

BRIDGE



MARCH

2020

The monthly newsletter
published by the

The
Grantham Canal
Society

CHARITY NO: 507337



See page 16



This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

As I write these words the gale has blown away the rain and I feel as if spring is just around the corner.

First may I thank those who responded to the Committee appeal for support in managing the operations of the Society? **Your prompt responses are appreciated.** Perhaps one or two others of you could join them! Other volunteers have increased the numbers working with the established teams and I thank you for that.

If you keep an eye on the activity calendar you will see that we are programming more dates to meet the needs and expectations of the public. More boat trips, more talks to Community supporters, more Educational activity and, of course, more mouth-watering cake with tea or coffee!

We have a real balance of activity as some volunteers collect the funds for the other teams to spend the hard-earned funds on restoring the canal. Talking of restoration have you seen the progress at Lock 14?

Despite a very wet and therefore muddy winter the teams there have made real progress and the next big task is making and fitting the lock gates. This is a specialist task undertaken by experienced CRT staff based at their factory at Stanley Ferry on the Aire & Calder Navigation.



Two photos taken by John Clark of lock gates under construction in the CRT factory



We hope to commence work on our planned Projects in the near future. If you are somebody with skills we could use please talk to us about joining as a volunteer and helping to achieve our goals.

Mike Stone.



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



COMMUNITY & EVENTS DIARY MARCH 2020

<u>Date & Time</u>	<u>Event & Venue</u>
Tues 10 th March 10.00	Events Team Meeting, Woolsthorpe Depot
Wed 11 th March 10.30	Vale of Belvoir Coffee – Bingham Bowls - cancelled
Wed 18 th March 7.30	Notts/Derbys IWA Clock Warehouse, Shardlow, DE72 2GL tbc
Sun 22 nd March	Mothers' Day Boat Trips, Depot Open
Mon 23 rd March 7.15	West Bridgford WI, St Paul's Church Hall, Boundary Road
Sun 29 th March	Gamston Task Day
Wed 1 st April 10.00 – 1.00	School Visit, Woolsthorpe Depot and Boat
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
Sat 2 nd May	Info Stand at Denton Church Craft Fair
Mon 4 th May 7.30	Sleaford Navigation Trust AGM
Sat & Sun 9 th & 10 th May	Bank Holiday Trips (nb not Monday) Depot Open
Sat & Sun 9 th & 10 th May	Nottinghamshire County Show, Newark Show Ground
Wed 13 th May	Newark Engineering Society, venue tbc
Sun & Mon 24 th & 25 th May	Bank Holiday Boat Trips, Depot Open
Mon 1 st June 12.30	Southwell Ladies Probus
Sun 21 st June	Fathers' Day Boat Trips – Depot Open
Sun 28 th June	Summer Sunday Boat Trips – Depot Open
Sat & Sun 27 th & 28 th June	Chesterfield Canal Festival
Mon 29 th June – Fri 3 rd July	SCHOOLS' WEEK
Sun 5 th July	Summer Sunday Trips from Harlaxton Wharf
Tues 7 th July 7.15	RAFA Cranwell
Wed 8 th July 8.30	Hawton WI, Hawtonville Methodist Church Hall
Sat 11 th July	Radcliffe Carnival
Sun 26 th July	Summer Sunday Trips – Depot Open
Wed 29 th July	Joint CRT/GCS Event at Depot
Sun 9 th Aug	Summer Sunday Trips from Harlaxton Wharf
Fri 14 th Aug	Joint CRT/GCS Event at Depot
Wed 19 th Aug	Grantham Ladies Probus
Sun & Mon 30 th & 31 st Aug	Bank Holiday Boat Trips, Depot Open
Sun 13 th Sept	Summer Sunday Boat Trips from Harlaxton Wharf
Sun 20 th Sept 10.00 – 4.00	Heritage Open Day
Sun 27 th Sept	Summer Sunday Boat Trips – Depot Open
Sun 11 th Oct 10.00 – 4.00	DISCOVERY DAY
Mon 19 th Oct 7.30	Bourne Civic Society, Wake House
Wed 21 st Oct 7.30	Barrowby WI

Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative at Lock 14



Work on the new byewash commenced Feb 11th



Brickwork completed Feb 26th



Byewash inspection pit



Adding blue brick copings



Many thanks to John Clark & Jim Freeman for these photos



Removing the solid oak mitre beams which were held in place by 6 massive 18th C nails



Ladder fitted

Community and Education

Update March 2020

Can't believe we're in March already. We have been busy planning for events and visits and had a fair number of talks. We will do almost anything to raise awareness and funds for the Canal Society. Tony and I both posed for Grantham Art Club in February. We were fully dressed in our boaters' outfits and received a generous cheque from them for £50. Hard work standing still for about an hour. We have been invited to similarly pose in August for Bottesford Art Club.

