

# BRIDGE



JUNE

2021

The monthly newsletter  
published by the

The  
**Grantham Canal**  
Society

CHARITY No: 507337



Otter hard at work -- photographed by Colin Bryan

ONLINE  
COPY  
ONLY



## This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

The Society is now actively planning for the forthcoming winter. "What about summer?" I can hear you thinking. Well as you know the spring and summer are times when nature renews itself and priority is given to insects, birds and small mammals to raise their families in a relatively calm environment. When autumn arrives our volunteers can get to grips with the heavy work which would otherwise disturb our nesting friends and others. In summer even our equipment can be commandeered by birds who build nests in locations that appear strange to us. Several items have been chosen this year!

**So what is planned to happen from August onwards?** Many of you will have noticed some preparatory work has begun at Woolsthorpe Depot for the construction of the barge slipway. **The contributions received from our many supporters for this work have ensured that it is now fully funded and completion is planned for early spring next year.** Volunteers are planning to undertake repairs to a number of culverts and other places with leaks along the canal. This work may commence before the autumn if site conditions permit and we receive final approval to the Canal & River Trust plans. To help us get tools and equipment to the various locations we are still trying to locate a suitable vehicle that we can afford. **We thank those who have contributed to the 'Van Fund' but if you haven't yet donated then now would be a good time for us please.**

The work to improve the canal heading west from Kinoulton by removing self-set trees and shrubs which commenced before the start of the nesting season, will recommence in September. **New activity will be started on the two miles of canal through the Cotgrave Country Park if we can encourage some new volunteers to join the Society.** **We are currently looking to develop a depot in the Rushcliffe area from which newly recruited volunteers can operate. For those living in or near Nottingham now is your chance to assist.**

Of course work will continue along the navigable lengths from Woolsthorpe to Grantham where we have yet to restore the canal to the condition it was prior to the country Covid lock-downs. Also we plan to undertake work on the weir at Denton to minimise the volume of water that is currently wasted over it.

Spring 2022 will see work undertaken on the three restored locks at the top of the Woolsthorpe flight which are showing their age as two of them were originally restored thirty years ago. Looking further ahead we are planning the detailed restoration of Lock 13 our next major project. We need to undertake surveys to establish the strength of the current structure before determining how radical restoration will be. After that lock is completed there remains only Lock 12 of the Woolsthorpe flight which we expect to be a complete rebuild as were Locks 15 and 14.

**Volunteers with surveying or construction experience would be most welcome during the planning process of these tasks.**

If you enjoy the benefits offered by the 30 miles of the Grantham Canal please consider giving us some practical support either by spending time as a volunteer or contributing to our restoration funds. Full details of both opportunities are found elsewhere in this newsletter or on our website [www.granthamcanal.org](http://www.granthamcanal.org)

Thank you all for your continued support for our canal.

*Mike Stone.*



**Support the IWA & become a member**

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



## Ashley Mather appointed Company Secretary for the Grantham Canal Society



Following the sudden death of Gordon Wallis, I am delighted to welcome Ashley Mather as Company Secretary for the Society.

Ashley has previous experience of the role working within both the rail and water industries and writes;

“I retired last autumn as head of the Legal Department at a large water utility so have ‘watery credentials’. I also had my first post qualification role at the British Railways Board where I became very interested in our industrial heritage and archaeology. We used to meet friends from the North at a pub in Redmile, so that was my first exposure to the canal as a good meal was followed by a stroll, taking in the beauty of the area.”

I am sure that Ashley, who prefers to be called Ash, will add to the Society’s skills base in discussions with business and other stakeholders.

*Mike Skone.*

## 70 At Seventy

**WOW, as of the 18th May we have raised over £1500.00 for the Grantham Canal Water Restoration Group SLOW (Stop Losing Our Water) campaign in conjunction with the Grantham Canal Society.**

**A Big Thank You to everyone who has donated so far, everyone has been so generous.**



**As you may have read in Peter Cadwallader's article, the Parkside Fishing Club, based on the canal between Vimy Ridge and Owthorpe has had to stop fishing due to lack of water and its consequence, lack of fish !!! The Parkside Fishing Club have over the years done a great job in keeping that stretch of water and tow path in great condition, so they will be sadly missed, please keep the donations coming, the 70atseventy will be online until the 18th June.**

