

BRIDGE

SUMMER 22



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society



In this issue:

*Sand, sand & more sand!
Behind the scenes
Three Shires report
Lady Bay section*

Published quarterly by

The
Grantham Canal
Society
RESTORING THE NOTTINGHAM TO GRANTHAM CANAL



Chairman Mike Stone writes ...

Every cloud has a silver lining or so they say. Lack of rainfall has caused distress to some of the canal's residents particularly in the West Bridgford area. However the hot weather has increased the number of bookings for the trip-boat which have contributed to the funds raised by the boat crews. Thank you very much guys!

Despite interference by some nameless individuals the maintenance teams have been active and already raised the towpath bridge over the Denton weir run-off water. Following this task the existing weir will be raised with the effect of increasing the depth of water in the summit pound. Then the by-wash weir at Lock 18 may need to be raised a little. If all goes well another task completed by GCS volunteers.

Thanks to our supporters nearly £8,000 has been raised specifically to enable the Society to commence initial restoration work on Lock 13. This will permit clearance of weed and rubbish from the chamber site

and conduct an assessment of the restoration work required at this lock.

What next you may well ask! We are encouraged to consider how the current canal could be joined to the River Trent – that is not possible as the route is blocked at Lady Bay Bridge. Our very diligent volunteers have looked closely at the options and think they have found a viable solution. As you may imagine there is still more to be done but so far significant funding could be in place; land owners have been contacted and confidence is growing. Establishing a route is a first step – constructing it may take longer – and attracting new volunteers based in the Nottingham area is a key target. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Thank you to everyone who is contributing to the Society's endeavours to restore the canal between Nottingham and Grantham. We could not undertake our task without your support!

I hope you are enjoying the summer!

Reading this but not 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

Family: £30.00 (Family membership covers two adults plus children living at the same address)

Under 16s / Concessions: £15

And, if you would prefer not to have to renew every year: Life Membership: £150

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**WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS
THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS**

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Summer is here and as I write this, accompanied by the delightful bluesy rhythm of a 1940s 3 cylinder Ruston & Hornsby at tickover as we glide past a long string of moored craft on the Stratford & Avon ... a very different beat at full chat - more heavy metal (yes, I'm crewing on my friends' narrowboat), the rain has stopped and the heatwave seems to be on again - it's 2pm and 27°C already. So what could be better than a gentle trip down a canal and we can all avail ourselves of this simple enjoyment - you don't have to rely on boat-owning friends - just book a cruise on Three Shires, our friendly little narrowboat. For more information and booking (see p 10).

In a couple of months we are hoping to publish a 2023 GCS Calendar and to that end can we have all your favourite Grantham Canal-related photographs, preferably covering the seasons. All images used will be given full credit of course; please email them to me at the address below and include your name (date and location of photo if possible).

Roger Cook

We have just heard from Sandie Cook to say her husband, Roger, sadly died on 17th July. Roger was GCRS chairman in early 1990s and instrumental in getting Casthorpe Bridge built by Lincs CC, SKDC and others.

Together with Sandie, who followed him in the chair they originated the first Trail-boat Festival in 1997.

Roger's funeral will be at Wilford Hill Crematorium, Loughborough Rd, Nottingham NG2 7FE on 18th August at 1pm.

Write to me at:

bridge@granthamcanal.org

with your comments, ideas, news, submissions, articles for inclusion, etc.



Brian Cantwell (Editor)

HAVE WE GOT ENOUGH SAND?

It has been a while since the GCS Learning Team had an opportunity to engage with future supporters of the canal, but on Thursday 14 July we were invited to visit Pierrepont Gamston Primary School. The playground backs onto the canal and Years 3 and 4 were studying the locality.

In the morning, I related the story of the canal from its origins in the late 1700s to the present-day efforts of the GCS. The 96 children, their teachers and teaching assistants were very attentive and there followed some brilliant questions from the children, who had to be stopped so staff could set up the hall for lunch.

It was the afternoon hands-on activities which required so much sand:

- A very large sand tray, role-play cards and model structures explores why the canal didn't run straight from Nottingham to Grantham.
- With quite a large sand tray, Brian told the story of how vast quantities of bricks would have been made to supply the locks and bridges for the building of the canal, child labour included.
- More sand was needed to demonstrate why water transport needed less horsepower than land transport.
- Then there was making of arched bridges from carefully angled wooden blocks.



Staff and pupils appreciated our efforts, sending a package of thank-you letters and drawings.

The GCS team who manned the activities were Tony Jackson, Brian Rogers, Rob Cook and Rosemary Gibson. We try and include educational activities at events at our depot as well as visiting schools, community centres, etc. for groups of all ages.