Mothering Sunday trips are upon us this soon and I would like to recruit more people who can manage our Depot Open Days. Last year was very successful, but organisation rested on very few shoulders and some of those shoulders have developed health issues. I have had one or two people offering to shadow on Saturday 21st March for preparation and Sunday 22nd March running the day. If you feel you could offer some time to help with this, please get in touch or meet up with us at the Depot for 11.00 on the Saturday.

The Craft and Produce Fair April 26th also approaches at speed. Mary has been working hard on managing bookings. This is a new venture and includes demonstrations as well as sales of local crafts and produce. Help will be needed setting up on Saturday 25th and I hope lots of readers will bring family and friends along to support local producers and swell GCS coffers.

The 2020 diary looks pretty full, but we would still like to hear of local canal corridor events.

Rosemary

communityandevents@granthamcanal.org

07971 173069

Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge



March - Daffodils

There is a wild daffodil - *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* - but these are significantly outnumbered by planted varieties and cultivars.

You will never see individual clumps or plants of truly wild daffodils - they exist in broad carpets in woodlands or damp meadows. Along the canal, the occasional clumps of daffodils brightening up the towpath which will all be planted.

The system for classifying daffodil varieties is surprisingly elaborate - there are 13 initial divisions based on characteristics such as trumpet length, number of flowers on the head etc. and these are subdivided further by petal/trumpet colour.

In total there are over 10,000 varieties - the RHS website has more details and can help you identify your own .

**Please see page 16 for some details
about James & his articles.**

ANOTHER CANAL

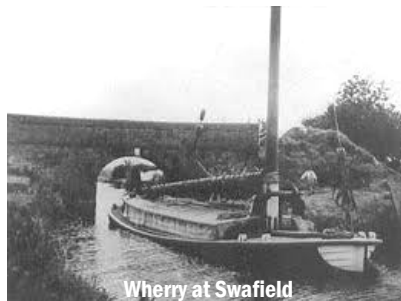
By Mike Atherley



Mike's story this month is about the past and present situation of the North Walsham and Dilham Canal.

When I came to live in Norfolk about 20 years ago I joined the North Walsham and Dilham Canal Society to find what progress was being made on its restoration. I had visited the canal before whilst on holiday and even managed to navigate the first section from Wayford Bridge to the first lock at Honing in my inflatable dinky with outboard engine, but all other sections were either very shallow or badly reeded. More about that later, so I will start with some details about the canal's history. These are my words and might be not be totally correct.

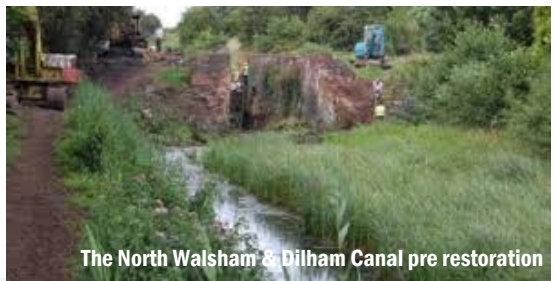
This canal is the only one in Norfolk with locks built purposely to allow sailing Wherries to trade from Yarmouth Port or other locations on the Broads up to Antingham near North Walsham. A bit like the Grantham it only passed close to the villages and town it was built for so staithes along the route enabled goods to be carted to and from the sources. It was opened in 1826. Following alongside the course of the river Ant. It is approx. 9 miles long with 6 locks approx. 14 ft wide and 60 ft long. All the bridges were brick arched with adequate height for wherries, with their masts down. The main cargo being, bone and flint, building products, sugar beet and other agricultural items. The Wherries were only sail powered and had to shoot the bridge holes with rapid up and down with the mast and sail so they could maintain steerage. They were built to carry about 20 ton. There were other river navigations with locks but all locks have been removed and replaced by weirs. Only one lock still in use is to connect Oulton Broad to a sea harbour.



