

# BRIDGE

**AUTUMN 22**



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society



## In this issue:

*Water, water, everywhere!  
Co-op comes up trumps  
Trent Connection  
Down at the Depot*

Photo: Julie Blyth

*Published quarterly by*

The  
**Grantham Canal**  
Society  
RESTORING THE NOTTINGHAM TO GRANTHAM CANAL



## CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

Somebody said “we live in interesting times”. Don’t we just! It didn’t rain for weeks on end and the Grantham canal in places dried up. “Why?” they cried! I thought the reason was obvious. We have now enjoyed some heavy rain in past days and the dry sections now have water. “Why?” they cried again! I’ll leave you to explain!

The Society volunteers have been actively working on the canal in several places recently including: Lock 13 near the bottom of the Woolsthorpe flight removing vegetation so we can evaluate the restoration work required to rebuild the lock; clearing the feeder from the Mow Beck and the exit from the culvert under the A1 at the east end of a navigation; at Denton weir after raising the tow-path bridge so that we can now raise the weir head to reduce water wastage; acting as a contractor to CRT at two culvert sites near Kinoulton to eliminate leaks in the banks; at Gamston bridge to remove rubbish from the canal which we found was much easier as there was no water present and lastly at several culvert entrances under the canal where inspection and maintenance access required improvement.

The GCS has over 100 hard-working and committed volunteers who offer a range of skills and to whom we said “Thank you” at a recent party at Woolsthorpe where all enjoyed a free barbecue supported by mouthwatering desserts and cakes. So committed are our volunteers to restoration that the event raised over £500 for society funds! There was also an unveiling of a plaque to the late George Gee – see separate article.

So what next? As I have mentioned previously winter is the time to work in those areas of foliage and growing plants that we cannot access during the summer because of the nesting season. There is much to do so if you enjoy the outdoor life why not join us? However if you prefer to stay at home or you live far away from the action we have many tasks in which you could participate. As readers will know we are developing activity in the Rushcliffe area so if you could help form the nucleus of a support group in West Bridgford we would like to hear from you. We need to develop our publicity, commence coordination of group activities locally and run small events like quiz evenings to help our cause. Please contact us if you can support this type of activity even if only from your home.

I have previously mentioned the development of the new link to the Trent and the society has made formal presentations to Nottinghamshire County Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and the Environment Agency all of which have been well received and we hope to make some positive announcements in the New Year so please keep watching our social media activity. Thank you for your continued support for the Grantham Canal Society.

I realise that for some of you my last comment may seem too soon but as we don’t have an issue of BRIDGE before the festive season, may I take this opportunity of wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and a positive New Year.

## CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Chairman's Letter</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Select us as your Co-op cause</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| Polly Browne updates us on the Co-op Charitable Cause scheme                                  |           |
| <b>Three Shires report</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| Liz Bland reports   |           |
| <b>Culvert Repairs</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| Tony Osbond with the latest news  |           |
| <b>Denton Weir</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| Report by Neil Truscott   |           |
| <b>Workparty &amp; Construction News</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| Latest from our hard-working unpaid volunteers working on the canal restoration & maintenance |           |
| <b>Connection to Nottingham</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Trending</b>   | <b>14</b> |
| with Tony Jackson   |           |
| <b>Down at the Depot</b>  | <b>16</b> |
| The Grand Opening   |           |

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



**There will be a GCS stall  
at the Dirty Duck  
Christmas Market  
on Sunday 27 November**

BRIDGE is published and distributed by The Grantham Canal Society, Registered Charity No. 507337 (hereinafter 'the publisher'). The views expressed in this publication reflect the author(s) opinions and are not necessarily the views of the publisher and editor. The published material, adverts, editorials and all other content are published in good faith. The publisher acknowledges all trademarks.

Please note that all images in this magazine are copyright of either the photographer or The Grantham Canal Society unless stated otherwise.

There is definitely a feeling of optimism in the air ... it is tangible ... I can almost taste it! What am I waffling on about, dear reader? (I do get the impression though sometimes, that very few read this thing as responses are, to say the least, sparse).

Anyway to get back to my point: the real possibility of a connection to Nottingham and the River Trent is becoming more of a reality. Skip forward to page 12 if you would like to read the latest news on this, in my opinion, the most important of topics, one that I think underpins the essential *raison d'être* of this society

Sadly, due to the underwhelming response for my plea in the last issue for content for a proposed 2023 calendar, this will not now be happening; I will make one final attempt next year and also with help of Polly Browne, we will be introducing a range of Christmas cards for members to purchase.

