

# BRIDGE



SEPTEMBER

2021

The monthly newsletter  
published by the

The  
**Grantham Canal**  
Society

CHARITY No: 507337



Family Fun Day at Duck Hall on 30th August 2021 raised a huge amount for the Society, our thanks to everyone who attended or volunteered.



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# Introduction

We would like to thank Steve Swann, who has done sterling work in editing Bridge for the last 8 years when he took over from Ian Wakefield and published the magazine as an A4 version, then updated and revised to produce the current A5 booklet. The Society is very grateful for all his hard work.

Following deep discussions, and given that our Social Media, both Facebook and Twitter, keep many of our supporters up to date on a daily basis, it has been decided that Bridge will be published quarterly for the immediate future, and to try and ensure that we catch all items and events that have taken place and will take place, the issues will be in February, May, August and November. We do of course reserve the option to change this back to monthly, particularly if one of our lovely volunteers steps forward to take over the editorship. Your feedback on both content and frequency would be welcomed, please email [bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org).

The Society has been busy over the summer catching up with works which had been postponed due to Covid 19, and planning works to take place during the next year.

This edition will include:

Chairman's Update - Mike Stone's summary of the past month

Long Term Plan - how we are planning progress towards the Trent link, and the works needed over the next 10 years

Workparty News - bringing everyone up to date on the maintenance works at the top of the canal, and the start of the restoration of the slipway, our progress on a new depot towards the western end of the canal, and recent workparties

Workparty proposals - where we expect workparties to be in the next month, and what they will be doing, weather and other conditions permitting

Three Shires update

Events and community news - last month and in the near future

Trending - Tony Jackson

Rangers in Action

Mike Atherley - The Way It Was

Volunteers information

We would like to thank ...

Caption and What is This competitions

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

Isn't it amazing that no sooner have pupils returned to school that the sun comes out from behind the clouds! You may be surprised to know that the Bird Nesting season has a similar effect on GCS Volunteers! They can work again!

The team of cake bakers were some of the first to appear baking for our event on Bank Holiday Monday – and what an excellent range of mouth-watering items they supplied! The muscular chaps began preparations for the construction of the restored slipway at the depot. That reconstruction will have started by the time you read this. The team that has been endeavouring to raise the profile of the GCS is the Three Shires Team which, despite the national growth of canal weed, has provided many with a chance to cruise on the Grantham Canal. Have you seen our very attractive GCS van yet? It supports our work parties when their tasks are located away from our depot.

If we look at matters more closely however, we see that the majority of visitors to the canal walk cycle or occasionally ride along the towpath, many starting their journey near West Bridgford. We know that lengths of the canal are not looking their best so this winter GCS volunteers will be enhancing several lengths of the canal particularly in Rushcliffe. Those of you who walk regularly will have already seen the benefits of work achieved recently in the Cotgrave Country Park. Other works are planned in the Hickling, Kinoulton and Cropwell Bishop areas where we will be supported by groups including the GCWRG. GCS teams will be concentrating on ecological and environmental work to maximise the benefit to the environment along the whole length of the waterway. We already enjoy active support on the canal in Lady Bay but if you want to get involved in your area please contact the GCS. Email [volunteer@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteer@granthamcanal.org) who would love to hear from you!

I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us on **18<sup>th</sup> September** to see the quality of work achieved when volunteers rebuild Lock 14. This is the culmination of a Project that was first started as an outline plan in 2009 by the Grantham Canal Partnership assisted by South

Kesteven District Council. Finance was to be provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund and British Waterways – later the Canal and River Trust – together with the Grantham Canal Society who were tasked with raising Matched Funding. Different local organisations contributed in differing ways to support a small army of volunteers (441) drawn mainly from the GCS and the Waterways Recovery Group, and supported by specialists in such disciplines as Archaeology and Bats. I know that the work has taken a long time but the contribution of the equivalent of 9,085 days of time has delivered results of the highest quality. My thanks to everyone who made it possible. I hope you can come to see the lock **between 11am and 3pm on the 18<sup>th</sup>**. Without your support we could never have completed the Project!

