

BRIDGE



NOVEMBER

2020

The monthly newsletter
published by the

The
Grantham Canal
Society

CHARITY No: 507337



Our workboat, Centauri , originally built by Harland and Wolff in 1935, returns with a happy hand of tired volunteers after a full day's work on the canal.

Photo by Philip Wright



This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

The nights are closing in and the working day gets shorter as we near the year end. What a year it has been! Four months with no activity on the canal; almost twelve months without interfacing with our public; massive weed growth everywhere; and, new to us, weed causing havoc to many of our moving craft;

I don't know why we bother! - **Yes I do!**

In the same year we have received donations of £20k from our supporters; we have received permission to re-construct the **slipway** at Woolsthorpe; a new, to us, **weed-boat** arrived and has been working hard; new volunteers have joined the team bringing additional skills and expertise; **Lock 14 has been rebuilt** and is operable; skills training has been undertaken; detailed plans for modifications to **Denton weir** have been approved; now we have protocols in place which enable us to work during lock-down

I think that's a very good result for a voluntary organisation in a pretty difficult year.

There's much more to look forward to in 2021 when I hope we can also start work along the western length of the canal into Nottinghamshire.

If you live in Nottinghamshire and would like to get involved in canal restoration we would love to hear from you! Please become a member of the society as that boosts our numbers. If you wish why not become an active volunteer. The opportunities are varied so whether your interest is in ecology, restoration, people or publicity please contact us. Why not give us a call? You might just enjoy the outdoor life the waterway offers and the satisfaction of restoring the canal for the

next 200 years! It's much more fun than lock-down!

Please see the article on page 12 about the retirement of one of our longest serving members of the Society, Ian Wakefield, who has been actively involved in restoration for more than 40 years.

Mike Stone

Below: some neat workmanship at Lock 14



PLEASE NOTE

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of The Grantham Canal Society will take place on Tuesday 24th November. If you are a member and haven't received the email notice yet then please check your spam/junk email boxes.

If you wish clarification on any of the details then please email bridge@granthamcanal.org and your question will be forwarded to our Secretary.

A copy of our Annual Report and Accounts is available to view on our website.



Support the IWA & become a member

<https://www.waterways.org.uk/account/register/>



Kingston's Lock comes of age!



The lock is allowed to very gradually fill



View from downstream (above) and from upstream (below) with the completed byewash.

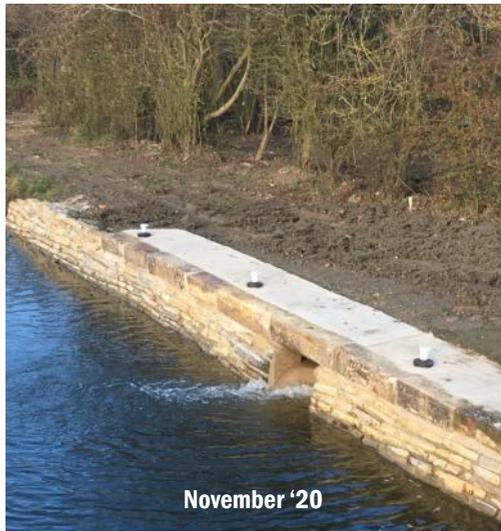
Photos courtesy of Bob Taylor, Martin Duignan, John Clark, Bob Terry & Dave Cross



The Bye-wash



November '20



November '20



Feb (pre Lockdown)



July '20



Nov '19



July '20

Building the bye-wash has been a significant task. A long length of pipework requiring inspection pits to be built along it's length had to be laid & lockdown to cope with in between!



The Friday Team: L-R: John Woodrow, Jim Freeman, Martin Duignan, Lou Catlin & John Nuttall

Landscaping & “miles” of fencing!



Training

The Grantham Canal Society now have four extra Lantra approved volunteers that can legally carry out maintenance chain sawing activities for the Society.

The course was run by the Folkingham and Loveden Rural Training based in Lincolnshire and was attended by Tony Reed, Kevin Weston, Philip Radford and Alec Hampson and was run over two days by Andrew Woodward. We now have 5 active volunteers with certification to use a chainsaws which will help in keeping the canal clear of fallen trees particularly over the winter months.



