

BRIDGE



MAY

2021

The monthly newsletter
published by the

The
Grantham Canal
Society

CHARITY No: 507337



Stunning aerial photography which complimented our volunteers work at both locks 14 & 15

Our grateful thanks to

SEA LANE MEDIA LTD

for doing a splendid job.

» Aerial Photography and Videography «

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This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

At long last life is returning to something like reality. Regretfully I doubt things will ever be the same as they were in 2019 but they will be much better than the past twelve months. The Society has several 'fronts' to address of which the most important is our finances. Despite the generosity of our supporters we have had a year or more with a much reduced income. We couldn't offer boat trips; serve our most excellent cakes and tea at depot open days; hold our annual Discovery Day; meet you face-to-face or 'show off' the restoration progress we were making. I hope we can during the coming months.

You may have seen that boat trips have already started and, thanks to our regularly working parties, we can now offer the opportunity for family groups to enjoy longer cruises. Why not bring a picnic and make it a family day out on the water?

Those walking or cycling the towpath will have seen that the first steps have been taken to re-construct the slipway at Woolsthorpe Depot. Work will also be starting at several sites where the GCS teams will repair culverts (water tunnels under the canal) and leaks in the canal. This work is part of a move to improve water levels along the canal.

In the recent past the restoration of Lock 14 has been completed. That was a very substantial project for the GCS volunteers supported by the CRT professional team that constructed and fitted the new lock gates. We thank Canal & River Trust, Heritage England and many others for their financial support for this project and most of the towpath in that area has been reopened. The site at Lock 15 has been landscaped and re-seeded and hopefully the recent rain will result in an attractive environment this summer. Later we hope to arrange the formal unveiling of the Bench and walls of named bricks.

Once again restoration progress is underway and, as always there is an opportunity for you to be part of it. There will, we hope, be activity in the east based on Woolsthorpe or in the west in Rushcliffe. If you feel you can help restore the Grantham Canal by active volunteering or fund raising please talk to us. The more help we receive the quicker the improvements along the whole of the canal.

Enjoy the sunshine!

Mike Stone.



Support the IWA & become a member

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



CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Its been a busy period for the Society over the last month. Maintenance activities at the Woolsthorpe Depot have been full on with the maintenance boats getting through a lot of work clearing trees on the Summit Pound.

A major clearance of the top storage area known as Aladdins Cave has been carried out and an organised fenced off area has been constructed containing GCS property. Storage containers have been cleared out and surplus equipment sold and scrap metal weighed in for valuable GCS funds.



We said a fond farewell to "Duncan" the yellow digger that resided next to Corvus belonging to Colin Bryan and Ian Wakefield. Members of the Melton and Oakham Canal Society are now the new owners as well as two dilapidated Dumpers that resided in the darkest undergrowth. More funds into GCS coffers.



The Saturday work party had five weeks of successful tree clearing from the canal between Mackley's Bridge 25 and Spencer's 24 in the Kinoulton/Owthorpe region of the canal. Work from Spencer's to Colston Lane Bridge 23 will start again in the Autumn after the Bird Nesting season

GCS are an approved contractor with CRT and as part of that remit have been appointed to carry out repairs to culvert leaks on the canal. Culvert 39 just upstream from Irish Jacks Bridge 27 and Culvert 42 upstream from Wildes Bridge 26 are the first to be carried out, CRT will be organising plant and materials with GCS providing labour from their skilled construction volunteers.

Our Expression of Interest for the repairs to Locks 13 and 12 was submitted to Heritage Lottery and after a debrief with the Lottery we need to provide further information to enable us to proceed to the first of two major submissions to eventually secure funding. The Evaluation process that has just started on our experiences from Locks 15 and 14 will play a big part in this process so capturing all the good things that we achieved is very important for future submissions.

We have taken over the responsibility of the compound at Lock 14 in preparation for the work on Lock 13. Timing of this is uncertain at the moment as there is a lot of work to complete behind the scenes to achieve satisfactory funding.