**[donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/70atseventy](https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/70atseventy)**

**By the time you read this, I will have completed the 70 miles on the 26th May,(weather permitting) by bike, around our wonderful countryside, although, at the time of going to press, on the 22nd May, the ride was still to be completed.**



**I would like to reiterate that all monies raised will be 'ring-fenced' for projects going towards stopping the leaks to our canal at Hickling, Kinoulton and Owthorpe.**

**Again many thanks to everyone who has donated, it's not too late if you have not and we can all look forward to seeing constant water levels to our canal and the return of our wildlife.**

**Again many thanks. Mike Hill**



# THE SLIPWAY

From early days to present - great progress so far



Photos by Colin Bryan & Jim Freeman

## Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge



### Dragonflies

June is a great month to spot dragonflies along the canal – there is little more impressive than watching them hawk an insect from the air or chase off a rival!

Dragonflies are intrinsically tied to aquatic habitats as the nymph stage requires water to develop and grow – although we naturally think of the 'adult' dragonfly as the truest form, they spend far more time as a nymph than as a fully bejewelled dragonfly!

The adult dragonflies lay their eggs after mating – some species lay these into plant matter such as stems or rotten wood; whilst others deposit them directly into the water. From the egg hatches the prolarva and this hunts and feeds underwater, gradually becoming larger and shedding old skins to grow and develop. The larval stage for some species lasts only a few months but species such as the golden-ringed dragonfly can take five years to fully develop!

When the time is right, the larvae head up to the surface and acclimatise, beginning to breathe air, before clambering out of the water onto emergent vegetation to undergo their final metamorphosis, leaving behind the cast of the larvae often clinging to the stem. The newly emerged dragonfly has to allow its wings to dry before it can take to the skies and this is a sensitive stage for them when they are vulnerable to predation. Once airborne they usually have a lifespan of around a week to feed, mate, lay eggs and begin the cycle all over again!

## Our very VERSATILE OTTER



**Rescuing Centauri's crew after the log incident**



**Collecting the log that brought Centauri to a halt**



**Photos by Phil Wright & Bob Terry**

**Keeping the canal clear of weed  
Doing a great job thanks to the volunteer operator  
and maintenance teams**



# It's amazing what plans were put forward in 2006 to connect the Grantham Canal to the River Trent

## Proposals of Havenwood Construction Ltd for GRANTHAM CANAL LINK to the RIVER TRENT



A Proposed link of the Grantham Canal from Tollerton Road to the River Trent at Pierrepont, Waterports Centre - enjoying the experience of an inclined plane and creating new and exciting opportunities for tourism, sports and all-family recreation

## GAMSTON to HOLME PIERREPONT ROUTE

JEFF MASON DESIGN ASSOCIATES

**The benefits of the Gamston to Holme Pierrepont route**

- Link connects at the navigable terminus at Tollerton Road—No dead-end branch
- The shortest possible length - Total length of the route = 1.3 miles  
Total length of the canal sections = 0.75 miles
- The least expensive route
- No loss of water to the canal
- No additional lifts other than the A52 crossing and no additional locks required - not affected by fluctuations of the river level
- Junction with the river is above Holme Lock where the river level is generally constant
- Offers the most practical engineering solution
- Encourages new and sustainable opportunities for Holme Pierrepont Watersports Centre, ie:
  - Regeneration of the buildings
  - Wide range of water activities
  - Additional outdoor sports & all-family recreation
- Extends existing activities, ie National Cycling Routes, bridle ways & footpaths
- The inclined plane will create an exciting tourist attraction



A link directly from the river to the western end of the regatta watercourse would create the opportunity for a deep marina for large river boats without the necessity of a bridge. A dam would extend across the width of the watercourse and the banks of the watercourse re-modelled to raise the water level to the height of the river and of Havenwood Lake. Only a relatively small section of the watercourse would be utilised for this purpose, the remainder retained as a rowing course.

The plan shows the alternative route of the link from the river. The marina in the lake will accommodate canal boats.

**The Professional Team**

Jeff Mason Design Associates—Architects & Designers specialising in inland waterways marinas and waterside developments together with hotels, restaurants, and indoor & outdoor leisure facilities.

Bennetts Associates—Civil Engineers specialising in bridge construction and inland waterways structures, eg the Falkirk Wheel.

