

BRIDGE



FEBRUARY

2020

The monthly newsletter
published by the

The
Grantham Canal
Society

CHARITY NO: 507337



Yes - this really is Kingston's Lock (lock 14)

Photographed by Sea Lane Media in January



This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

This year has started well on the canal – or has it?

At Lock 14 the teams are becoming mudlarks! Working on wet and muddy ground is no fun and delays progress. **Several of the senior management** have health issues and are therefore operating at less than 20% efficiency.

Our dredger Mudlark had an oil leak (on-board thank goodness).

A response is awaited from our land lords about our future plans.

However over 60 of us were at Mary's Birthday party at The Thatch in Bottesford last week – OK it was officially the Society Christmas Bash but hey it was her birthday and Mary organised what was, I thought, a most enjoyable evening and an excellent venue.

I am delighted to announce that **Jo Altham** has volunteered for the role of **Volunteer Coordinator**. Jo will be getting her feet under the table and will be communicating with volunteers shortly.

To ensure that the Society is appropriately managed your committee has identified a list of Projects for 2020 in priority order (see article on p. 3). If anyone could volunteer as a Project leader please let us know as this would help us significantly in what will be a very busy year.

You will see that, in addition to the major construction projects, we are planning to complete the seat at Lock 15 which will incorporate the engraved memorial bricks. The trip-boat will be working harder than ever and the number of 'turn up and go' short cruise days will be increased – many with the expected offering of tea and homemade cakes!

On a slightly less exciting, but beneficial note to those walking between Grantham and Woolsthorpe, and thanks to Tony Jackson's efforts we hope soon to have a new litter/dog-bin installed at Casthorpe Bridge. Our thanks to the SKDC, CRT and others for their contributions to funding the regular servicing required.

It is a measure of the volunteer support we receive that the Maintenance team activity, in addition to Fridays and Saturdays will now also take place on Mondays. Our thanks to all those who are delivering this Monday activity. Can I remind those of you who have partners who are less enthusiastic about the Grantham Canal to please remember them on Valentine's Day for supporting your volunteering – and give them something special as a Thank You!

Mike Stone.



Lock 14 taking shape - Photo by Sea Lane Media



**INLAND
WATERWAYS
ASSOCIATION**

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

Next meeting Wednesday 19th February at 7.30pm.

The speaker will be Chris Madge, Chairman of The Derby & Sandiacre Canal Society. Chris will present a talk, and update on the progress of restoration, and news of their soon-to-be-launched Trip Boat.

Grantham Canal Society 2020 - Projects and Priorities

A restored and active navigation inevitably needs more maintenance following the restoration work we have undertaken. **Lock gates and brickwork** restored during the 90's now requires a makeover; **craft** used for a decade either carrying passengers or used for maintenance, require cleanings and painting; **water leaks**, despite everyone's efforts, always manages to escape! **So we have a list of operational matters that need attention.**

What to do and when? If we had infinite resources we could deliver fast results but we haven't, so difficult choices have to be made to use our resources effectively.

With the senior management team experiencing health issues our ability to 'Keep all the plates spinning on the poles' is not currently possible. **We need additional resources to be fully effective.**

Your committee met recently and considered the options. **What are we most in need of?**

A few more Committee members and other individuals to head up the various Projects. So if you are available and are a good communicator willing to head up a team please contact us.

Below are our priorities for 2020 in order. I have also detailed the respective Project Leaders.

Rod Gordon has taken on the role of Special Projects supporting **Tony Osbond** on all construction activities working closely with **Neil Truscott** who has a wealth of Project Management experience in the construction industry.

Key tasks we have to undertake this year. All are essential to the future growth of the Society. We need to: -

- ⇒ Negotiate with Belvoir Castle Estates to retain the Lock 14 compound to ensure that we can restore Lock 13 – *Tony Osbond*
- ⇒ Complete projects already underway – Lock 14 & Memorial bench at Lock 15 – *the Lock 14 team and others*
- ⇒ Maximise the operation of the trip-boat – our major source of income – *the Trip-boat team*
- ⇒ Increase funding to enable our work to continue – sourcing possible opportunities for grant funding – *Neil White with the support of Tony Osbond*