Upcoming adult group talks:

- Wednesday 24 August – Probus 88 Grantham
- Monday 12 September – Grantham Local History Society
- Tuesday 13 September – National Trust Leicester Association

For more information on our illustrated talks, contact Rosemary Gibson at communityandevents@granthamcanal.org or mobile 07971173069

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://membership.coop.co.uk/membership)

Some items are excluded from selected Co-op branded products and services, and gifts for the same amount may be made to other causes. Members can select a cause to support when they log in to their account. For more information, visit membership.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 [co-op.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 (over £500 raised to date) and the more progress we can make on the restoration of our canal.



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 website giveasyoulive.com or app and sit back and let good things happen!

A considerable amount has already been raised this way for the GCS.

amazon smile

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.

So when shopping online, perhaps the Grantham Canal Society could benefit a little too!

If you have any questions or difficulties, please get in touch:
bridge@granthamcanal.org

BEHIND THE SCENES AT EVENTS

With a busy August ahead – outside events and the grand open day on 28th – here’s a brief look at what goes on behind the scenes.

For outside events we need to know what it is, where it is, what time, and how much room we have, well in advance so we can get on to the next step: which gazebo(s) are we taking, how many tables, and which display stands?

If the event has a specific theme, do the display stands need to be updated with appropriate information and do we have time to do so?

What marketing items can we take? Related to the size of the stand and, how many volunteers we have, and of course, the weather.

What educational activities can we take? (with the same constraints).

Staffing – is there going to be someone available to fill the van and drive it to the event or will volunteers be using their own vehicles? Will there be enough volunteers to have at least two on the stand at all times? Is there going to be someone with the skills to talk to casual passers-by and draw them in to donating, buying merchandise, or joining up?

Once the event is over, have we staff to take down the stand, pack it away, get it back to the depot, dried out and safely into store? That’s a typical outside event, but it’s child’s play compared with an open day at the depot. Planning what stalls we need has to start months in advance, or a year in advance if we’re inviting outside people to have stands.

We need to check what’s going to be in each area, and ensure the depot (which is a working site) is going to be neat and tidy with grass cut.

If we need specific marketing material discuss with our designer and have the information ready at least a month in advance to send to publications and volunteers; organise a visit to venues both local and in the surrounding areas who are willing to display our literature.

Then down to the physical outline of the site: is there going to be enough parking, or do we need to utilise land on the other side of the bridge?

If there’s going to be food served outside, where can they be placed so the aromas don’t clash.

Where should each of the main areas go?

Educational: information on canal construction, environment and boats

Fundraising activities: stalls inviting attendees to enjoy themselves while adding to our coffers

Participation: fun activities for adults and children

Sustenance: essential for all visitors!

Then we're down to the details:

Do our excellent cooks have the time to provide their cakes, biscuits, scones and other savouries? How do they get them to us?

Do we have enough gazebos and will the weather allow for outside activities without cover?

Do we have enough suitable tables or other display material?

Who will be staffing the stands?

Contact all the regular volunteers and anyone else who comes to mind to confirm availability, hours and stands they'd like to be on.

Will there be plenty of people at hand to put up and take down the stands at the beginning and end of the day? This takes a small number of dedicated people willing to spend an hour at each end.

Will there be enough people to serve the food and do the cleaning/washing up so annoying and necessary during the day? Do any of the stands need special help from our volunteers or our equipment, and if equipment, is it all clean, checked and ready to go on the day?



Are there enough cups/ mugs, plastic glasses, plates, napkins, cleaning materials, bin bags, bins ...

And finally, once we're all finished/sold out/ready for a nice lie-down, has everything been put away in order so it's ready for next time, all the funds marked up as to where they've been raised, totalled and banked.

... and breath, check the calendar, and start all over again - phew!!!!

WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION NEWS

General Manager **Tony Osbond** reports:

It's been a busy Summer so far and doubly difficult in contending with the extremely hot weather we've had in July and the first two weeks in August.

The canal maintenance teams have kept on top of weed and reed clearance making sure that the summit pound is kept clear for our Three Shires cruising over the summer months.

The offending large tree above Harlaxton that came down in the late winter has now been cleared by the Friday team which taxed their endeavours to the full in getting the tree moved. Chain Saw and Tirfor skills were never more needed.

Lock 16 became virtually unusable due to the large build up of silt – samples were taken to establish the toxicity which came back as a clean substance so that we can dispose on the offside of the canal.

The lock has been semi-cleared but with still some work to do. Further plans are in hand to this end.