Amber Boats—Steel boat manufacturers and engineers with knowledge of the design and development of the gondola.

*This leaflet is for the information of the members of the Grantham Canal Partnership and should be read in conjunction with the letter of 22 March 2006 to the Partnership.*

**The Route From Cotgrave**

Cotgrave Visitors Centre

A new visitors centre at the Country Park near Irons Lane accessed from the canal and road could provide a destination point for visitors and educational trip from Holme Pierrepont. The park would illustrate the history of the Grantham Canal and its relationship to the Vale of Belvoir.

A small basin for boats waiting the country park and visitors centre might be formed above the lock.

The 2 mile stretch of canal from Cotgrave to Tollerton Road—the future navigable terminus

The proposed junction of the canal with the link

A bridge will be constructed here where Basingfield Lane crosses over the new canal link

**The Grantham Boat Lift**

It is envisaged and proposed to divide the western end of the site incorporating a new marina and boating club with the Eastern end to connect with the watercourse. Much of the western bank has little fringe vegetation being a former mineral extraction site. The landscape will incorporate meadows and aquatic planting to increase the biodiversity and provide a safe habitat and breeding environment for aquatic insects and birds.

The crossing of the A52 will be achieved by the construction of an inclined plane. A Water filled gondola will lift the boats from the canal over the road to Havenwood Lake.

The boats will arrive a self-mounted gondola incorporating a diesel engine and wheel support system. A self sealing gate system similar to that of the Falkirk Wheel will be fitted at both ends of the gondola and will accommodate four full length narrow boats. The alignment of the rope will set the gondola on a level plane.

The above sketch and model illustrates the concept of the lift. A topographical survey and engineering assessment has already been made to prove the principle of the system.

A wing bridge could be constructed here at Adbinton Lane to facilitate river boats navigating up to the Western end of Havenwood Lake.

The River Trent where the canal link connection is proposed

The Gamston to Pierrepont route will help to create new and exciting opportunities for the waterports centre

## **Paddleboarding is coming to the Grantham Canal!**

**Emma Love of Wotbikini from Redmile will be bringing paddleboarding to the Grantham Canal from July 2021.**

**Emma is a British Canoeing qualified White Water Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Coach and Flat-Water SUP Instructor.**



### **Sessions**

**Start** – Introductory (7 yrs +)

**Discover** – Improving (7 yrs +)

**Explore** – Paddleboarding and awareness of the environment (14 yrs +)

**Social Paddle** - (14 yrs +)

**Meno-paddling** – for women

**Maximum of eight participants per session / minimum of two**

**Must be able to swim 25 meters**

**Delivery on stretch of water post Lock 18 Woolsthorpe by Belvoir (towards Denton)**

**START/DISCOVER/EXPLORE are British Canoeing accredited**

**In July**

**Delivery of sessions start 21<sup>st</sup> July Wed/Thurs/Sat/Sun Morning sessions (START/DISCOVER)**

**9.30am on the water x 2hrs**

**Women Only sessions Thursday/Friday evenings 6.30pm \*\***

**\*\* Meno-Paddling Sessions – For women going through the menopause.**

**For more information and to book please visit/contact**

**[www.wotbikinipaddleboarding.co.uk](http://www.wotbikinipaddleboarding.co.uk)**

**[enquiries@wotbikini.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wotbikini.co.uk)**

**When Booking please quote the following codes**

Grantham Canal Society Members get a **10% discount** with **WGCSB2021/MF** or any non-members who book Wotbikini will make a **10% donation** to GCS with **WGCSB2021/NM**



# Grantham Canal Walk - March to April 2021

In April 2020 I came out of retirement and returned to nursing to help with Covid. I worked long hours to support care homes and to establish the Covid vaccination programme for Nottinghamshire. Whilst tucked away my husband, Tony, walked the Grantham canal twice and each time he waxed lyrical about the beauty of the canal. He did out and back walks taking between 4-5 days to complete the 64 (32 each way) miles.

I set myself the target of walking the Grantham canal as soon as I retired again. On my first day back in retirement Tony and I set off to complete the 32 miles of the canal, out and back, over 5 days, during March and April 2021. Each week we completed a section of around 6 miles each way. It was stunning and was the perfect way to wind down from a stressful time. I reconnected with nature; the birds are delightful and sing to you on most of the sections, we loved seeing the swans building their nests and researched their habits; staying together as couple and working together for their family. It reminded me of how I couldn't have managed to work without the support and love of my family and Tony.