What new tasks are necessary in 2020 and why:-

- ⇒ Reinforce our efforts keeping the top length clear for the trip boat – lack of water and growth of weed slows operation – *Ian Wakefield, who would like some support*
- ⇒ Raise Denton and Lock 18 byewash weirs - to increase water depth for the trip-boat – *Rod Gordon*
- ⇒ Restore a slipway at Woolsthorpe depot – to enable all craft to be repaired out of the water during the coming winter – *Rod Gordon, Neil Truscott and Jim Gaut*
- ⇒ Undertake repairs to Locks 18 to 16 – to replace old timbers, stem leaks – Currently *Tony Osbond with Rod Gordon are meeting with CRT to prepare plans.*

Planning and research required for future works:

- ⇒ Restoration of Lock 13 – *Tony Osbond*
- ⇒ Lottery Fund submission for restoration of Locks 13 and 12.- *Tony Osbond with CRT support*
- ⇒ Removal of accumulated silt on parts of the top length – *Mike Stone and others*

Other important activities undertaken by the Society volunteers include **Canal Rangers, Community and Education, Events, Environmental Work, Cake Bakers** - *I could go on!*

All these different activities fall on a few shoulders - we need support - YOUR SUPPORT!
Please can you help? Few of us are experts, we learn as we go, but just a few extra hands will help to ease the burden. Thank you.

Mike Stone - chairman@granthamcanal.org

Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative at Lock 14



Above: Lou dry stone walling



Left: The upper byewash in the course of construction.

Below: John clearing the site



This threaded bolt was removed from the mitre timbers and the nut was removed after a gentle tap with a hammer.

A tribute to 1794 engineering!

Many thanks to John Clark & Jim Freeman for these photos



Community and Education

Update February 2020

At the Event Planning Meeting on Thursday 23rd January, we thrashed out dates for another busy year. Still plenty of activity at the Depot and people willing to go out to events further afield. I am working through booking forms.

Home events start in earnest for **Mothers' Day, Sunday 22nd March** when the Depot will be open for refreshments, activities, information and some fund raising. We hope Carole and her priceless team will come up with the usual irresistible array of refreshments.

Planning is underway to bring together a range of **Crafts and Produce for Sunday 26th April**, which will include some interesting demonstrations and we hope the sort of refreshments we have become used to drooling over. Further information about this event from Mary thermalist@gmail.com

Education: The Learning Team have picked Monday 29th June to Friday 3rd July for this year's Schools Week. We shall be sending invitations out to schools soon, but this isn't the only time we work with schools and youth groups. On 29th January, we were invited to Harby School to contribute to Year 5 and 6 Class Project on Bridges. We took activities and slides of some of the bridges on the Grantham Canal, culminating in the story of Harby's own potential lift bridge. I set the children the challenge of designing a new bridge for Muston Gorse for when the Woolsthorpe Flight is completed. I offered to display designs at the depot for visitors to vote on the best. The winner will be decided on Discovery Day and I just need to think of an prize. Prizes for the tombola will be welcomed in time for Mothers' Day.

Thank you in anticipation and do let me know of any activities along the Canal Corridor where we could take the information stand.

Next Event Planning Meeting Thursday 20th February, 10.00, Woolsthorpe Depot. additional offers of help and ideas always welcome.

Rosemary

Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge



February – Alder

Alder is a tree synonymous with damp habitats such as rivers, lakes, ponds, swamps and canals. It grows to nearly 30m tall and lives for around 60 years. A member of the Betulaceae family – along with silver birch – it can be found flowering at this time of year.

Alder is dioecious – this means that it bears both male and female flowers on the same tree. It differs in this respect to poplars and willows which will also soon be in spring flower, where male trees and female trees need to grow in close proximity for them to be pollinated. The male alder catkins hang pendulously from the twigs, releasing their pollen to the wind. The fresh female flowers on the other hand are small and inconspicuous, looking like small purple buds.

Following fertilisation however, these subtle structures become woody and eventually release the seeds from the cones. The presence of last year's cones and this year's catkins on the same tree is a great way to identify this species!

Alder wood goes a deep orange/red colour when cut – it grows well beside water and is only durable as a material when wet. It was historically favoured for purposes which mimic its living habitat – in the construction of boats, sluice gates and water pipes.

In common with some other trees – notably those in the legume family such as laburnum and false acacia – the alder has an association with nitrogen fixing bacteria in its roots which allow it to thrive in nutrient poor soils.

THE WAY IT WAS

By Mike Atherley



This month Mike continues his VERY eventful trip on the Broads ...

