

# BRIDGE



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2021

The quarterly newsletter  
published by the

The  
**Grantham Canal**  
Society

CHARITY No: 507337



Photo: Kevin Weston

Work continues at the slipway, great progress being made by our small but highly qualified and expert gangs of willing volunteers.



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## Editors comments

It's been a busy autumn, and is due to get busier as prospects for our new depot towards the western end of the canal are good - once we've got that in place we'll have somewhere to allow workparties to have a base there. We have great plans for clearance, surveys and eventual re-watering of the dry section.

There are a few notices for our supporters to consider, you'll see later in this issue details of another volunteer post which needs filling, and I'm pleased to be able to say that my job as caretaker editor of Bridge may well be filled shortly by another great volunteer - you are a lovely lot of supporters!

Thanks also to the workparty volunteers who have supplied photos for this issue, you are much appreciated.

Jane

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## This month's update from our Chairman Mike Stone

Does the Grantham Canal support the objectives of the COP 26 gathering? I think we do as we support trees – unless they fall into the canal – and if we have an opportunity we plant more of them; we minimise our carbon contributions; much of our activity is using our volunteers rather than machines; and we actively support the use of the canal for healthy pursuits by all members of the community. Could we do more? Of course we all could so, every day we need to consider if we can improve our contributions to saving our planet. I know that the society is a very small cog in the world-wide machine but if everyone makes a contribution it will gradually make a difference.

Recently we have saved some water loss by the repair of a leaking culvert. Thanks to some external technical assistance through pressure grouting we now know what can be achieved and we can investigate whether adding the technique to the range of volunteer skills would be appropriate.

Whilst on the subject of water somebody interfered with the waterflow at Lock 15 and raised the water level in the pound above. This resulted in the flooding of the cofferdam at the slipway construction site. The flooding could have seriously impacted upon our progress at the site and caused the Society significant expenditure. We may well have to replace one pump ruined by immersion and I hope not two. My message is always leave paddles, stop-planks and gates as they are and never play or interfere with them unless you have discussed the position with active volunteers working nearby first.

Moving to a more positive note we were delighted to receive financial support resulting from the sale of cakes and other foods by three year 8 pupils from South Wolds School. I really appreciate their initiative and welcome them to the list of Society volunteers. I just wish that I could have tasted some of their cooking!

That subject focusses attention towards the western end of the canal which passes through Cotgrave and West Bridgford and ends just across the River Trent from Nottingham. The Society is searching for a site for a small operating depot which can act as a centre for voluntary activity in the area. We are in discussions with one landowner but our plan to have an active site by New Year is probably optimistic. We hope that a western depot will enable those who live in the area to volunteer on the canal without the need to travel to Woolsthorpe. The site will be a base for local restoration and enhancement of the canal and add to the work already undertaken by the group of volunteers from Lady Bay. Please keep an eye on our facebook page for further announcements!

Enjoy the autumn colours.

Mike



**Support the IWA & become a  
member**

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



## Christmas Cards

Those who've enjoyed Robbie Cummings' Canal Boat Diaries on BBC Four will be familiar with Robbie's favourite phrase 'cranking it'.

Robbie and The Canal Shop Company got together and have produced a range of Christmas Cards, with profits from sales being donated to the Grantham Canal Society!

You can choose from the traditional 'Season's Greetings' or the fun 'HAVE A CRANKING CHRISTMAS'.

Worth having for the fabulous atmospheric painting by canal artist DWG Gardham!

Order here: [Canal Christmas cards | The Canal Shop Company](#)

There's also a link on the 'Donate' page of our website.



## Co-op membership - Charitable Cause

Great news - we have been chosen by the Co-op as one of the causes supported in the next round of the Co-op Local Community Fund.

**Select us as your cause**

We're part of the Local Community Fund  
When members buy selected Co-op branded products and services, the Co-op will give local causes a helping hand. Go online: [coop.co.uk/membership](https://coop.co.uk/membership)

Co-op members are now be able to select us as their cause to receive the charitable donation when they shop at a Co-op Food store.

It's easy to participate; all you need to do is join up at [coop.co.uk](https://membership.coop.co.uk), log into your account, go to our page at <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/62643> and select us as your chosen cause.

Please spread the word - the more people that join up and choose us the more money we get and the more progress we can make on the restoration of our canal. If you don't have access to the internet, you can phone the Co-op on 0800 0686 727. You will need to quote our cause reference which is 62643.

## Workparty News

One of the rare occasions when we can actually say there's traffic on the canal - Centauri and Three Shires nearly occupying the same bit of water.



And another massive piece of tree fished out by the workparty, ready for cutting up. It sometimes seems that the supply of tree trunks is never-ending.

Early morning start on Mudlark, working in the half mile pound to clear weeds.