While I'm on the topic of membership participation, it's only 45 days to Christmas (as I write this drivel), so why not make an early start on your New Year's resolutions, drag yourselves away from that wretched TV and become a volunteer ... do something worthwhile, which costs nothing but your time and get some fresh air and exercise into the bargain! There is an ongoing demand for any number of volunteers covering a very wide spectrum of disciplines, but it's not all about puddling the canal (if you don't know what I'm on about, 'Google' it!). Contact our volunteer co-ordinator at [volunteer@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteer@granthamcanal.org) for further info or go to: [www.granthamcanal.org](http://www.granthamcanal.org)



Write to me at:

[bridge@granthamcanal.org](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org)

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

Brian Cantwell (Editor)



# Select us as your cause

**Great News - we have been selected again by the Co-op Local Community Fund as one of the causes that they are supporting this year.**

For every pound spent by Co-op Group members in their stores (those with frontages that have turquoise lettering on a grey background) on Co-op branded products using their membership card, 1p goes to the member's nominated charity. To nominate the Grantham Canal Society (GCS) as their chosen charity members should log on to the GCS page on the Co-op website at <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/70006>

Most of you supported us last year, for which we are incredibly grateful, but please, please, may we ask that you do so again this year? We have a new cause number and this is a new link, so even if you nominated us last year as your chosen charity, you will need to choose us again to continue your support.

If you live locally and your closest store is in Bottesford (which is the store that we are linked with) and you don't have access to the internet, you can nominate us over the telephone by calling the Co-op Customer Services phone line on 0800 0686 727 quoting our reference number, which is 70006. Unfortunately, if you live further away, it is only possible to choose us over the internet by using the link.

Every single Co-op member that chooses us makes a difference and we are so grateful for all of the support that we get. The more members that nominate us, the more funds we get, enabling us to repair and restore this beautiful canal for the benefit of everyone and our wildlife, so please join the Co-op and support us.





## CO-OP MEMBERSHIP – CHARITABLE CAUSE UPDATE

We now have the final figure for the donation that we will be getting from the Co-op from the funding year that has just finished – **£1,841.97** . Fantastic result!



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 website [giveasyoulive.com](http://giveasyoulive.com) or app and sit back and let good things happen!

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



Another way to help is by using Amazon’s Smile option:  
Shop at [smile.amazon.co.uk](http://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](mailto:bridge@granthamcanal.org)

### 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

## THREE SHIRES

As the 2022 cruising season draws to a close, we can report that Three Shires has had a very successful season raising over £9,000 for the society.

This has only been possible because of the support of over 1,000 passengers who have joined us on various cruises since the start of the season in March. We have enjoyed taking many passengers on various celebratory trips, including a 92nd birthday party, a 60th Wedding Anniversary, a few reunions, and a hen party to name just a few. From the feedback we were given on the trips and also via our TripAdvisor page, our passengers always gave us top marks!

The trip boat cannot run without our dedicated team of Skippers and Crew. Statistics show that our volunteers have turned out 107 times during the season. So a big thank you to this small team that keeps Three Shires running for the benefit of our passengers.

This year we have been blessed with lovely weather, with most trips enjoying blue skies and sunshine - we even managed a trip on the hottest day of the year! However, the lack of rain has also caused us operational issues, with the water level dropping dramatically. This prevented us cruising to Harlaxton, and therefore unable to offer three and four hour trips.

To conserve water we moored Three Shires above Lock 18 at the new mooring on the non-towpath side, meaning that Lock 18 could remain closed, saving water in the Summit Pound.

Over the winter period we will be carrying out various maintenance tasks on the boat so that it will be 'ship-shape' ready for next season, starting on Mothers Day 2023.

We look forward to seeing you then!



Melton 41 Club from a recent Three Shires trip (sent in by Chairman John Wood)

# CULVERT REPAIRS

**The Problem:** The canal had run dry during the summer months causing fish to die and distressing the wildlife. This major water retention problem had been brought to the attention of the Canal and River Trust (CRT) by a local action group Grantham Canal Water Restoration Group (GCWRG) who had campaigned long and hard with CRT to get something done to alleviate the lack of water.