Tony Osbond - General Manager

Bryan Palmer

Bryan Harper Palmer, born on the 21st September 1930, died on 18th January 2021

Largely due to his father being in the Navy, Bryan spent most of his childhood in a variety of south coast towns between Southampton and Portland. He was awarded a scholarship from Dorchester Grammar School to attend Bristol University (1950-1953) where he graduated with a B.Sc. (Hons) in Zoology. He married in 1956, just prior to moving to Nottingham, where he had secured an appointment as a scientist within the Research Department of Boots. During his 32 years with Boots, he worked on a variety of medical and veterinary research projects.



Following his retirement, he anticipated a quiet and uneventful existence. He was introduced to the waterways by his youngest daughter, Linda, and it was not long before Bryan became fascinated with the history and restoration of canals.

Using his research skills, together with his talents in graphic design and technical drawing, he became an indispensable 'backroom boy' to the Grantham Navigation Association and worked tirelessly preparing presentations, creating maps and establishing policy for the furtherance of the Grantham Canal

During the early 1990s Bryan and Linda worked closely with David Lyneham-Brown on a project to restore 2.3 miles of canal from Hickling towards Hose. A Derelict Land Grant enabled the section to be fully dredged and 3 new steel swing bridges installed replacing the previously lowered brick built bridges. The project was completed in 1994.



One of Bryan's display boards

Wildflowers



It's that time of year when the towpath comes to life with wildflowers – the early spring species are just about hanging in there but the first flush of early summer flowers are joining them too. Lots of people have been sharing photographs and comments on the wildflowers along the canal on social media and I thought it would be useful to share some ways you can learn more and ID that tricky species!

WildflowerHour was started in 2015 as a Twitter event – each Sunday night between 8-9pm people were invited to share photographs of flowers using the hashtag as a way to spread a little joy and positivity and help people learn and identify new species. It has developed across different platforms now and has gathered momentum with ID sheets, tips and special activities and guides for kids with Herbology Hunt.

This movement, now working closely with the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) does a great job of bringing botanists and experts together with anybody and everybody who has an interest in wildflowers, from a casual 'I wonder what that is' through to those who actively want to learn more and develop their knowledge. You can find out lots more on the BSBI website here about how to get involved or have a look at what others have seen in your area at www.bsbi.org/wildflower-hour

I should give a mention also to Plantlife's campaign – NoMowMay which encourages people to leave their lawns unmown for a month to allow the flowers to grow and support pollinators such as bees, hoverflies and butterflies. The concept is pretty much self-explanatory in the name but with social media, there's an opportunity to share experiences and discoveries with others. Take a look at their website for more info and ideas at www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/discover-wild-plants-nature/no-mow-may.

Hedgehog Welfare

There are a lot of hedgehogs thin and dehydrated. Please leave out a large plant pot saucer of water and also a few chicken based dried cat biscuits scattered on your grass or patio.

This could save a hedgehog's life after the long dry spell.



Benches along the canal, previously organised by Chris Cobb, are now being fitted with QR code labels which, when scanned, will direct you to the section in our GCSGUIDE which gives details of the donors.

DUNCAN - THE DIGGER

On April 20th I waved goodbye to Duncan the digger, who's been with the GCS since 1990.

He's recently been standing idle at the depot, but was used extensively in the 90s - inc digging out lock 18 byewash plus many other projects along the way.

End of an era for us, but going to a good home with Melton and Oakham Waterway Society, for a refurb, and on to a new adventure or two no doubt.

Good Bye Duncan, and thanks.

Colin Bryan





Centauri towing an ivy covered tree trunk to be cut up



Otter on rubbish collection duties

THE WAY IT WAS THEN...

by Mike Atherley

In these series of photos one shows the old Grantham Wharf Building, one at the Stathern Rally, two of our early attempts at restoration and four showing the work at the Nottm. Canal Street Museum.

This photo shows the old warehouse at the Grantham Wharf either being demolished in 1929.



This was my brother in laws boat giving trips between Harby and Stathern Bridge at the 1972 Stathern Rally. We fitted out a fibreglass roof mould with seats to tow behind the boat, this enabled us to carry even more passengers.

This shows us trying to refit the top gates we had recovered from the canal bed at Lock 9 using a Smalley crane on trial together with a normal Smalley. The idea being to re-flood that section with water being pumped from the nearby Gypsum mine. Unfortunately vandals set fire to the gates shortly after and BWB demolished the remains.