Hard work has also been going on to provide a better landing area for the workboats above Lock 18.



First phase complete with the piling in place, plenty more to do over the next few weeks.

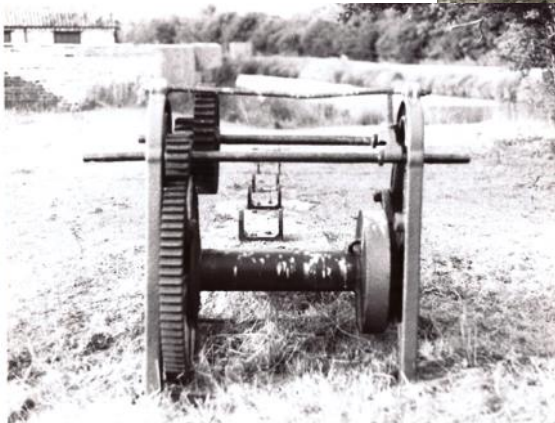
Inspection of the Smite feeder blockage showed that it was mainly too much greenery stopping the flow. A day's work cleared both the blockage and the nearby congestion under the bridge over the feeder.



# Workparty News

## continued

Works on the slipway uncovered some archaeology too, in this case 200-year-old slipway rollers and wooden supports.



Brian Rogers was able to provide us with a picture which he had taken of the old winch and rollers in situ.

Work begins on the bottom of the wall to be rebuilt - the old bricks are considerably variable in size, so the bottom courses have to be modern bricks to give a good basis for the reconstruction.



The last of the big concrete pours done, just one small one to go, so the slipway is well on its way to being in use. Once the concrete has been poured, a wheeled trolley will be created to support our boats, and the winch will be strategically placed to allow us to tow all the workboats and Three Shires out of the water for maintenance. The savings in using the slipway are enormous, hire of a crane to remove and then replace a boat in the water costs a bomb.

## Three Shires

Despite restrictions and the occasional weather event, this has been a very good year for the trip boat, the final trip of the year took place on 31st October, with a 2 hour cruise.

The slipway is nearing completion, and once the boat trolley and winch are in operation, we hope to get the boat out of the water and fully repainted ahead of our 2022 season.

We aim to offer a wider range of scheduled trips than ever before together with our popular private cruises, which can be booked for between 1 and 4 hours.

For those who like statistics, the boat crew have kindly collated the following details for the year:

Revenue generated - nearly £6,000 (remarkable considering Covid)

Cruises and short trip days - 54

New crew trained - 10

Volunteer hours undertaken - 900

An early September trip was very much enjoyed by these ladies, who requested that we include them in Bridge - a lovely trip out in perfect weather:



Photo: Ros Church

## Events



Photo: Colin Bryan

A members invitation day at Lock 14 was blessed by good weather and great attendance, with our usual BBQ team working very hard to feed and water us all. Well done to everyone who turned up, not only were you able to inspect the works and enjoy the food, the information stands were busy too and we even gained several new members who'd seen the festivities from the towpath and joined us.

The final burger of the day was served by John Robinson to Tony Jackson, who had been working so hard he nearly forgot to get lunch!



Photo: Colin Bryan



## Young Fund raisers support the Grantham Canal Society



Young fund raisers Katie-Mai Campbell, Chloe Wallis and Hayah Rathore, all year 8 students at South Wolds Academy in Keyworth got together to raise money for the Grantham Canal Society.

The three girls organised and managed a stall on the 26th October in Kinoulton (which is a village adjacent to the canal) on the Nottinghamshire stretch, they sold a selection of refreshments including cakes, samosas and fidgets as well as lemonade which raised £100.

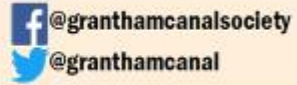
The local section of canal which includes Kinoulton and Hickling across the Leicestershire border has in recent years seen water levels drastically reduce impacting upon wildlife and fish, we have the support of an active group in that locality, the Grantham Canal Waterway Recovery Group (GCWRG), who have recently launched a SLOW (Stop losing our water) campaign.

The GCWRG have previously raised money this year through the Kinoulton Big Night In and through Mike Hill's 70@seventy sponsored bike ride in the summer. The total amount raised for this section of the canal is nearly £4000, including the girls recent stall fundraising.



# #Trending

By *Tony Jackson*



Couldn't you weep!

These fabulous buildings razed to the ground. Comprising of workshops and cottages, they were still there in 1963 when Ivan Cane visited while working on his dissertation. Speaking to some waterways employees, they told Ivan their work was largely building weirs these days. Were they referring to the concrete weirs which were constructed in the locks to maintain water levels once the lock gates had seen better days? I'd always imagined those weirs to be older than this? Perhaps it was overflow weirs which regulate water levels, allowing excess water to drain into existing water courses?