The GCS will be looking to run a Polesaw training course in the future but initially we will be looking to run first aid, angle grinder, abrasive wheel cutting and power tool courses which will be funded by the Lock 14/15 Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative project. Details and timing of these courses is currently underway with CRT

Refresher courses for Dumper and Excavator operators will be carried out during November at Lock 14 for those volunteers that went through the training at the start of Lock 15.



An earlier Dumper & Excavator course

The renewal of our volunteer tickets is instrumental to going forward as we look to start the Slipway project and moving on eventually with Locks 13 and 12.

Many thanks to Tony Osbond and Alec Hampson for the photos.

My diary from the Isles of Scilly by James Faulconbridge October 2020

The tourist season here tapers to a gentle end in autumn, but the announcement of Lockdown 2.0 meant that our visitors stopped arriving overnight. We were conducting self-guided and socially-distant tours and tastings through to the end of October but we 'reluctantly' finished the last of the 'tasting' bottles ourselves as the islands emptied of tourists once more.



With the visitor season over, and the wine for this harvest fermenting away, we're turning our attentions to the vineyard management. We've carefully removed the nets which protected the vines in autumn and let the birds back in to pick off the remainders – those grapes we've missed or were too small to be worth picking. We did feel bad about excluding them from such a feast, but our next job is more than making up for it! The traditional means of improving soil fertility here on the islands is with seaweed, and the storms which blew across at the end of October coinciding with the tail-end

of Hurricane Epsilon, washed up plenty of seaweed on the beach just over the dunes. This is being spread by barrow and fork along the rows and has several benefits: by mulching the surface, it helps control the vegetation growth beneath the vines without recourse to herbicides or mechanical cultivation. Like compost or manure, it adds organic matter which will break down into the soil over winter to provide better structure and stability; and with over 60 trace elements including potassium and magnesium it makes sure the vines have the nutrients they require. As well as suiting the vines, the birds love it - walking into a field will see flocks of starlings, blackbirds and thrushes picking through looking for critters.

Our next big task of the winter will be building the first of our shepherd's huts for vineyard stays, as well as renovating the shop and improving the landscaping ready for visitors next year. We are hoping to be installing solar panels in the next few months to make the vineyard energy supply as sustainable as possible.

We don't yet have a house here on the island and the winter will be spent in the yurt – it almost never drops to freezing here on Scilly but the temperature has certainly decreased in the last few weeks – we'll be very grateful to the log burner to keep us warm for the next few months!



www.stmartinsvineyard.co.uk

Mike Atherley



Mike recounts the flooding that occurred in the Winter of 1976

1976 turned out to be one of the driest summers on record and I had been struggling with the replacement diesel I had fitted the previous year so I was pleased the end of the boating season had arrived and I could put the boat to bed for the winter. I had mentioned that I had moved to the new Shardlow Marina and also sold my trailer so bringing the boat home was a thing of the past. No one knew or forecast how severe the winter was to turn out, we had a lot of snow then on top of the spring melt a lot of rain. I had built a floating pontoon assuming that would cope with the river level fluctuations and Mel Crosby next door had constructed a fixed deck. Neither worked as my story unfolds. The levels rose more than usual and overtopped the banks around the edge, several boats floated onto the surrounding high ground but our two boats reached the height limit our pontoons could cope with, see pictures.

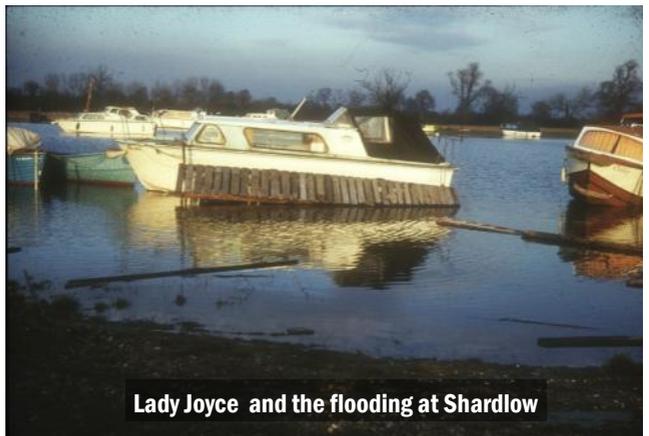


I received a phone message from the marina to say they had moved my boat to another temporary berth because the pontoon was in danger of collapse. A few days later a message informed me that the boat had broken free and floated down river, luckily it had caught on a tree and the marina team had managed to make it fast to the bank. It took some time before I could get anywhere near the boat to make a recovery, the normal entrance to the marina was via a track under the Cavendish Road bridge so access was quite difficult. A team of us managed to get access to the boat and climb aboard to check for any obvious damage None was found but the engine would not start so the dilemma was how do we drag it back to the marina. I heard what sounded like a commercial boat coming upstream presumably to the marina and as it came closer I shouted to ask if they could give us a tow. They did and although going was extremely slow we reached safe waters and cast us off to tie up to some secure mooring. I can't remember what happened to my floating berth but I don't think I went back to it. More on that later. Many boats had been lost, several had ended up high and dry on the bank top but others had gone down river and destroyed at Sawley weir so I suppose I was lucky.