The next day we left to cross Breydon Water on route to Norwich, the damage and leak were holding fine but the trip across the lake was unpleasant, strong headwind and poor route marker posts together with the fact that I had never handled a boat across open water that large before. Relieved to get across without running aground we set course for Norwich along the River Yare. Passing the Berney Arms pub, only available by water, the route to Norwich is very pleasant, similar to the Trent, a bit tricky where all the rivers converge but good moorings at the Yacht Centre. After a day or so in Norwich the next route was down to Lowestoft, Oulton Broad, not so pleasant because the rivers are large and few places to stop and moor up, when we left Norwich we saw the Greenpeace Ship, Rainbow Warrior leaving port, I don't think ships of that size can reach Norwich these days. After a day in Lowestoft it was time to head back to Martham. We stopped at Yarmouth to await the incoming tide but a boater moored behind us started early, with full throttle his boat collided with my colleagues inflatable dingy hanging on davits and crushed it against the boat, it blew up like a balloon. They would not stop but the harbourmaster saw it all and gave us the boat details, that allowed us to contact the hire base before the boat returned. A claim was eventually successful.

Getting close to Thurne mouth near Potter Heigham my colleagues boat picked up something on the prop and going hard astern to try and clear it the Z drive leg kicked up, it should remain locked down in reverse, and tore the gears off the driveshaft, this was not repairable on the water, so luckily being quite close to Martham I decided to tow him. When we reached Potter Heigham bridge, the lowest headroom on the Broads, you have to pass through quickly to keep a straight course, I got through but his windscreen hit the arch and tore the corner piece off. After a few bumps and bangs we moored up on the other side to repair the screen. Possibly a shorter towrope might have been better. Next day it was time to travel the short distance to Martham and begin the boat recovery.



The slipway was available and with me being in front decided to recover first. My trailer had twin axles and was low to the ground so the boat came on reasonably easy, just a bit of manoeuvring once on level ground but his trailer was single axle and high so the boat would not float on.

Continued

He kept winding the winch until you could imagine the wire breaking but the boat would not slide up. When partially on he decided to try and pull the lot out with his car but there was a big bang and the winch post broke off the trailer and the boat launched itself back into the water. The boatyard owner refused help, whether it was risk assessment I don't know but he did offer some long wood troughs to slide under the trailer wheels so it could sit further into the water. That done the boat floated on but the car wheels wouldn't grip so eventually the man towed the boat and trailer out with his tractor. Both outfits out and secure it was getting dark and we had to make the decision to leave or stay over until the next day. Thinking how difficult for all parties to climb aboard and the weight on the trailer bilge rollers, etc. made us decide to leave. My problem was fuel for the car but thinking there would be plenty of garages open we pressed on.

We passed through the outskirts of Norwich but no service stations were open, it wasn't until we were close to East Dereham that an all night garage was open. Although it was set back from the main road the entrance and exits were a very tight manoeuvre. After filling up and checking the trailers and rear lights, etc. the lead car made an exit, I followed but had to make a large loop across the main road to clear the long trailer from catching the exit wall. I had just about got the whole outfit back on the correct side of the road when I saw headlights coming up very fast, thinking the car would slow down I continued the manoeuvre. The car began to swerve and as it passed collided with the rear trailer wheel bringing me to a complete stop. I jumped out and checked the damage, there was no sight of the other vehicle, the rim was damaged and tyre flat so I thought it better to try and reverse back onto the forecourt, nothing would move, further checks revealed the axle had moved back and pulled the handbrake cable tight. After a lot of power and effort the trailer eventually moved backwards. By this time the main road was full of vehicles and people with torches and eventually that slowly cleared and the driver and companion of the offending vehicle appeared. The language and threats were appalling and it was obvious they were quite intoxicated but I managed to exchange details for the insurance claim. With the wheel being beyond repair I was lucky to find my colleagues spare wheel fitted the trailer.



All repaired we set off using a different route, the A47, A1, A46 but by the time we reached the A1 and found a safe parking spot I decided it was time for a sleep until daylight. My colleague decided to press on but I and the lead car stayed put. Next day we felt better and after a snack carried on to Sheetstores Marina to leave the boat and trailer safe for further inspection and then continued to home.