Photo four. This was one of the first attempts of the canal societies work party, poss 1971, after excavating the culvert at Fishpond Cottages the team cast a concrete layer over the brickwork with the hope of a permanent seal but it never did and this culvert still leaks today.



THE WAY IT WAS THEN... (continued)

by Mike Atherley

We were asked to help with the silt clearance in the arm leading into the Fellows, Morton and Clayton wharf building at the proposed Canal Street Museum. Les Read had made us some dragline buckets and we tried to haul out the mud using ropes and timber panels but that failed and John Bayliss eventually brought his excavator from Langley Mill which did the job.



This shows the opening ceremony after all the work was completed, unfortunately the whole project was eventually closed by the city council.

My diary from the Isles of Scilly by James Faulconbridge

April 2021

Scilly has seen a change of pace in April, along I suspect with the rest of the country! The easing of COVID restrictions has meant that holidays in self-catering accommodation have been permitted for the last three weeks so our little island of 120 has seen new faces around the sandy tracks after a long winter! It's been lovely to see people enjoying a little space and freedom after a long winter lockdown and the weather has behaved beautifully so far.

We've been opening a few afternoons a week now for self-guided tours of the vineyard and a tasting flight of wine at the end. This must be one of the lowest food miles you could imagine – the grapes are harvested in the little fields which back onto the winery, processed in the winery and emerge from the barn doors only when somebody comes along for a tasting or wants to buy a bottle! From grape to glass can never be more than around 250m!



The vines themselves are beginning to burst into bud across the vineyard too. We have three polytunnels and these are unsurprisingly leading the way, but the outdoor vines too are beginning to show leaves. Vines are unusual in that the flower buds appear alongside the leaves at bud burst and develop over the next few weeks. We have had a stormy day or two this week which isn't ideal timings – 60mph winds and salt spray can cause havoc for the tender leaves but we'll need to wait a week or two to assess if there's been much damage.

Like much of the rest of the country, we've had an incredibly dry spring which doesn't seem to have set the vines back fortunately – with their deep roots they are able to continue to access water. However the soils around the visitor centre and shop here on the vineyard are very sandy, being set back just 50m from the dunes, which means that the grassland and wildflowers around the tasting benches, usually a lush green, are looking a distinctly August-shade of brown right now. Hopefully the rain will come soon and everything will have a chance to catch up.

Our main ongoing project is now finalising the shepherds hut – water and electric are ready, the structure is complete and we're on the last leg now, the internal fit-out! Our first guests (coincidentally from the Vale) will be arriving in just a month's time!





The Friday team present Mark Owen with a leaving gift

Crowd funding for a GCS vehicle

In March 2021 we started an appeal for support towards a much needed GCS vehicle. Our work parties and operations team leaders have emphasised the importance of a GCS vehicle to transport equipment and tools along the canal.

Some of the benefits of having our own van are as follows:-

We will have a visible presence along the canal –with a van with GCS logo

We will be able to transport larger tools and equipment to enable us to carry out our maintenance

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our supporters, since we started the GCS GOFUNDME van fundraiser we have had over £3000 in donations either via the GOFUNDME page on Facebook or as direct donations from supporters towards our van –Thank you so much to all that have contributed so far.

We plan continue with the fundraising so if you have not donated and you would like to please go to our website www.granthamcanal.org and follow the link to the Van fundraiser or make a direct donation via the website

We can't wait to update you with a picture of our actual van



Example of what we would like to purchase with your support.

With a tail lift and a towbar we can get our large pieces of equipment to a far wider radius in a quicker time than lugging them along the towpath in a wheelbarrow!

THE SLIPWAY

Preparatory work starts



The adjacent 'Heritage' wall to be dismantled and rebuilt



Brick cleaning again!

#Trending

By *Tony Jackson*



Post Lockdown smiles all around on our Facebook page recently. Esther, aged two brought her grandma Julie along for a boat ride. Mum Suze taking the picture, says they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves!



Shielding for most of last year, this boat ride was a particular joy for 12 year old Edward! Others making up this smily picture are two year old Abigail, dad Jude and mum Hilary, who tells us they 'had SUCH a super time'. There wasn't room in the picture for grandparents Alison and Jim, but I'm sure they were smiling too!