Continued ...

Mike Atherley continues his story ...

I had a call from Mel Crosby to say he had found his boat had floated on top of his mooring and one scaffold pole had punched through the hull, he had managed to removed the outboard engine and as many other objects as possible but couldn't lift the boat off the pole so could my firm help.



Although we were electricians we had two scuba divers and most were used to boating. We took bilge pumps and tools and found the boat as Mel had described. So, after packing material around the pipe and hole we managed to pump most of the water out. The boat was then able to level up and rise but not high enough to float off the pipe. One diver kitted up and went overboard with a hacksaw and managed to saw through the pipe and the crew onboard pulled the stub out and packed the hole with a rug we found on board. The pumps kept the water ingress under control until we could bow haul the boat to a concrete slip way close by. We beached the boat and luckily the Dawncraft had twin keels so sat upright on the ground, the remaining water drained away when we pulled the boat further up the slip with a car. It was left there for the insurance company to inspect and a GRP specialist to make a successful repair.

Neither of us stayed on at Shardlow after this event; Mel moved to Sawley and then on to the Derby Motor Boat Club and I decided to sell up and finish with canal boat ownership. So I contacted Sawley Bridge Marina who sold my boat under brokerage. I received very little for it but it was enough to buy a second hand caravan and an inflatable which could be carried in the caravan! I managed to continue boating by sharing with the Crosby's and also Ken & Linda Brockway.

I did see my boat 'Lady Joyce' again during a trip on the Leeds and Liverpool but it was ashore in a marina and not looking too good. I have never been back to Shardlow so don't know how the marina eventually finished up.



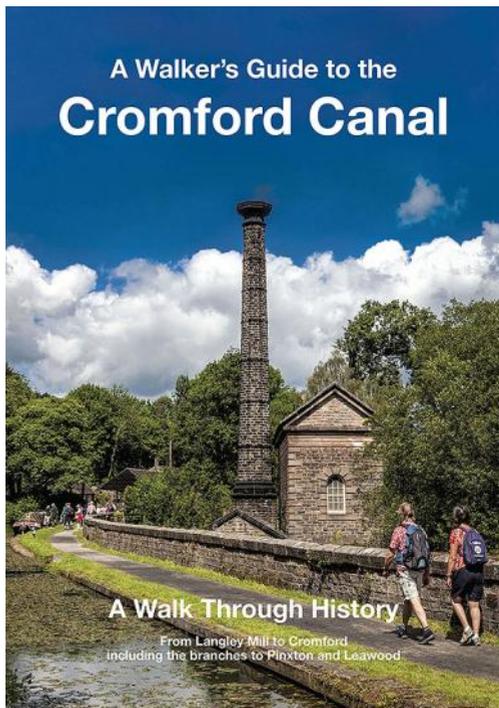
Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge



The Winter Cast

The Wind in the Willows sees the swallows rhapsodising about the 'call of the South' as they gather and make their preparations for the long autumn migration. Birds which hawked insects over the Grantham canal have already made it beyond southern Europe and are on their way across the African continent they will spend the winter. After all of their eulogising, Ratty asks the swallows why they ever come back: "What do you find to attract you in this poor drab little country?". The swallows reply "and do you think that the other call is not for us too?" With the largely insectivorous summer migrants departed, 'the other call' drawing birds to England is already being answered by many. Perhaps the most noticeable along the canal are the noisy fieldfares and redwings which clatter and chatter as they move in flocks along the hedgerows feeding on berries and seeds. Similarly some waterbirds such as wigeon are only here for the winter and you might be lucky enough to see a short-eared owl hunting at dusk.