It is disappointing to report that the long time Editor of Bridge, Steve Swann, has decided to retire. He will be sadly missed and his contribution to the Society over many years has been huge not only in the production of Bridge but also in other areas of publication. We thank him for his help in developing the Society as a major restoration body.

I am delighted to record that Jane Grylls has volunteered to take on the role as editor of Bridge and I hope that you can give her your full support.



**Support the IWA & become a member**

[https://waterways.org.uk/  
support/ways-to-give/join](https://waterways.org.uk/support/ways-to-give/join)



# **The Grantham Canal Society Restoration Plan**

## **2021 to 2030**

As everyone who supports us knows, there is quite a way still to go before we can join our beautiful canal to the Trent, but we're getting there, and have proposals for the next 10 years which will involve works all along the canal, from the top pound near Grantham to the lower reaches near Lady Bay in Nottingham.

Firstly we have started reinstatement of the slipway at the Woolsthorpe Depot. This will permit us to get the working boats and the trip boat out of the water for maintenance, and allow other boats to access the canal.

The weir at Denton is to be raised, allowing a higher water level in the top pound of the canal, which will also give us more water storage for use in the top flight of locks, as we progress further down the canal.

We are in the process of developing a base near Cotgrave, which will allow volunteers to work more efficiently towards the lower end of the canal.

Enhancement of the canal between Cotgrave and Gamston is intended, alongside the volunteers at the Cotgrave Country Park.

An ongoing task is the stopping of leaks and repairing of culverts, removal of shrubs and self-set trees, and clearing the canal to enhance its amenity value.

Investigation of the dry section is planned to determine the cause and solutions available to us, and to take forward the re-watering of this section.

Restoration of the last two locks in the Woolsthorpe Flight is proposed to start as soon as funding has been secured, and then bridge reconstruction and canal maintenance along the 20 mile pound, so that that part of the canal can become navigable.

## Workparty News

Since the beginning of the year volunteers have put in nearly 8000 hours of work, some at the locks, some on maintenance works, some doing rangering, and some just working behind the scenes to keep the whole lot going.

Volunteers on Centauri have been working hard in August, fishing all sorts of items out of the canal using grappling hooks and manual labour. Work has taken place over the summer on litter removal, and although some was fished out during the month, it looks as if we may be on top of it for now.



Otter has been busy too, removing reedbergs and weed from the cut, both above lock 18 in the top pound and in the half mile pound between locks 15 and 16.



## Workparty News cont.

In the meantime other volunteers have been kept busy on routine maintenance of the workboats, grass cutting in the depot area and around the locks, and removal of signs at Lock 15. Mowing and strimming are a constant in summer, as anyone with a garden knows.



Inspection of the bridge over Denton Weir took place - this needs to be raised to allow raising of the weir, which in turn will permit the top pound to hold more water.

Quite a bit of maintenance work has been done on our new (or rather new to us) workparty van - thanks again to everyone who contributed towards it, it's already a great asset for all the workparties.



Work in the Cotgrave Country Park at Locks 7 and 6 started in August. The workparty began by clearing and grass cutting, to allow access to the damaged fence for repairs.

## Workparty News cont.

The new van was invaluable in carrying all the kit needed to do the works, even including a saw horse, wheeled strimmer, essential supplies .....



The workparty carried on with the cleaning and painting of metalwork on the lock gates.

And used the aluminium boat to remove branches, timber and surface weed from below the lock and under the bridge.



When we are bidding for grants, we need to be able to demonstrate our commitment and achievements. One way we can demonstrate this is to show how much time has been put into our various activities. This year we have started collecting and collating our Hours donated. If you are a volunteer and have been signing in to work parties, the hours have been captured from the signing in sheets. The Trip boat and Ranger's hours are also being captured. If you contribute hours in any way to the society and would like those to be counted please either send an email to [timesheets@granthamcanal.org](mailto:timesheets@granthamcanal.org) or give Rod Gordon a ring to discuss the easiest way for you to submit them.