I was incredibly unfit when I started the walk. Whilst working long hours some weeks I didn't leave the house for days. Walking the canal was ideal as it's flat but interesting. By the fifth walk I could feel the enormous health benefits of walking, both physical and mental. We will repeat the walk once or twice a year and look to walk other canals as we have been so inspired by the walk. I urge everyone to go and enjoy the Grantham canal and as we open up from covid we can support the local cafes and pubs on route!

Our walks:

Lady Bay to A46 - A46 to Hickling - Hickling to 19.5m marker - 19.5m to Muston - Muston to Grantham  
Tracy



1. This is the start of our walk at Lady Bay, really apt as I'd just finished a role for the NHS as part of supporting the Covid response. I came out of retirement in April 2020 to help.



3. Self explanatory but one of three benches we enjoyed taking a break on! Lovely to see where you are and a great addition for 2021 and new walkers to the canal.



2. This is on the way to Cotgrave, we loved looking for the swans and especially watching them build their nests



4. This is coming up towards Kinoulton and shows the wonderful reflections and landscape so typical of the canal walk, fishermen pitches and workers clearing the weeds in anticipation of the fishing season restart

Continued...



5. This is bridge 36 with a very welcome bench! Lovely to watch the wildlife and appreciate the scenery with a coffee!



8. A lovely stop at the end of day four, close to Muston



6. This is a view of Long Clawson, we loved the glimpses of villages on the walk



9. Lovely Belvoir castle which you can follow as you walk with different angles. You can see it in most of the 6 mile sections



7. Tracking progress through the distance markers, some new and some old but helps motivate you!



10. It may look green but it's a welcome scene at the end of the 32 miles! Such a fantastic sense of achievement.

*Many thanks Tracy - a great inspiration to others*

*Ed*

# My diary from the Isles of Scilly by James Faulconbridge

## June 2021

It's felt like a surprisingly short winter here on St Martin's vineyard – we had so much planned for it that inevitably it would be over before half the jobs were done! With the rains which finally came in May, the vineyard has sprung to life and is filled with wildflowers including trefoils, clovers, hawkbits, daisies and more. We have flocks of starlings twice the size of the winter congregation as they all now have their young on the wing – a most welcome sight right now but the sound of their chatter will mean trouble at harvest time!



The vines in the polytunnels have reached the plastic with flowers open and ready to be wind-pollinated. The outdoor vines are in varying states of advancement depending on species but also on location – we had more 60mph gusts blowing through last month which – due especially to the salt from the sea – resulted in the leaves being burnt off the vines as well as apples, elms and more. Luckily it blew consistently from the west meaning that those vines located close to the hedges were untouched whilst those furthest from protection suffered most.

Our shepherds hut – the main winter project – is finally habitable and will hopefully have had the finishing touches completed in the next week or so. It has been an amazing learning curve, having never done anything like this before, and it's very exciting to have created a fully functional living space tucked in the corner of the vineyard. We hope to have guests throughout the season which will provide a vital financial buffer in years when the weather gets the better of the vines here!

The other noticeable change is the last month is the return of boats on the bay, whether these be fishing boats, local's run-arounds or yachts from the mainland. One of the smallest but most impressive are the gigs – each year the islands host the world Gig Racing Championships but this has been cancelled for the last two years due to

COVID. However the teams are back in the water in these special ocean-going rowing boats training for inter-island competitions. The islands used to be first port of call after a long Atlantic crossing for fresh supplies or repairs and a ship would pick up a pilot to guide them safely into the shelter of St. Mary's pool. When a ship signalled with a flag for a pilot, the gigs would race to get there first and claim the job – and the payment – the current sport derives from this tradition.





# THE WAY IT WAS

## By Mike Atherley



This month Mike reminisces on the early days of the Grantham Canal Restoration Society

In the early years we had little or no plant or equipment of our own or the money to rent for just weekend work. Therefore it was necessary to borrow or beg items from Waterways Recovery Group or hire companies.



These photos show a Smalley that I had brought down from a WRG site at Marple locks and a few of us at Cropwell Wharf . This was used for exploring the dry section around Cropwell so that re-watering could take place. We also managed to lift the lock gates into position with it.