Whilst swallows exit stage left whilst the fieldfares enter stage right, more subtle changes occur too as birds join the existing cast. Did you know that many of the mallards which winter in the UK are migrants from northern Europe and Iceland? The winter population of garden favourites such as robin and blackbird swell with incomers from cooler Scandinavia – the robin you hear singing along the towpath may have just made an extraordinary journey!



NEW WALKER'S GUIDE

A new edition of the FCC's perennially popular *A Walker's Guide to the Cromford Canal* has just been published. This third edition takes on a new form as 'A Walk Through History', guiding you not only along the route of the canal today, but showing you what it used to look like in the past.

There is a public footpath along most of its route, but diversions are necessary in some places, and the footpaths are not always easy to follow. With this guide you can confidently trace the entire route of the canal from Langley Mill to Pinxton and Cromford.

Copies of the new 36-page guide are available at just £5 (post free) from the online shop at www.birdswood.org or by post from Friends of the Cromford Canal, 264 Bennett Street, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 4JA.

Here is a excerpt from the press release issued on 28th October 2020
by our press officer Michelle Storer pressofficer@granthamcanal.org
RESTORATION OF LOCK 14 ON THE GRANTHAM CANAL
COMPLETE

The restoration of a historic lock on the Grantham Canal is now complete and it has been filled with water.



Kingston's Lock, Lock 14, is made up of circa **35,000 bricks**, over **100 tonnes of concrete**, the gates which are made of Oak weigh over **2 tonnes each** and the lock itself is approximately 75 feet long, 15 feet wide and 18 feet deep so about **20,000 cubic feet** and holds about 150,000 gallons of water once full, half of which is lost each time the lock is used.

This work would not have been possible without an incredible team of volunteers none of whom are qualified brick layers. **Every day Monday to Friday** a team of between 3 and 4 volunteers have worked on the lock for 7 to 8 hours per day since August 2018, (with the exception of lockdown). Some volunteers have worked on more than one day a week. **GCS volunteer** builder hours have totalled over **2000 hours** this is not including input from the **Waterway Recovery Group** and other volunteer hours within the GCS which would considerably add to this figure so 'to achieve what they have is absolutely amazing, a massive effort of everyone involved and now we've seen the gates installed and the lock filled with water it's just incredible' said Mark Owen.

The locks project has also involved training volunteers in valuable conservation skills and laying the groundwork for the restoration of a further two locks (numbered 12 and 13).

Mike Stone Chairman of the GCS says ***"The rebuilt lock mirrors the original design of Jessop and particularly the method of transferring water through an unmanned lock. It is this heritage aspect that was of special significance to the Heritage Lottery Fund when supporting the project financially. GCS volunteers are now some of the most experienced volunteers in lock construction in the country. We must thank them all for the thousands of hours they have committed to the completion of this project. We look forward to carrying out similar restoration on the remaining two locks, 13 & 12 if we can obtain the necessary financial support"***.

In addition to the funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund an additional £110,000+ has been raised by the Grantham Canal Society with the support of members and local communities. The project has also received support from WREN, Donald Forrester Trust, the family of Alan Applewhite, and Michael Worth on behalf of the Waynflete Charitable Trust."



Kingston's Lock photographed by Bob Terry

Ian Wakefield

Ian has decided to retire for the Committee of the Grantham Canal Society after a voluntary career of at least 40 years devoted to restoring the Grantham Canal.

I have known Ian since I joined the society 14 years ago. However Ian has been active in protecting and then restoring the canal for more than any existing active members. As soon as you talk to him, well listen actually, he will tell you that, with others, he removed a railway embankment at Woolsthorpe in 1992; in 1995 persuaded Lincolnshire County Council with others to build Casthorpe Road Bridge No 64 as a high level bridge He's helped to rebuilt locks (16, 17 & 18), removed trees and branches, repaired engines, boats and other things; helped to rebuild two locks (14 & 15), fell in (to the canal), got wet (often), fell out (with British Waterways); loved working quietly; expert at rescuing sinken vellels; hated management; knows more about our canal than almost anyone else ... and has a very understanding wife!



Would the current position of the canal been achieved without him? A resounding NO!

We will be less strong without him ... but we know where he lives and I know that I can go to him for help if I need it.

**Enjoy your retirement Ian
with our blessing and our
thanks for all you have
done.**

Mike Stone



Wet & Grumpy!



One of his best photos!

#Trending

By *Tony Jackson*

 @granthamcanalsociety
 @granthamcanal

A picture of the lock keeper's cottage beside Lock 13 on Facebook, prompted Sue to get in touch. Sue's mother was born in the cottage.