The canal was reasonably profitable until like a lot of other canals, the railways appeared, trade declined and the owners closed it in 1934. Although they retained ownership all repairs and maintenance was stopped and allowed to deteriorate and the lock gates fell into the chambers which caused water levels to fall and reeds etc to fill the water channels. Various rescue attempts regarding restoration started in the 1970's but the owners would not contribute with help or finance. The East Anglia Waterway's Association volunteers were the first followed by Inland Waterway's Ass and Waterway's Recovery Group but the local volunteers couldn't sustain a working team so apart from reed removal and fallen trees very little was achieved. About year 2000 a new canal society had been formed, the North Walsham & Dilham CS. now a trust and together with the mentioned three major groups got restoration firmly under way. By this time parts of the canal had been sold off. It is now in the hands of four different owners.



Starting at Antingham, the Mill, canal basin and bed have all gone and returned to agricultural land, the two locks and canal up to Swafield is with one owner. The locks are derelict and bed dry but although that owner isn't interested in restoration, he does allow visits to the sites and tidying up of the lock chambers.



From Swafield Bridge to Ebridge Mill is owned by the Old Canal Co. They are very proactive with restoration and have rebuilt the lock chamber and re-gated Bacton Wood lock, part rebuilt the lock chamber and new top gates at Ebridge lock, collated a few spare second hand gates from CRT for the same lock, rebuilt the large spill-weir and de-silted the millpond and canal back to Bacton.



The NWDCS have now got two trip boats on that section and hold regular open days for visitors. The section above Bacton Wood either breached or was culverted off into the nearby sewage farm many years ago but the Environmental Agency have allowed test flooding of the short dry section, but the lock needs a small amount of work then that section back to Swafield can be de-silted and reopened.



From Ebridge to Honing lock, this is still owned by the original company. They are not keen on total restoration but have allowed the canal society volunteers access to remove vast amounts of vegetation and fallen trees, etc. A mill pond at Briggate was cleared and the lock made safe, a short arm and staithe at Honing was dug out and re-watered and Honing lock tidied up and made safe. At the present time they only allow limited clearance work. The final length down to the connection with the Norfolk Broads network at Wayford Bridge is the other private owner, he has rebuilt Tonnage Bridge and cleared some banks and canal bed and does allow small boats and canoes to navigate this section, small donations are requested. This water is semi tidal and therefore is at normal depth.

There were three small branches, one off the canal before Honing lock which went to East Rushton but was severed by the railway with a very low bridge, one above Honing lock which was very short, it could have been reduced when the railway came and the third up to Meeting Hill Hamlet, very little of this remains. The only bridge partially lowered is Royston Bridge to allow HGV's to pass to the Gas Terminal site at Bacton. This will require a rebuild if total restoration is successful. The whole canal is totally independent of the Broads Authority who erected a no entry sign at the entrance, which has now been removed.

There is no public right of way along the banks of the entire canal but the Old Canal Co. have made permissive rights of way along parts of the section they own and this continues. Four of the six locks can be viewed from roadside bridges or nearby public footpaths.



This is the last part of Polly's account of crossing the Wash in narrowboat Pipit ...

Once the water had receded far enough I decided to go for an explore on the sandbank, but not for long; a lot of it was like a quicksand and I felt my feet being sucked in, so after that I stayed on board and enjoyed the view and bacon sandwiches!



Seals

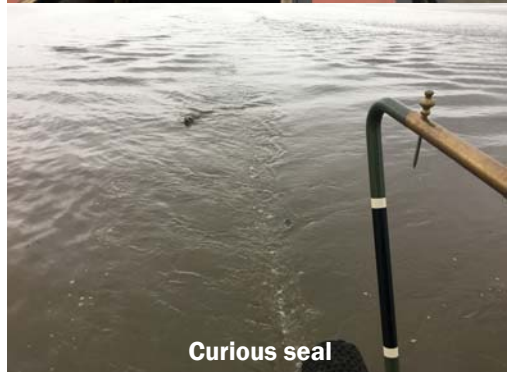
After an hour the tide had started to turn and it was time to set off. We started our engines and waited for the water to lift us off the sand, and then turned towards the estuary of the River Witham. One of the more inquisitive seals began to follow us, and I was delighted to get a photo of it; they look so appealing (although apparently they aren't if you get too close).