On a Cropwell Butler village Facebook group, Estelle had posted a picture of these buildings beside Cropwell Top Lock ( L11). In reply came this little gem of information from Charles:

'The picture brings back memories. I remember when the Handleys and Simpsons lived in the cottages. Bill Handley was the lock keeper.'

We love these snippets of information.

Little remains of these buildings other than a few brick courses which once formed the rear wall – a poignant reminder of their existence. This place today, despite its close proximity to the busy Fosse Way, has a feeling of remoteness, one of desolation.



We live in more enlightened times – hopefully! What we have lost in the past makes what remains all the more precious. Visit our website [www.granthamcanal.org](http://www.granthamcanal.org); the 'Join us' page or the 'Donate' page, where you'll discover a range of options for you to offer us your support – some won't cost you a penny!

Do one thing for us today?

## The Grantham Canal Water Supply by Rob Cook

The highest point of the canal is actually about 3 miles west of Grantham at Woolsthorpe. This stretch is aptly called the “Summit Pound”. I imagine the majority of the water flows towards Nottingham but some heads off the other way towards Grantham.

Did you know that almost all of the water which feeds the canal comes from a couple of reservoirs? One is near the villages of Denton and Harlaxton and the other is at Knipton near to Belvoir Castle. The Denton reservoir is fed by a number of unnamed small streams arising in the hills around Denton. The main stream flowing into and around the reservoir is called “Old Beck” which, eventually, after being renamed Foston Beck, finds it's way to the River Witham. The Knipton reservoir is fed by the River Devon. The Devon continues to feed Belvoir Castle top and bottom lakes and then flows on into Nottinghamshire to join the Trent at Newark Marina. An outlet from the reservoir called “The Carrier”, which passes through the Castle grounds, in some places buried below ground, is connected directly to the canal.

In addition to the water provided by these reservoirs the canal is topped up in a number of places along its route by streams. The majority of the water is lost through broken culverts through which streams and smaller rivers pass. These were constructed at the time the canal was originally cut in the 1790's and are mainly built of brick. Damage by dredging, plant and tree roots have caused leaks over the years, a great deal of repair work is needed. Here are a few photos of the canal in Lady Bay taken on 26 September 2021.



Inlet to Trent Lock 1



Trickle from culvert at Bridge 3



Very Low Level at Overflow Weir

I'm very happy to say that the Grantham Canal Society (GCS) along with the Canal and River Trust (CRT) have plans in place to repair the leaking culverts and have already started work on some. More of the dry section between Owthorpe and Cropwell Bishop will be cleared over this period.

## THE WAY IT WAS

By Mike Atherley



### Progress on the Woolsthorpe Locks 18 to 16 part 2 of 3

Before we could start any further restoration it was obvious that some kind of bund needed to be built at the topside and at the bottom end and also a temporary water feed around the lock. Before all this could be organised we received notification from British Rail that the rail embankment could be removed and also our friend Dave Carnell contacted us regarding a Derelict Land Grant (DLG) scheme that had some money still available if we applied quickly. So you can see that from no work we suddenly had far more than we could cope with.

It was decided that the DLG scheme was the best way forward because of our lack of finance for any large job, and also to contact Waterways Recovery Group (WRG) to help with the railway blockage. The grant was very difficult and took several attempts before a successful application was accepted. We had decided to apply for all three locks, 18, 17 and 16, to be included and the full amount we applied for was accepted. The problems came both thick and fast, we had to match fund the grant and complete the three rebuilds in a set time. To enable this a Grantham company called Trainline were contacted and they agreed to rebuild locks 17 and 16 provided we cleared the chambers and site and provided a temporary water bypass. The conclusion of this was that their work took all of the grant and we were not allowed to work on their site and we were to provide all tools, equipment and materials.

This left us with lock 18 to rebuild without any money or help from the grant. Fortunately the two locks were completed in time, WRG and ourselves removed the railway embankment but all work on lock 18 had to take a back seat until most of this work had been done.

A few years passed with little improvement of lock 18 and we had also committed to hold the I.W.A. National Trailboat Festival at Woolsthorpe in 1994 so all the canal from the A1 to lock 15 could be officially opened.



A young Fred Marsh

## Mike Atherley continues ...

Luck came our way with an offer to donate several lorry loads of clay free of charge to use as a bund top and bottom of the lock. We could get to the site using the old rail track but had to cross one of John Mulsher's fields which was a meadow and it was cut up very badly.

A tracked excavator was hired to construct the bunds and a new pipe run along the bank to provide a water flow. The first job was to break up and remove the concrete cill dam so we could see how good or bad the top cill was. British Waterways (BW) must have had a change of heart and provided us with a good team of lock engineers/builders who set about the large and complicated jobs concerning the lock chamber. Our team set about the wing walls, replacing missing brickwork and the missing coping stones. Fred Marsh had good contact with Barnstone Cement Works who provided coloured cement to build new coping stones, Gary Conelly built us a steel mould for that job and obtained a lot of paddle gear and gate furniture from old BW stores.