## Workparty Proposals

Workparties usually take place on every Friday, Saturday and Monday, and now we can restart work in the dry section following the closure of the bird nesting season, expect to see us there.

All workparties are subject to change - the weather conditions on the day, the status of urgent works, and the number of volunteers present, can all affect what is intended, but we are expecting the following to take place during September:

Start of work on reconstruction of the Slipway at Woolsthorpe - all the deconstruction has been done, the heavy work will now begin.

Continuation of the weed clearance and removal of the objects which appear in the top pound, maintenance of the machinery in use, and works to keep the new locks' environs in good order.

## Three Shires

The GCS trip boat Three Shires has been working hard over the summer, doing short trips on Summer Sundays, as well as a large number of longer trips during both weekdays and weekends, this provides a large proportion of the income for the Society. The last short trip day will be on 26th September, places are going fast, please go to our website <http://www.granthamcanal.org/> and click on Boat Trips to book short or long trips.

While we are not currently putting on our Cruise & Dine trips, J-F and Lynne at the Dirty Duck would be happy to feed you before or after your cruise, check their website for bookings.

Keep an eye out on the GCS website for next year's offerings - although Three Shires only works to the end of October, we would expect to start operations in March next year, so may be able by then to reinstate the popular Cruise & Dine and Fishy Fridays trips.





## Events and Community engagement

Although Covid has dramatically reduced the amount of public interaction which has taken place this summer, the Events and the Community and Education Teams have been able to show the flag in various places.

The Red Gazebo has taken its place at the Dirty Duck when weather conditions allowed, getting our message out to walkers, runners and cyclists enjoying the towpath amenities, and attracting both donations, new members and merchandise sales. It also appeared alongside the workparty at Lock 7 in Cotgrave Country Park, manned by some stalwart volunteers.



Despite some slightly damp patches, our day at the Cotgrave Country Park Fun Day was also busy, with lots of interest from the passers-by, and a great deal of bridge building by the younger attendees, well done Brian.

By far the best day recently was the Fun Day held at Duck Hall, with thanks to our Landlords J-F and Lynne. This first open day event for nearly 2 years was extremely well supported and raised a massive sum, thanks to everyone who attended.



And further outings to the Woolsthorpe Fete and Kinoulton Big Night In have been enjoyed by both volunteers and visitors.

## Events and Community continued by Rosemary Gibson

The diary for 2020 was quite full and ended up with a lot of crossings out. I can't say I enjoy Zoom, but got used to meetings and attending talks on the laptop or phone and even took part in some bake offs and international play readings. I thought I ought to be able to give a talk myself if someone else would act as host and with a bit of guidance from Michelle I did manage to do a couple.

Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 2021 Vale of Belvoir Probus were hoping to receive a talk from David Lyneham-Brown and I stepped in on Zoom

June 17<sup>th</sup> 2021 Charnwood Museum asked for 'Food and Cooking in Prehistory' – one of my sidelines by Zoom

Both of the above brought in donations to the Canal Society

Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 It was such a treat to speak in person about the canal to Ropsley WI and they have asked me back for one of my sidelines as long as I dress up.

Happily the diary is filling up again.

Oct 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 Grantham Ladies' Probus

Nov 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 Hawtonville WI

Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 Leics Assciation of the National Trust: 'Boaters' Costume'  
2022

Jan 19<sup>th</sup> Harlaxton WI 'Violet Van Der Elst of Harlaxton Manor'

Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> Rauceby WI 'Bess of Hardwick'

Feb 9<sup>th</sup> Bulcote Local History Society, Burton Joyce – back on the Canal

Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> Grantham Men's Probus – Canal

Apr 5<sup>th</sup> Ropsley WI 'Food and Cooking in Prehistory'

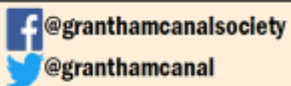
At the beginning of 2020, I decided organising events as well as giving talks and working with schools was more than I could cope with. I helped out at Cotgrave Country Park, Woolsthorpe Fete and the Open Day at the Dirty Duck, but left the organising to others who are already doing a lot for the society. A new Events Team Leader is needed.