Afloat again

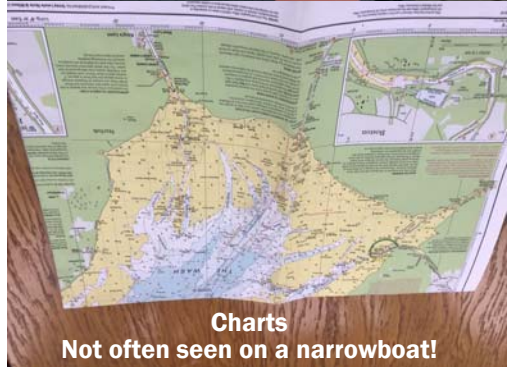
As we entered the estuary the steep sides of the river were just thick mud and it started to rain. We quickly could see Boston Stump in the distance and then the commercial ports of Boston, and finally Grand Sluice Lock which would take us up onto the non-tidal part of the river.

We safely locked through in the rain



Curious seal

and moored up on the Boston visitor moorings shortly before dusk. It was only after we had moored up that we learnt we had only got through the lock with minutes to spare, and if the water level had risen any higher we would have been stuck on the tidal waters for a further 4 hours. The water level had risen unexpectedly quickly due to weather and flooding and, as it turned out, we had to stay in Boston for the next week because of the high water levels on the River Witham.



Our thanks to Polly for sending Bridge her account of 'Crossing the Wash in her narrowboat'.

Hopefully it will inspire others to do the same, send me an article that is, not necessarily take their narrowboat to sea!

Ed

An eventful summer cruise

By Norman Woolley on his narrowboat "Bruin"



On Friday the 24th May 2019 I started my summer cruise on Bruin. However, before leaving my Marina on the River Wey Navigation in Surrey, I asked the Manager to fill Bruin with diesel. This turned out to be literally the case as, due to a hidden split in the fuel filler pipe, fuel was redirected into Bruin's bilges once the tank was full. This therefore had to be pumped out before starting my voyage, causing some degree of delay, but I managed to set out later the following day.

The destination for the first of the seven legs planned was as usual to Braunston. This time I had taken my car to Braunston Marina beforehand, ready to drive back home after my arrival. The first leg went according to plan. However the next leg, from Braunston to Warwick, was interrupted by a leak in the domestic water system. A hole had appeared in the accumulator which had to be fixed. I duly sorted that and continued on my way to moor Bruin on the Saltisford Arm in Warwick.

So far I was boating single handed, but leg three was with my long term boating friend to attend the Annual Russell Newbery Rally, held this year at Stratford on Avon. Following the most enjoyable Rally, we headed north on the South Stratford Canal to Lapworth, from where my friend returned home and later that day my younger brother joined me for the fourth leg, taking us through Birmingham, where we had a most interesting visit to the



South Stratford Canal Lock & Aqueduct

Black Country Museum at Dudley, to be highly recommended.

Leaving the Museum we worked down the Wolverhampton 21 locks onto the Staffs and Worcester Canal to Great Heywood, having a splendid, but challenging day's walk on scenic Cannock Chase, before mooring Bruin at Great Heywood Marina.



Aynho Weir Diamond Lock South Oxford Canal

The fifth leg was to be single handed back to Braunston. Whilst my repair to the accumulator in the domestic water system held good during the last two legs, on my return it developed another hole which took a full day to repair. I diverted to Penkridge to purchase a replacement accumulator. However fitting it had to await my return to base because of the limited area in which the new accumulator and water pump could be accommodated, entailing redesign of their configuration.



Guillotine Gated lock number 1 on North Stratford Canal at Kings Norton Junction



Kings Norton Junction at Lapworth

then navigate the Leicester Arm of the Grand Union Canal as far as Foxton Locks. Apart from a soaking in heavy rain at Watford Staircase Locks, it was a most enjoyable leg, before returning the following day to Braunston and commencing the final leg back to base, arriving at Pyrford Marina on the 2nd September.

It was fortunate that my second repair held good for the rest of my cruise, which took me up the just beyond Stone in Staffordshire to Barlaston, where the Wedgwood Factory and Museum is located. I returned at Braunston Marina at the end of that leg for dry docking to have the hull blacked. I returning on board to firstly get Bruin out of dry dock and

Hopefully these accounts will inspire you to send me your canal stories. This is what the canals are about. Whether you boat, walk or cycle them, they are part of our culture and by keeping notes and taking photos it may encourage others to venture further afield.