We dug a shallow trench along the centre bed and then filled with water to test for section leaks. Most of the bed leaked so no progress was made until the Gypsum mine started pumping water into the canal bed between Cropwell bridge and lock 11. Chris Deucher was the driver and he also cleared the towpath and pedestrian entrance for the 1972 Stathern Rally.



The photo on the left is the Smalley that Colin and Ian bought for use when we removed the mineral railway embankment at Woolsthorpe. This machine did other work on the Canal for a short time. Early Smalley's were not much better than a back actor on a JCB, however they weren't as mobile. It went to pastures new recently.

The right hand photo shows one of the two small dumpers that we purchased from a scrapyards at Cropwell being taken away. Although they did sterling work the load capacity was small and they had no safety features. We had to cannibalise one for spares to keep the other operational.

## **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:

### **Making a visible presence along the canal** **Transporting tools and equipment**

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our supporters since we started the GCS GOFUNDME van fundraiser.

However we're not quite there yet so plan to continue with the fundraising. If you have not donated and you would like to please go to our website [www.granthamcanal.org](http://www.granthamcanal.org) and follow the link to the Van fundraiser or make a direct donation via our website

**Thank you so much to all that have contributed so far.**

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 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!

# #Trending

By *Tony Jackson*

 @granthamcanalsociety  
 @granthamcanal

Keeping a tally of those I get to hear about, the Grantham Canal towpath has been the vehicle for raising over £18,500 so far this year for good causes. Magnificent!

Just to avoid any confusion, although we are indeed a good cause, none of this ended up in our coffers.

Not so with Mike's 70@Seventy fundraiser. For a special 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday treat, Mike decided to cycle 70 miles to raise money specifically for the repair of leaks in the canal. I don't know if Mike used the towpath en-route, but we'll let him off if he didn't! Seventy miles is a good ride at any age! Mike raised a little over £2,000!



Oohs and ahas aplenty! We have babies! Thank you to all who've sent in your cute pictures of duckings, cygnets, goslings and chicks. Swans appear to have been particularly successful with their broods this year.



Photo by Julie Blyth





**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>

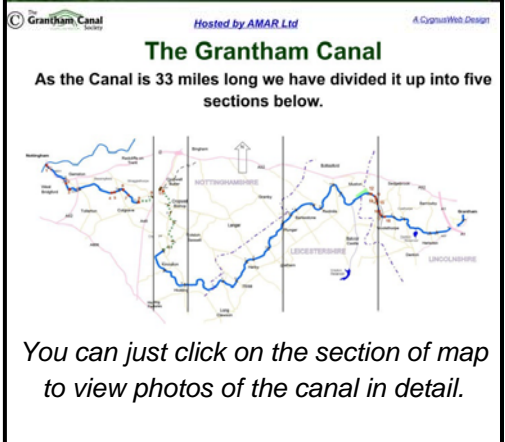
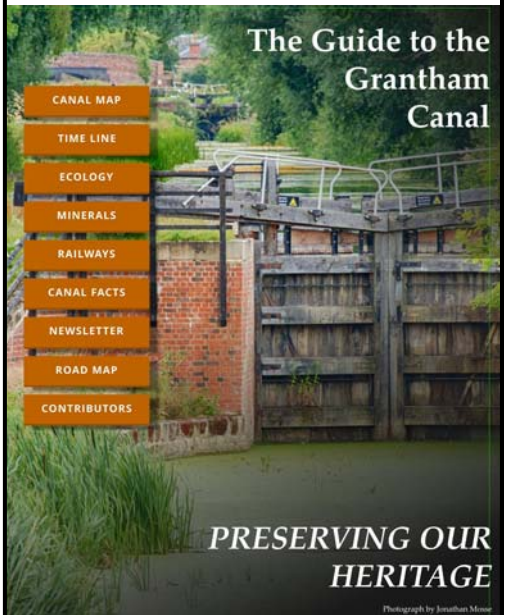




Photo by Kevin Weston

**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:**

- Jo & Tim Altham, John Sentence,  
D G Green, Jane Grylls, Margaret Leighton,  
John Clark, David Allsop, Terry Shaw,  
Pat Weston, John Dodwell, Tony Osbond,  
Hedley Davies, Paul Green, Tony Binch,  
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John Dodwell