**The Solution:** Repair major leakages on the canal offside banks around the vicinity of Culverts 39 and 42 in the Kinoulton area and GCS, as an approved contractor for CRT, have been using their volunteer labour to support them in carrying out this work.

Redundant sheet piling that had been installed over a number of years were taken out and the banks excavated to find the voids where water penetration from the canal had successfully made its way into the culverts.

Deep trenches were excavated in places over 2m deep along the bank side, then filled and compacted with puddle clay to form a waterproof barrier to seal the leakages (60 tonnes of clay from Castle Clay Sales, Stoke on Trent who specialise in providing Puddle Clay to Canal Organisations was delivered on site).

There will be more repairs to do, e.g., Culvert 45 at Fishponds Cottage, but it will be determined by finance from CRT if needed and, of course, GCS can supply labour (free of charge). We are also looking to do this winter some major tree clearance in the canal bed from Spencers Bridge 24 to Colston Bridge 23

Mechanical excavators and a dumper were hired locally from AE Faulkes, Hickling and our volunteers completed the project working full time in just over a week. A fantastic effort by all those involved.



That's a lot of puddle clay! and (right) the clay being compacted into a trench to prevent water ingress

# DENTON WEIR

Report extract

The bridge over the weir was replaced in the 1990s to allow better access and for cycle use. The new structure however, severely restricted the flow over the weir with no opportunity to raise water; the bridge was also found to be very corroded. We therefore decided to raise the bridge structure, clean and paint the framework of beams which support the deck plates and make some provision for the location of temporary stop planks.

With a towpath closure in place the first job was to remove the deck plates which were so badly corroded that most had to be drilled out and the threads in the beam flanges re-tapped. With the plates off we were able to jack the framework to a convenient height and temporarily support ready for cleaning and painting, also affording room to raise the bridge support walls.

The brick support walls were constructed while the paint was going on, ready for lowering the steel support framework into its new position.

With the new walls in place, the steel support framework lowered into position & secured, the deck plates replaced, and the approach ramps were re-graded to suit the raised bridge deck level. The stop plank support blocks have been cast ready for raising of the weir crest as required.

Probably the trickiest part of the job, was getting materials to the work site and keeping them safe, which involved a considerable amount of help from our boat crews, and rather a lot of wheelbarrow work, thanks to all who helped.

Neil Truscott, Project Manager





# WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION

A bunch of photographs from our unpaid volunteers working hard to maintain, refurbish and restore this wonderful canal, broadly covering the last three month's efforts. I could easily fill this entire magazine with their images. Ed



Tree trunk removed 5 August



Eel rescue at a dry Lock No 2 on 13 August



Pole sawing in the Amazon? (19 August)



Hole to be filled



Job done! 16 Sept



24 September: fence job at Irish Jacks bridge and Culvert 39. Above the culvert, 2 of 3 fence posts had rotted through. The fence protects an 8ft drop into the stream bed so the posts had to be replaced before the planned start of the culvert and leak works.



30 September: a lot of work done clearing grass etc and self sets around Lock 13 and opening access to the Sustrans route which will allow further surveying for future restoration.



Mudlark on silt removal duties at Lock 16, 28 October



Above and left, work continues on the workshop at the depot (21 October)

## CONNECTION TO THE RIVER TRENT

We are always being asked by supporters of the Grantham Canal Society *"will the canal ever get connected to the River Trent again"*?

Well, plans are afoot to realise this aim, albeit that I am sure it will be a long drawn-out process.

Firstly we must acknowledge that work on the canal has been skewed towards the eastern end of the canal, that is from the A1 at Grantham to Woolsthorpe by Belvoir primarily because this is where the water comes into the canal with Denton and Knipton reservoirs being the main feeders.

Work has been concentrated on the Woolsthorpe flight of locks with more recently Locks 15 and 14 being rebuilt with Heritage Lottery money and a new slipway constructed so that our canal maintenance boats can be hauled out of the water for general maintenance.

Our trip boat Three Shires, a main source of income in the spring/summer period, is dependent on our maintenance teams clearing the canal of weeds and overhanging branches so that our paying guests enjoy summer cruises.

However we have an untapped population in the west ie Nottingham/West Bridgford and various other boroughs where it is felt that a western base could be established to attract volunteers to help with maintaining and clearing the canal of detritus, trees, reeds etc.