Wouldn't it be great to receive an account of a recent boat trip along the Grantham Canal from the River Trent into the heart of Grantham? Maybe one day!

Ed.

The Three Shires Trip Boat – March

Private cruise bookings for the 2020 season are beginning to roll in, with 4 bookings received in the past two weeks alone. There is plenty of availability right now, but with a packed programme of scheduled cruises, you might want to check out our availability at www.granthamcanal.org/availability if you are planning a private cruise.

Three Shires will be out on the water on 17th, 18th and 21st March as we train 15 new crew members. Good luck to all of them and let's hope they have some good weather!

We are now taking bookings for **'Cruise and Dine'** which will operate (numbers depending) 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.

Bookings are also open for **'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!



Don't forget that our new season starts on Mothering 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.

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

YOUR HELP PLEASE!

AS YOU WILL SEE FROM OUR DIARY ON PAGE 3 WE ARE PLANNING A MORE AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME FOR THIS YEAR THAN EVER BEFORE

WHY?

BECAUSE WE NEED TO CONSOLIDATE AND MAXIMISE OUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO EMBRACE THE WHOLE CANAL CORRIDOR IN OUR FUTURE PLANNING.

**TO DO THAT WE NEED TO RAISE MORE FUNDS
AND TO DO THAT WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS**

**WE CURRENTLY NEED TO RECRUIT HELPERS AT OUR DEPOT
OPEN DAYS.**

PLEASE CONTACT: communityandevents@granthamcanal.org

GCS Volunteer's visit to Belvoir Castle

We were fortunate to receive an invitation from the Duchy of Rutland to a behind the scenes tour of Belvoir Castle and 16 of us arrived up at the Castle on the morning of the 4th March.

We received a warm welcome from Roz Symonds along with a refreshing cup of tea or Coffee. We then spent several enjoyable hours looking all over the castle, visiting the State rooms, the art gallery with their famous full height portrait of Henry V111, some of the Chinese Bedrooms and more besides.

I sat in the chair where Winston Churchill first heard news of the abdications in 1936 and we visited several rooms where scenes from the 2nd and 3rd series of the Netflix Series 'The Crown' was filmed.



Here we are in the guard room at the Castle

As well as 'upstairs' we also visited the 'downstairs' areas including the beer cellars and we saw the tramway carriages which used to run from the Castle to The Dukes Wharf down on the Grantham Canal in the Vale of Belvoir. This was a horse drawn tramway used to supply the Castle with coal and foodstuffs, back in the day when the many household staff looked after numerous society guests visiting for grand weekends of entertainment.

Everybody had a very enjoyable visit and thanks to Mary Noble for coordinating the trip and of course to the Duke of Rutland, who is our Patron, along with his staff who made our day so magical. We also now know why the views from the castle were the inspiration for its name .



Look out for next month's edition of Bridge when we feature the Belvoir Castle rail track with full details and photos.



COMPUTER TECH TIPS

BY GILES



5G Mobile Network

There has been a bit of talk in the news about the deployment of the quicker 5G mobile network in the UK. EE have been the first to provide coverage with other carriers following suit. It will take a while for nationwide coverage to be put in place and 5G is only available in major city centres and some towns at present. You can go to the website of each mobile network provider to see details of which areas they currently provide 5G.

How fast is 5G?

While top speeds of over 1Gbps are quoted, in reality speeds are more consistently around the 200-400Mbps at present which is still comfortably faster than the average 4G speed, this should improve as coverage increases.

Does my phone support 5G?

Unless you've sought out a 5G capable smartphone then probably not. There's no 5G capable iPhone yet which is due later this year, there's a 5G capable Samsung Galaxy S10 which is currently the flagship model, others are available.

Are there any health risks with 5G?

There were initial concerns about potential health risks associated with 5G networks. While 5G will require a lot of new base stations, there are more transmitters and each one can run at lower power levels than previous 4G technology, which means that the level of radiation exposure from 5G antennas will be lower.

The UK government guidelines on mobile phone base stations says radio frequency fields at places normally accessible to the public are many times below guideline levels.