Later I was able to find a correct wheel and tyre on Cranfleet lockside, replaced the broken stern post and relaunched the boat, my colleague repaired his Z drive and the insurance companies sorted out the accident claims. **What a holiday !**

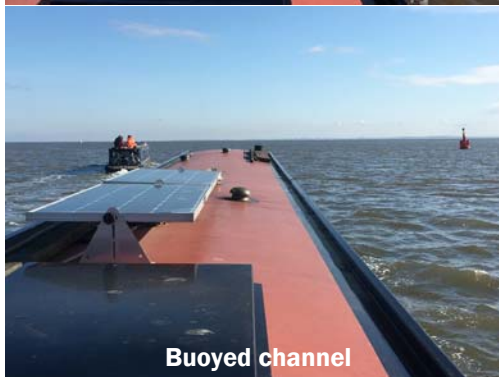
CROSSING THE WASH IN A NARROWBOAT

By Polly in Meadow Pipit
PART 2

Polly's continues her story from last month where she describes crossing the Wash in narrowboat Meadow Pipit ...

As we neared the mouth of the estuary the land began to disappear and was replaced by water, and eventually all that was left were the red and green marker buoys showing the channel going out to sea. I have sailed on such channels before in a sailing boat, but to be doing it in a narrowboat felt rather disconcerting! The pilot (who was travelling on the other boat, Olinda) kept in touch by radio and advised us when we needed to be careful of currents which could take us off course, and finally even the marker buoys disappeared and we could relax (as far as possible when on a narrowboat at sea!).

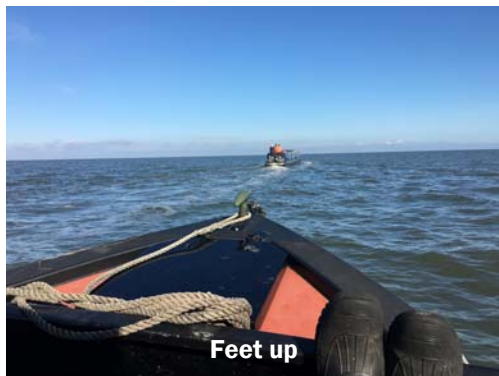
There were some big fishing boats in the distance, and a navy shooting range, but apart from that a big expanse of nothing although I'm pleased to say we never totally lost sight of land. It was a glorious day with bright sunshine and the sea was calmer than many rivers we have cruised on, although at one point you could feel the swell of the waves underneath the boat which was slightly unnerving. *Continued ...*



Oddly, we suddenly noticed some flies on the roof – I have no idea where they could have come from, but presumably they were just glad to be hitching a ride on something that wasn't water!

After a few hours at sea we began to see the marker buoys marking the channel to Boston, and sandbanks were appearing all around us being enjoyed by seals and cormorants. The water became shallow and there were fast currents, which took a lot of concentration to negotiate; at one point it looked as though we were going to be dragged onto a red marker buoy (they are very big close up), but luckily we managed to avoid it.

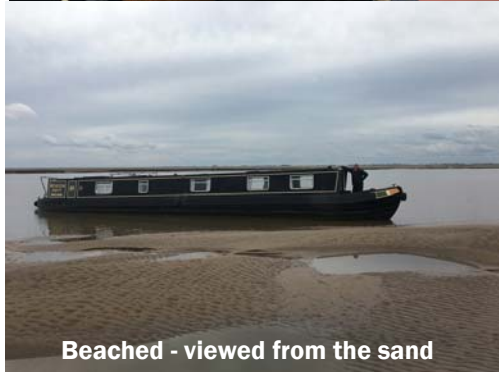
The instructions then came from the pilot over the radio to turn into the sandbank on our right and leave the power on for about 10 minutes, by which time the water would have dropped enough to hold us. Sure enough it did, and we were fast aground. At that point everything became quite surreal; I think it was the silence as much as anything, and then, as if from nowhere, the seals came. In the silence we saw their heads gliding along the top of the water, often stopping to look at us, and occasionally one of the heads would come up out of the water to get a better look.



Feet up



Beached



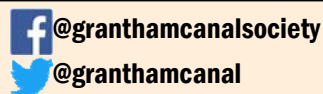
Beached - viewed from the sand



To be continued next month

#Trending

By *Tony Jackson*



We've celebrated William Jessop's 275th birthday since our last edition of Bridge – to be truthful, we were a day late. I should remember the date; it's the day before my own birthday! Thank you to Tom, one of our avid followers on Facebook for reminding me of our Will's big day! In hindsight, we should perhaps have made more of it; 275 is indeed a good age, one worthy of celebration – if he'd been born in the summer, it would be an excuse for a BBQ or something.

You do like your history about the canal. There is so much yet to be discovered – actually, we know where a lot of it is. It lies in archives all over the place – some local, some farther afield. A list of these archives was compiled as part of the Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative (lock restoration project). Wouldn't it be wonderful if these archives could be visited and copies of documents and photographs produced where permissible. I feel there is also much yet to discovered!

