunteers must wear appropriate PPE including Hi-Viz vests at all times, hard hats when head injury is a risk, goggles, gloves, etc., whenever appropriate to the task at hand.
- life saving equipment must be worn when working on or close to water and appropriate safety gear when working at height.
- chainsaws must only be used by fully trained and certificated operators.
- great care and appropriate safety precautions must be taken when dealing with heat sources, fire and inflammable items.
- volunteers must abide by the Society's Health and Safety Policy at all times.

Failure to comply could lead to the insurance cover being prejudiced and ineffective and pay out being withheld by the insurers.

Gordon Wallis
Acting Company Secretary

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES



WEEKDAYS AT LOCK 14



or FRIDAYS & 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

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

Mr & Mrs Holmes, R. Gibson,
A. Ambrose

We would also like to thank the following for their regular donations for which the society is very grateful:

John Dodwell, Mr & Mrs Altham,
Miss Margaret Leighton, Nigel Lee