BW gave us a set of steel quoins which turned out to be faulty after one set had been fitted. They also offered some second hand gates if we collected them, Fred Marsh did that. A gate builder called Barry made up a set of top gates but unfortunately died before he could finish a bottom set but BW came up with a new pair just in time. During the complete rebuild BW insisted lock ladders were required and the stop plank grooves at both ends were to be cut much larger with steel liners, these were both massive jobs. They did provide us with bollards and stonework to complete walkways alongside the lock chamber. The bottom offside wing wall had to be taken down to base line and a tree was found growing through where it was split. Another big job resolved. After all the gates had been hung it was time to do a water test so the stop planks came out first then a small channel cut through the top bund and the top gates held ok, then the lock was filled and the bottom gates were ok, it was then ok to remove both clay bunds and tidy up the whole site.

The whole three locks were only just completed in time before we needed to prepare the site for the trailboat festival. Just to manage the grant aid was colossal, accountants, treasurer and loads of paper work to be submitted with bills and time sheets before payment could be received.



## Volunteers

We're delighted to report that we're making progress on getting new volunteers inducted, and will shortly be announcing one or more induction days, to take place at the Woolsthorpe depot.

If you've joined us or started volunteering since before the start of Covid, and want to do works on the ground (rather than admin works) we'll be in touch soon and ask you to visit us at the Woolsthorpe Depot to meet fellow volunteers, get to know some of the organisers, and go through the safety requirements when working on site - we know this can be a bit of a bind, but as everyone knows working outdoors can occasionally be just a little perilous, so just in case something does happen we need to know that you're all up to speed with the proper procedures.

If anyone who wants to work on site has any appropriate qualifications, e.g. current First Aid, Chainsaw, Dumper Driver etc., would you please bring your certificates to an induction meeting so we can make a record?

We look forward to seeing you all.

## GCS needs you - Recycling Officer

This is a job mentioned previously, but the requirements of the position are a bit more than just putting the tin cans in the right bin - we take all sorts of things out of the canal, from well-soaked ancient tree trunks, through weed and silt, to all the odd bits and bobs that appear in the water by the actions of wind, weather and, I'm sorry to say, people.

Our recycling officer will need to be able to deal with where to dispose of tonnes of wood, from foot or more wide trunks to saplings, with buckets (Otter buckets that is) of weed, and with the silt removal/dredging that is required in many places.

They would need to set up a database of people/places who would be happy to receive such items (preferably paying us of course) organise transport, and contact farmers or landowners next to the canal to see if they would accept any of the above and where it should go.

The post would suit someone outgoing, with good communication and organisational skills, and a knowledge of what is likely to find a good home and where.

If you think this would be for you, please contact [volunteercomms@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteercomms@granthamcanal.org).



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

Margaret Leighton, Cynthia Snowden, Dave & Jo Tarrant

D E & J Grinstead re David Goodall

Jason Beeson, John Dodwell, Tony Osbond

Tony Binch, Jeremy Lee, Patricia & Adrian Ford

John Sentence, Jo & Tim Altham, Roger & Elaine Osbond

Peter Cadwallader, Karen Argent

Ros Church, Kinoulton School

## ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE GRANTHAM CANAL SOCIETY?

Every member we have adds to the likelihood of us gaining grant funding, membership numbers are a great way of demonstrating the amount of our support, so why not join us and help make a difference to our canal and preserve our heritage? Only a small proportion of members are active volunteers, the remainder help us just by being members. It doesn't matter if you live miles (or in some cases continents) away, you will still be supporting our efforts.

The cost is modest, annual subscription rates are:

Single Adult      £20.00

Family              £30.00

(Family membership covers two adults plus children living at the same address)

Under 16s / Concessions    £15.00

And, if you would prefer not to have to renew every year:

Life Membership    £150.00

## Winners, September 2021

### Caption competition -



A modest but excellent selection of offerings from you all - however Tom Reviewer takes the caption kudos with:

"I know they work us like horses, but do we really need to wear these collars?"

Try below for this month's offering ...

### What is this? - wooden gate paddle.



Fastest correct answer back was from John Robinson, followed closely by Dave Carnell, well done both of you.

However applause is also due to Tom Reviewer, who was the fastest responder, with "I don't know!"

## This month's competitions:

### Caption competition - email to

[bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org), subject "Caption"



Photo: Bob Terry

Best answer will be published next month

### What is this? - email to

[bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org), subject "Puzzle"

First correct answer received will be published next month



(Photo credit - Rob Reeder - CABI)