We need people to spin this plate – if you're a bit of a sleuth - get in touch!

Sometimes you don't need to go anywhere. Occasionally, things drop on your lap. Thank you to Heather who lent us her dissertation about the canal – drum roll! We now have two pictures of the original Casthorpe Bridge! They're wonderful – and I might just keep 'em to myself a little longer...okay, I haven't got them in digital form yet.

People do like to see us working – cheers guys! Thanks to Alec, our Friday Workparty have begun sending in pictures of their endeavours. I know it isn't easy when you're busy and all toggled up – the last thing on your mind is taking photographs! There's talk on the Towpath Telegraph of a Monday Workparty being formed, to carry on the work of keeping the summit pound (trip boat route) navigable – this is an ideal time to become involved.

Picture of the month: Henna's fabulous photograph of swans near Woolsthorpe, which could well have been conceived of the fluffy white clouds above – delivered by stork – naturally :-)

Don't know who William Jessop is? You need to follow us on Facebook and/or Twitter!



March 2019



January 2020



Lock 14 - Kingston's Lock

In August 2018 we gained access to the lock and demolition started as soon as the access road had been completed. Rebuilding started in January 2019.

Drone photos by Sea Lane Media



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

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✉ relax@theoldwharf.co.uk

🖱 www.theoldwharf.co.uk

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347474

The Three Shires Trip Boat – February 2020 Update

The new cruising season will soon be upon us and we have a packed programme for 2020 with some new experiences for you to try.

As well as our popular 'Turn Up and Ride' short trips from Woolsthorpe by Belvoir on Bank Holidays and selected Sundays, we will also be running **short trips from Harlaxton Wharf** on July 5th, August 9th and September 13th.

Cruise and Dine is back, operating every Tuesday in June and July. Enjoy a 1½ cruise plus a two or three course meal at the Dirty Duck for only £25 or £30 respectively. New this year is 'Fishy Friday' which will run on 26th June and 31st July.

Relax on a 3 hour cruise from Woolsthorpe to Harlaxton and back, with fish and chips delivered to the boat, all for £20! Also new for 2020 are our **Experience Days**, where one of our Skippers will show you the ropes during a day out on the canal.

As well as our scheduled trips, don't forget that **The Three Shires** is also available for your **private cruise** for up to 10 people. Prices have been held for 2020 - £90 for two hours, £125 for three hours or £150 for four hours.

The new season starts on Mothering Sunday, Sunday 22nd March where we will be running short trips from Woolsthorpe. The first trip is at 10 am and the last trip will depart at 4 pm. £3 for adults and £2 for children.

We look forward to seeing you out on the water!

To book a private cruise, purchase a gift voucher, or to find out more about The Three Shires, please contact our booking team on 07486 955775 or email bookings@granthamcanal.org



BOAT TRIPS on 'THE THREE SHIRES' PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR

Mothering Sunday	March 22 nd 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open for refreshments
Easter Sunday and Monday	April 12 th & 13 th 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open for refreshments
Early May Bank Holiday Friday	May 8 th 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open for refreshments
Spring Bank Holiday Sunday and Monday	May 24 th & 25 th 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open for refreshments
Cruise and Dine	June 2 nd , 9 th , 16 th 23 rd & 30 th 18:00	Must be booked in advance. See boat trip leaflet
Father's Day	June 21 st 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open for refreshments
Fishy Friday!	June 26 th 17:00	Must be booked in advance. See boat trip leaflet
Summer Sunday	June 28 th 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open
Harlaxton Wharf Short Trips	July 5 th 11:00 - 15:30	Departs from Harlaxton Wharf
Cruise and Dine	July 7 th , 14 th , 21 st & 28 th 18:00	Must be booked in advance. See boat trip leaflet
Summer Sunday	July 26 th 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open
Fishy Friday!	July 31 st 17:00	Must be booked in advance. See boat trip leaflet
Harlaxton Wharf Short Trips	August 9 th 11:00 - 15:30	Departs from Harlaxton Wharf
August Bank Holiday Sunday and Monday	August 30 th & 31 st 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open for refreshments
Harlaxton Wharf Short Trips	September 13 th 11:00 - 15:30	Departs from Harlaxton Wharf
Summer Sunday	September 27 th 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open
Discovery Day	October 11 th 10:00 - 16:00	Depot open for refreshments

I have included this programme so that you can see the busy year ahead planned for the crew of "The Three Shires" with the support of the refreshment team at the Depot.