A lack of water in the canal in the summit pound and beyond has been a big problem and continues to be so. Denton Reservoir is being kept approximately 600mm below normal as the Canal and River Trust have maintenance work to do. This is a legacy of reservoir maintenance where work is needed nationally after the Toddbridge problem that CRT had some three years ago in Derbyshire when the reservoir nearly had a major failure. Suffice it to say GCS are getting into the canal whatever water is coming into the reservoir.

The upgrading of Fixed Weir One at Denton is ongoing with Neil Truscott leading the Team. As we cannot get vehicles close enough we are boating materials up from Denton Wharf. We have had problems with vandalism which is frustrating for our construction team to say the least. Hopefully completion of the project by early September.

Woolsthorpe Depot is now back to normal and with the addition of the two container units now a lot more organised. Kevin Weston has fully fitted the electrics to the units, shelving installed by John Clark and the Saturday team led by Bob Terry; the individual units have now been stocked with events material, PPE/lifejackets and machinery. The depot area is now able to be turned into a marketing area and our display boards can be permanently on display. Further work to the workshop is still to be carried out.

Plans are also in their early stages in carrying on with our Lock Restoration on the Woolsthorpe Flight. Neil Truscott is looking at the phasing of the work for Lock 13 and we are shortly to meet and agree a plan to take the project forward.

Plans are moving apace in setting up a maintenance depot at the western end of the canal. We have made a presentation to Notts County Council concerning our vision for the canal and an eventual Trent Connection. To enable this to happen we need to establish a protected route. Our proposals also include the reinstatement of a bridge at Gamston 4A and Gamston Lings Bar 6B. Positive meetings have been held with National Highways and their eventual reinstatement are now in the very early stages of planning.

We have met with the Council on site (off Adbolton Lane) to view two of their empty properties there that GCS could rent/lease for a potential western base. Feedback is very positive about our plans for the property.

Rob Cook and myself met with the Lady Bay Action Group when we shared our plans for a western base which were met with an incredibly positive response and the over riding comments were "how can we support GCS?"

So exciting times are ahead for GCS in both west and east. Thank you for all our volunteer support as without it we wouldn't be where we are today.



Troublesome tree removed

THREE SHIRES NEWS

We are having a very successful season, having already raised over £8,000 for the Society. We have had record bookings, and thanks must go to all the skippers and crews who have given their time to fulfil such a busy schedule. We are also indebted to the workparties who labour tirelessly to keep the canal navigable.

In June, the water level in the canal between lock 17 and 18 dropped dramatically, and as a result we decided to moor Three Shires at the new mooring above lock 18, meaning that we did not have to go through the lock each time we used the boat, thus saving thousands of gallons of water.

The new mooring has proved to be very successful despite the current water situation. Water levels have continued to fall to such an extent that we have had to stop all 3 and 4 hour cruises and reduce each booking to a 2 hour trip to Denton winding hole. If we don't get rain soon, these trips may also have to be stopped – we are practising our Rain Dance as I type!

Our two speciality cruises, Cruise and Dine and Afternoon Tea Cruises, have proved to be very popular – we have served over 20 cream teas to date and Birthday and Anniversary parties have also continued.

We have opened a Tripadvisor page (Grantham Canal Three Shires Boat Trips) and it is most encouraging that we have continually received excellent reviews, with such comments as *a hidden gem in a beautiful spot, the crew were welcoming, friendly and very knowledgeable, boat lovely and clean, crew lovely and very accommodating and helpful, gorgeous scenery ...*

Our success is down to the great teamwork of all those involved. If you would like to join the team as a skipper or crew member, we are always looking for more volunteers. Please contact the senior skipper, John Trigg at boatmaster@granthamcanal.org



For bookings call 07486 955775
or email bookings@granthamcanal.org

THE LADY BAY DRY SECTION

For the majority of this year water has been flowing in great excess through the Bassingfield, Gamston and Lady Bay sections of the canal. Back in March this year I thought there wouldn't be any water shortage in this area throughout this summer. I had rarely seen water flowing at such a rate over Lock 3 – possible flooding was of more concern. I suspected but never actually confirmed, that the very large flow rate was due not only to the Polser Brook but possible additional flow from the Cotgrave section. That would mean water would be over-topping the Lock 4 weir. That's something I've very rarely known to happen (see photo below).

All of this water flows over Lock 2 weir, through the flattened Bridge 4a culvert under Radcliffe Road (A6011), and into the Lady Bay section. About 100 metres from Radcliffe Road any excess water flows over a spill weir into a brook and on to Holme Pierrepont; the rest meanders its way to the River Trent at Lock 1 (sandwiched between Nottingham Forest football ground and the Environment Agency). It's doubtful if any of this water actually reaches the Trent as the distance from the last point of the Lady Bay section to where it re-emerges into the Environment Agency section is about 300 metres. This is the culvert (hopefully installed) under the junction of Radcliffe Road, the road over Lady Bay Bridge (former railway bridge) and Trent Boulevard.