This family picture was taken at the lock house circa 1937. It shows Sue's granddad, Jack Topps, who was the lock keeper, with her gran, Margaret Topps and mum, then aged about 4, Isobel (Bunty) Heppenstall (nee Topps).



I don't suppose there was a lot of work for a lock keeper by this time, with the canal now closed!

We're pleased to say the cottage is presently undergoing restoration.



Twitter follower Estelle, was up early, sending us this fabulous picture of the sun rising over Denton Reservoir.

While some content may be shared between our Facebook and Twitter pages, they do have lives of their own. Our Facebook followers are the most interactive – thank you to them for making the page so interesting, with some beautiful photographs of the canal through the seasons.

Remedial work on Lock 17

The work we did on the top gates came about because after boat movement through the lock the top gates were leaking so badly that the Three Shires Pound drained of water leaving Three Shires grounded and aquatic life dying. This was complicated by the proliferation of 'Nuttals Pondweed' which has plagued the canal since the first lockdown.

It was clear that the towpath side top gate had dropped thus widening the mitre gap at the bottom where the gates meet.

In an effort to regularise this situation a task force was assembled firstly to clear the Nuttals weed from the gates and in two days our trusted and amazing volunteers cleared hundreds of barrow loads of this weed not only from the gates but all the way up to the bottom gates of Lock 18.

To pull the gate back into the quoin the metal wedges were eventually released (they were welded together to prevent vandalism) and realigned and the gate pulled back into position.

Must thank John Robinson who led the realignment of the metal work and volunteers Colin Ansell, Phil Wright, Jack Christen, David Briggs, Kevin Weston and myself helping out.

The result was not a complete success we have since done some similar work on Lock 17 bottom gate offside with a similar problem.



We have taken professional advice from Nigel Lord who used to run Hargreaves the Lock Gate Manufacturers & who supplied the gates to 17 and 18 and we are putting plans in place after his site visit to carry out more intrusive repairs to both sets of gates at 17.

Tony Osbond - General manager

LOCK 14 from overhead



The rural aspect surrounding the lock. Lock 13 is only a few yards away on the bend by the lock cottage which is being refurbished.

This Drone photo is just one of the many taken during the rebuilding work by

SEA LANE MEDIA LTD
"Aerial Photography and Videography"

info@sealanemedia.co.uk
Sea Lane Media



Our Rangers for Section 3a, Doug and Liz (Cotgrave Country Park) getting down to a spot of milepost painting, five miles from the Trent. The five and a half milepost had been given a fresh coat of white paint previously by our Ranger for Section 3a, Sandra. She'll be back soon to complete the black bits. Many thanks to you all for your dedication.

Head Ranger Rob

TRAINING ON 'OTTER'

Photos by Bob Siddall

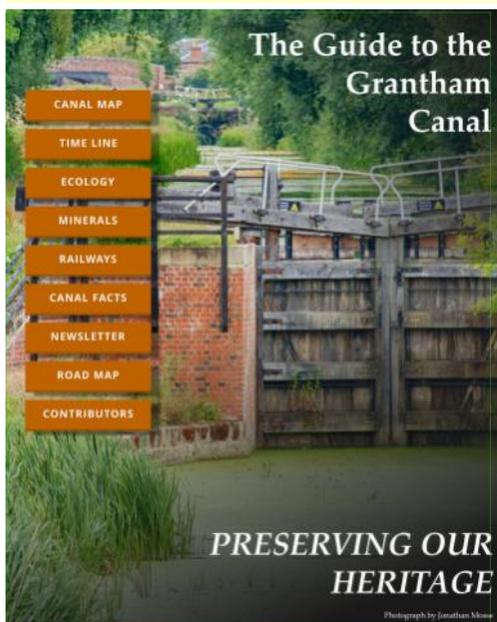


This is our new on-line guide to the Grantham Canal.

You can search the guide for details about the canal together with interactive maps which, when clicked, enable both past & present photos to be viewed.

Give it a try:

<http://www.gcsguide.org>



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

F Fitzpatrick, Margaret Leighton, Richard Wright, John Dodwell, Tony Binch, Tony Osbond, Alec & Lisa Hampson, Jeremy Lee, Mary Noble, John Sentence, Jo & Tim Altham, John Clark, Martin Duignan