Posting your smiley pictures on our social media is optional of course – but we do love to see them! We hope to run smiley trips every Sunday throughout the summer. Check out the boat trip page on our website for updates – information is likely to change as Lockdown rules evolve.

Smile about this too: the Grantham Canal towpath remains a popular choice in raising funds for good causes.



Give as you Live®
Online

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN "GIVE AS YOU LIVE" AND DONATE TO THE GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY BY DOING... NOTHING MUCH? YOU SIMPLY BUY YOUR GOODS THROUGH THE GIVE AS YOU LIVE WEBSITE OR APP AND SIT BACK AND LET GOOD THINGS HAPPEN! SO FAR, OVER £12,000 HAS BEEN RAISED THIS WAY FOR THE GCS - WOW!



ANOTHER WAY TO HELP IS BY USING AMAZON'S SMILE OPTION: SHOP AT SMILE.AMAZON.CO.UK AND AMAZON WILL DONATE 0.5% OF THE PRICE OF ELIGIBLE PURCHASES TO YOUR FAVOURITE CHARITABLE ORGANISATION, AT NO COST TO YOU.

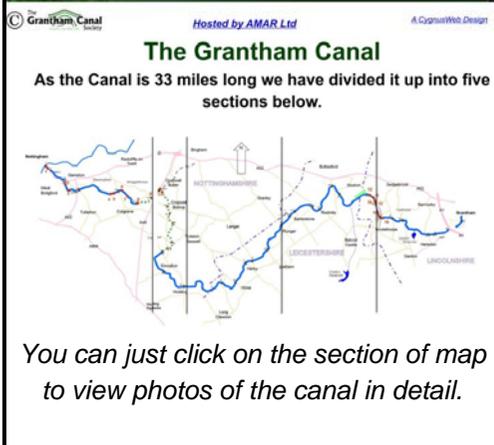
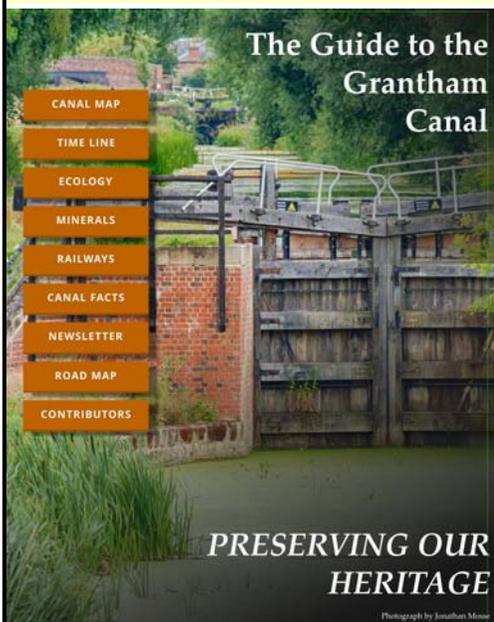
WITH CHRISTMAS SHOPPING ON THE HORIZON, PERHAPS GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY COULD BENEFIT A LITTLE TOO...

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR DIFFICULTIES, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH

This is our 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: <https://gcsguide.org>





Two ladies enjoying the commemorative seat at Lock 15

This lock should be called 'Bottom of Half Mile Pond Lock'

and not 'Woolsthorpe Middle Lock'

Aren't names also canal 'HERITAGE'?

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY?

Our membership is growing so why not join us and help make a difference to our canal and preserve our HERITAGE

It doesn't matter if you live miles away or don't wish to actively volunteer - you will be supporting our efforts

THE COST IS MODEST!

The annual subscription rates are as follows:

- Single Adult:£20
- Family:£30
- Under 18/Over 60: ..£15



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

- Anne Trevorrow, Geoff & Janet Newbatt, Margaret Leighton, Jan Hortor, Valerie Linday, Susan Pulley, Michael and Linda Harvey, Jan Wiczowski, John Dodwell, Anonymous, Jane Grylls, Mary Noble, Tony Binch, Tony Osbond, Patricia Pedlar, Carol Grabham, Sue Stone, Gary Watmore, Melton & Oakham Waterway Society, John Leach, Brian Rogers, Jeremy Lee, John Buggy, Carol Savage, Derek & Carol Ritchie, Anthony Warman, Anne Earl