That's a very long way for a culvert and how on earth could it be kept clean? Who owns it and who has the responsibility for keeping it clean?



Even if water could get through this very long culvert (if it is indeed there), when it reaches Lock 1 there's a flood wall built across the lock just upstream of the top set of gates. This contains a small sluice gate which seems to be always closed. It's my belief that the water in the (probably) cut-off Environment Agency section is rainwater run-off from the football club building as there's a pipe from that direction into that part of the canal.



The very beautiful Lady Bay section in full water looking east (above) and west (below).



It is not just the canal in the Nottinghamshire area that's short of water, the whole length of our canal is suffering a similar fate due to:

- Known water leaks which GCS are able to fix on behalf of CRT which hopefully will start when the bird nesting season is over.
- The water level in the two reservoirs which feed the canal at the Grantham end have had their stored water levels severely reduced as a precaution due to the Toddbrook failure last year. The bank stability of these 200 odd year-old structures being the main concern.
- The amount of water actually in the canal is much reduced due to silt build-up and the lack of maintenance to keep it clear.

If there are any able bodied ladies and gentlemen who would like nothing more than to save money on exorbitant gym fees and get involved in helping the GCS sort out some of these issues: please go to our website granthamcanal.org and join our cause.

Rob Cook, Ranger, Grantham Canal Section 1

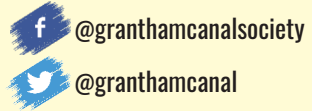
With thanks to local residents for providing some of the photos.



By contrast with the images on p12, here's a few taken over the last few days. Clockwise, left to right: the now dry view to the east, very dry view west, dead fish in the canal and an 'at risk' swan family being kept alive by caring local residents. Please note however, that it is not recommended to put out food and water for those suffering animals, such as water fowl, which are able to move to other areas, e.g., the River Trent.

#Trending

by Tony Jackson



Pure coincidence that I took myself off cycle camping across the Serengeti, aka Lincolnshire fens, when some of our social media followers became animated on noticing sections of the canal drying up. I for one am looking forward to a change in the weather – hopefully it will have arrived by the time you're reading this!

It's so sad to see fish dying. What is not so obvious is the demise of invertebrates – whole ecosystems wiped out, taking time to recover once water returns.

At times like this people implore us to do something! In truth there is little we can do in these instances but to notify the relevant agencies, which we did. Our volunteers work every day of the week, year in year out, towards our ultimate goal in full restoration of the canal. Full restoration is the key to these low water issues.

I wonder how many of these keyboard warriors are members of the Grantham Canal Society? There's a direct correlation between membership numbers and restoration progress. Canal restoration groups which make greatest progress are the ones with greatest membership numbers.

- Authorities are more likely to support a project which has public support
- Funders are more likely to support a project which has public support

Healthy membership numbers enable us to demonstrate this support.

I know many reading this will already be members of GCS, and we thank you so much for your support. But readership of BRIDGE is far wider than our membership.

Becoming a member doesn't mean you have to volunteer! Please do visit our website and join us: <https://www.granthamcanal.org/join-us/>

We cannot do it without you – really!

We have 800 members. Help us reach that seemingly illusive, magical 1,000!

Let's hope times of plentiful water are soon to return.

Thank you to Julie Blyth for the cover picture of Lock 17 at Woolsthorpe.

COMPETITION TIME

Answers to last issue's conundrums



Micheal Hibbert came up with the winning witticism: *Oh dear ... I said steak not stake ...*

Honourable mention:

John Robinson with *Anyone know where Dracula lives, before it gets too dark?*



The sole response from **Owen Rushby** correctly identified Maunsel Lock on the Bridgewater & Taunton Canal; the yellow globe being a model of the Sun, part of the Somerset Space Walk.

CAPTION THIS!



Email your wittiest caption to:
bridge@granthamcanal.org
with CAPTION as the subject

WHAT IS THIS?



... and on which canal might you find it?

Email your answers to:
bridge@granthamcanal.org
with PUZZLE as the subject

OPEN DAY

SUNDAY 28 AUG 10am - 3pm

Childrens' activities - fun and educational

Refreshments & homemade cakes

Tombola

Various information displays

Merchandise for sale

Books and Bric-a-Brac

Bottle Stall

Proceeds to the Grantham Canal Society

Woolsthorpe Depot (behind Dirty Duck pub)

Woolsthorpe by Belvoir NG32 1NY