Room in the diary for more talks and to offer young people information and hands on activities, [communityandevents@granthamcanal.org](mailto:communityandevents@granthamcanal.org) will still reach me or phone 07971173069

Rosemary Gibson (not Gilbert as labelled in Grantham Journal)

# #Trending

By *Tony Jackson*



The gate is gone! Few will mourn its passing – the romantics perhaps? No more snogging with fervency over the kissing gate! Romance was far from the minds of those who were unable, or struggled to access the towpath because of this darn gate!

I seem to have been banging on about this gate since before I was old and grey. Finding its owner, gathering evidence, convincing people and mustering support – thank you to our social media followers who've helped with this.

Grandparents have been unable to accompany their grandchildren on a walk because mobility scooters couldn't negotiate the gate. Parents with double buggies will no longer struggle, and those with heavily loaded or non standard bicycles, child trailers etc., will now find it easier. Canoeists heading for the summit level will now find portage a doddle.

I'd like to thank my colleagues who liaised with the owners of the gate and the Canal and River Trust. Our Workparty have removed the gate and, after a period of monitoring, if no unintended consequences are encountered, it's hoped to carry out further improvements to this busy access point. Remembering of course – progress on the canal is measured in 'canal years'...

Did we miss a fundraising opportunity? A pound a time for a last kiss over the kissing gate?

Dampening your ardour, kissing gates get their name because the gate 'kisses' one side, then the other – aww, another of life's illusions dashed.

Who's fervency?



## Rangers in Action - by Rob Cook

As Head Ranger I feel really privileged to know so many hard working people who are willing to give up their time to help keep the canal looking as good as possible and report on any problems there might be along its 33 miles.

Whilst our Work Team volunteers deal with the heavy stuff like grass cutting, lock building, dredging, weed and reed clearing, removing sunken objects from the canal, boat maintenance, clearing and re-watering the dry section etc., etc., our Rangers have slightly lighter roles. For example, litter picking, dog poo spraying, trimming back overgrown vegetation, recruiting new members, carrying out local surveys required by the Executive Team, etc.

However, it could be argued that a more important part that they play is the reporting of problems with the canal such as low water levels, leakage, invasive flora, obstructions on towpaths, other towpath issues, problems with structures or injured flora and fauna.

Quite a few of our Rangers have been busier than usual during August - doing their normal "Rangering" along the canal but also by helping at our Bank Holiday Fun Day and at the Cotgrave Country Park Fun Day.

Rangers reported recently that there was an injured cygnet in one of the locks. After speaking to the RSPCA they attended the site and took the injured animal away to treat its injuries. Another recent report was of a tree which had fallen down, close to, but not in the canal. That one is still in the process of being resolved. Yet another – fly tipping.

Rangers do not only report problems. It's truly amazing to receive items like the one received recently on local flora. It told of a plant growing along the canal bank called Bistort. That's not one I'd ever heard of. I was then treated to more of the same – Borage, Purple Loosestrife and Ragged Robin. OK, the latter is well known. See if you recognise these ...



Red Bistort



Purple Loosestrife

Our Rangers provide a such a plethora of information that I never tire of it. So much of it is still new to me that I'm always on a steep learning curve. Thank you so much Rangers you do a great job.

If anyone would like more information on volunteering for the GCS please contact [volunteer@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteer@granthamcanal.org).

## **THE WAY IT WAS**

### **By Mike Atherley**



The article shown in our August edition was the middle one of three on the restoration of Lock 18. To allow the articles to be read correctly, we will now issue them in this and the next two copies of Bridge.

After the committee decided to start restoration from the Grantham end, based on the help from Lincolnshire C.C. and SKDC, there being plenty of water and apart from the 7 locks less other major structural work as far as Redmile, the BWB agreed we could start the restoration of lock 18, Woolsthorpe in approx. 1990.