Please make a note in your diary so you don't miss out. Ed

If you would like someone to give a talk to your group or club then please email:
communityandevents@granthamcanal.org or call **07971 173069**

Hedgelaying at Cropwell Bishop

Participants: Richard Fowkes, Philip Thomas, John Robinson,
David Cross

Instructor: Dave Padley



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

The hedgerows bordering the canal towpaths are often over 200 years old and were originally planted to protect the canal and towpath from the intrusion of livestock. They also create an important and established habitat for our wildlife. However over the years sections die off and gaps form weakening the structure. This makes it necessary to carry out some remedial action and learning a country skill.

In order to do this a hedgelaying training course was arranged by the Canal and River Trust over the weekend of 18/19th January at Cropwell Bishop. Hedge laying is the process of partially cutting (pleaching) the vertical stems and bending them without breaking so that they can be intertwined and grow horizontally. This forms a thick bushy barrier, invigorating the hedge and creating a pleasing effect. Two volunteers from The Grantham Canal Society along with members of CRT were taught this skill by Dave Padley, a hedgelaying expert.



Before work commenced



Some hard graft



Prickly stuff



Weaving the top



Nearly there



The finished job



The team



Some serious kit

Many thanks to Dave Cross (GCS)
and Daniel Du Heaume (CRT)
for providing these photos

On the morning of Saturday 18th January yet another group of willing volunteers, which included two completely new members, met near Morrisons' Supermarket to begin work on the canal towpath. Ably assisted and supervised by Gareth Carter, Canal & River Trust Volunteer Coordinator, and having had the usual H&S briefing, we set about our work. This time we concentrated on the eastern (Ambleside) end of Section 1. It was a beautiful sunny day, but nice and dry for once.

One of the first things we had to do was to clear a half fallen tree which obstructed the towpath. We then split into two task groups, litter picking and the tough job of scabbling the towpath.

The litter picking suited the two children from the local Pierrepont Gamston Primary School who quickly trained their Mum in how to deal with this which resulted in a big bagful. By sheer coincidence a litter pick was simultaneously taking place from the Gamston Village group who also dealt with the lower section of the canal.

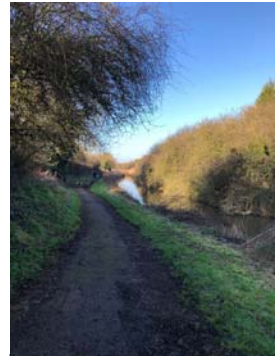
The rest of us started restoring the towpath to its original width. This is quite hard graft. Using shovels and spades the grass has to be cut back to where it should be. The resulting spoil is then barrowed away and deposited on the opposite canal side bank. Umpteen barrowloads of the stuff! There's a good reason why we refer to our volunteer work as the Outdoor Gym!

One thing that has to be contended with is the spraying of dog mess. There is always more on this particular part of the Gamston Section and there was a lot to be sprayed that day.

Thanks to our volunteers for giving us their precious time, working hard but, nevertheless, enjoying themselves. Thanks also to Gareth of the Canal & River Trust.

Yet another improvement has been made to the appearance and usefulness of our canal, for the benefit of the local community.

Our next Task Day is on Sunday 29th March. If anyone would like to take part please contact Rob Cook on 07986 701348.



**IF YOU SUPPORT OUR
HERITAGE AND GAIN
ENJOYMENT FROM SEEING
THE RESTORATION OF THIS
BEAUTIFUL CANAL -
THEN PLEASE JOIN OUR
SOCIETY**

THE COST IS MODEST!

The annual subscription rates
are as follows:

Single Adult:£20

Family:£30

Under 18/Over 60: ..£15

**Membership is important to us and
encourages our active volunteers with
their various tasks.**

**With your help we can also persuade
the local Parish, County & Borough
Councils to support our efforts to
maintain and rebuild our canal for the
enjoyment of future generations.**

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL



**A full application form can be
downloaded from our website
www.granthamcanal.org/join-us**

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES



WEEKDAYS AT LOCK 14



or FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS or MONDAYS WITH ONE OF OUR WORKPARTIES

If you can spare some time to join
one of our teams then drop in for a
chat & a cuppa around 8.30am on
any Friday, Saturday or Monday
morning.

Alternatively you can always
email us

volunteer@granthamcanal.org

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

Mr J. Dodwell, Warwicks IWA
David Lyneham-Brown, Nigel Lee