The WHO says electromagnetic frequency exposures below the limits recommended in the ICNIRP guidelines do not appear to have any known consequence on health. (source bbc.co.uk)

In broader terms the introduction of 5G provides the infrastructure to interconnect more smart devices and also provide a communication platform for driverless cars.

Full 5G network coverage in the UK is expected by 2022.



We announced in October that 'The Grantham Canal Society' were finalists in the Ringrose Law 'Grand Idea' project.

Thanks to the efforts of our supporters we were voted winners and have since purchased some of the safety equipment essential for our boating crews.



WE NEED A SHIPPING CONTAINER

The Grantham Canal Society are in the final stages of completing the reinstatement of Lock 14 at Woolsthorpe and are in the process of planning for the reinstatement of the final two Locks in the Woolsthorpe Flight Locks 13 & 12.



To enable this exercise to be completed on site we will be looking for a second hand shipping container to facilitate the storage of site equipment and material. If any of our valued members and volunteers can help with this request then please contact our General Manager Tony Osbond on Mob 07803973257 or email generalmanager@granthamcanal.org



#Trending



With Alec, from Friday's Workparty remarking they'd had their first sunny workday since last October, there's little doubt spring has sprung. Those with a few years under their belt, will know we could still get some snow, but signs of the new season's growth along the canal are plentiful.



Violets, Celandines, Primroses at ground level, with Blackthorn blossom, pussy willow and lamb's tails along the hedgerows to gladden the heart. Julie, Debbie and Dave, have all captured the season for us, with some fabulous photographs on our Facebook page.

I've asked our followers to listen out for the 'song' of the Chiffchaff – no reports yet along the canal corridor, of this true harbinger of spring in my book!

Our plea for shipping containers on our social media travelled far and wide – thank you for all the shares and retweets – alas, there came none. It was a big ask, I know. I'd so hoped to be able to demonstrate the usefulness of social media to our management team!

It feels like the calm before the storm, our events team and boat team, have been meeting throughout the winter months – Mother's Day bearing the first fruits of their labours on 22nd March.

If you go to the 'Boat Trips' page on our website, you'll find a link at the top, with dates of our scheduled 30min and 45min trips.

Tony Jackson

Duke of Edinburgh Award Students Daisy Elms and Abi Wake

attend Toot Hill School in Bingham & are currently undertaking a Bronze D of E award. To achieve the award students have to undertake voluntary work, demonstrate a skill, evidence an activity and undertake a two day trek and camp overnight unaided by adults in Derbyshire.

Daisy and Abi are friends who are completing their three month volunteering section of the award supporting the Grantham Canal Society by carrying out both rangers' duties and lock repair/restoration.



They began volunteering in January and are due to complete this part of the award in April 2020.

Their Ranger's duties, supervised by Daisy's granddad Steve Ball (a long term ranger), include collecting litter, spraying (highlighting) dog mess, handing out leaflets and engaging with people using the towpath on the 6 mile Plungar to Hose stretch of the canal. They also check mile stones and water levels for leaks.

Daisy and Abi have also supported the work parties at Locks 14 & 15 maintaining grassed areas, clearing paths of trees and shrubbery and laying woodchip under the supervision of Abi's granddad Tony Osbond, GCS General Manager.

The girls described their volunteering experience as **"a good thing to do, it helps animals, their habitat and the environment as well as clearing rubbish which improves the look of the path"**. Granddad agrees, especially considering the recent wet weather which hasn't deterred their volunteering efforts. We wish them well in the completion of their award and in their forthcoming studies.

Michelle Storer

Front cover picture



Photo taken by Deborah Spencer

JAMES FALCONBRIDGE

We have just moved from the Vale (which has been home for the last 24 years) to the Isles of Scilly off the south-west corner of Cornwall – quite a change of scene! I am hoping to continue writing pieces for Bridge from afar but if anybody has any observations or questions about wildlife along the Canal, do drop me an email and perhaps they could make a good piece! My email is

james.falconbridge@gmail.com

We have moved to take on the UK's most south-westerly (and perhaps tiniest) vineyard on land which used to be a flower farm for the Scilly flower trade which was an important source of income and continues today. This means we have daffodils popping up everywhere amongst the vines which led me to do a little more research into these flowers.

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:

Harby School, Raucey WI, B Inglis,
Mary Noble, Edwalton Gamston U3A
Magic cottage, Vida & Dick Smith
David Gale, Anthony Turner
Susan Miles