Our work site was based at lock 11, Cropwell and the tool trailer kept at Home Farm, Colston Bassett, so it was necessary to find a new base close to Woolsthorpe and John Moulsher found us an ideal site on a short branch of the old mineral railway that the Duke used to transport his hunting hounds and horses by rail. It was large, mainly flat and had road access. We managed to acquire two containers and move everything we had to the one site. We had tried to obtain the derelict Carpenter's Shop site but B.W. had their own plans for its future. I also took the decision to share the team leader job with Colin Bryan and Ian Wakefield because of the size of the job ahead.

The first serious look at lock 18 revealed, like many of the others, it had a concrete top weir, no bottom gates or any remnants of paddle gear. All four wing walls were either missing or damaged, there was a large crack in the off-bank wall, bottom end, several missing large coping stones and plenty of debris and reeds in the chamber. The off-bank wall had been rebuilt in blue bricks by previous owners but was still leaning inwards, the towpath side was remarkably good and appeared as original. A lot of brickwork around the ground paddle water sluices and gate quoins had been done by BW.



## **Mike Atherley continues his story on the restoration of Lock 18, the highest lock on the canal.**

Where to start? First we tried a barrow hoist which we had to hire over each weekend until we purchased our own electric one and Martin Day helped us with the loan of a generator. This was a partial success but the water was too deep to reach the silt or debris so we needed to drain the chamber of water. Because there was no bywash, keeping a water supply flowing turned out to be our biggest headache.

First we purchased enough 6" plastic pipe to run from the concrete weir to the railway embankment culvert, there were stop plank grooves at both ends. A timber board was cut for the weir top and holes made to allow two pipes to pass through then a long board placed to partially block the culverts at the embankment end. This was to stop water coming backwards from the other side. Sounds easy but the weight of water in the pipes kept breaking the joints. We also bought a fire pump to empty the water when the pipes worked. Just pumping out took nearly a whole day leaving little time to use the barrow hoist so an idea was tried to create a dam at the tail end of the lock using scaffolding, boarding and plastic sheeting, but this kept getting vandalised until an agreement with the fishing club was reached. Eventually the pipe run was successful and we tried a cess pit emptying company to drain the chamber but the 4" pipe kept getting blocked so a larger 6" machine came from Bristol and that emptied most of the silt etc. We found that building debris had been tipped into the chamber from the towpath, the remains of the top gates and many other odd things were discovered under the silt. We also found some of the missing coping stones which created a problem of how to lift them out until a large excavator came on site. It was now time to get BW engineers together with Roy Sutton from the IWA to inspect the lock before rebuilding could start. The engineers found that the newer offbank wall did in fact lean inwards but was within acceptable tolerances and explorations did not reveal any voids behind the brickwork so we were then given the go ahead to continue with its restoration.

To be continued.

## **Volunteers**

We'd very much like to thank everyone who's put their names forward for volunteering during the past 18 months or so - please don't think we've forgotten you all. There have been a couple of problems with getting you all inducted and working hard for the Society.

Covid 19 has restricted the number of workparties, the number of people on those workparties, and where we could work (no car-sharing, for example).

We need to have some new programmed works ready to go before we can start inducting new volunteers to come and do some manual work, so that the new people can have a flying start. However there are a lot of new things starting soon, including working towards the Western end of the canal on the dry bit and other areas.

We will be in touch with new volunteers to arrange inductions in due course.

## **GCS needs you:**

One major volunteer job that does need filling is Project Manager - does this description fit you?

We are in need of a project manager with practical construction background, to work alongside our Special Project Team to manage a variety of projects both large and small.

This will involve managing and organising our willing and trained construction personnel, and delivering safely projects to completion.

If this suits your inclinations, talents and experience, please contact us on [volunteer@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteer@granthamcanal.org).

**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:**

Jeremy Lee, Jo & Tim Altham,  
John Berry, John Dodwell,  
John Sentence, Margaret Leighton,  
Mrs G A Pownall, Roger Morris,  
Tony Binch, Tony Osbond

## Competitions

**(Not for prizes, just for the kudos of seeing your name in next time's Bridge)**

**Caption competition** - email to  
[bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org), subject "Caption"

Best answer will be published next month



**What is this?** - email to [bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org),  
subject "Puzzle"

First answer received will be published next month