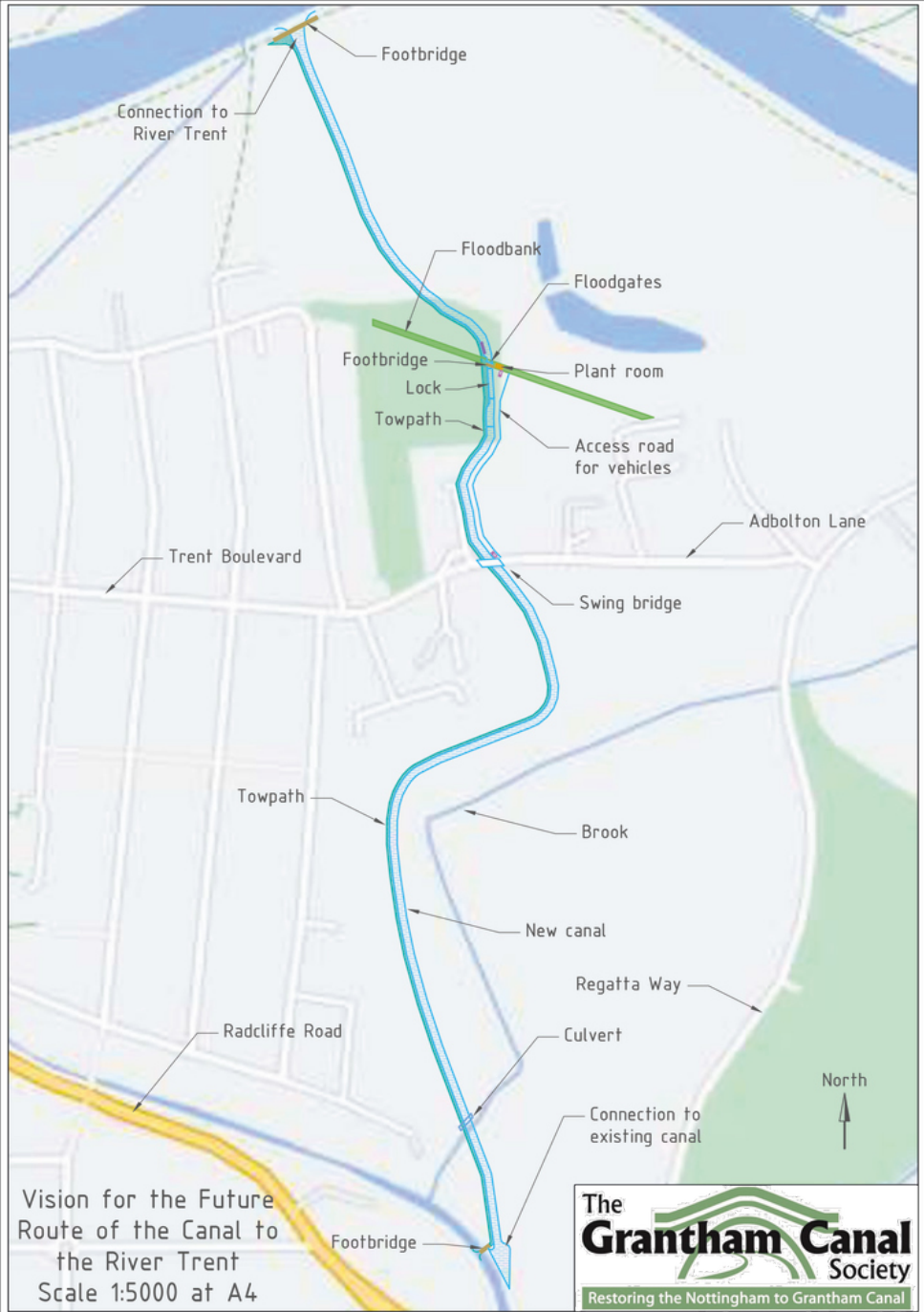
We have put a provisional plan together to reconnect the canal to the River Trent through the Adbolton Lane approach and have also identified a location for a western base

Ongoing presentations have been made to Nottinghamshire County Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council, The Environment Agency and Ruth Edwards, MP for Rushcliffe. In addition we have also spoken with and are due to meet with National Highways concerning the lifting of the Eastbound lane of Gamston Bridge (A6011) and Gamston Lings Bar bridge (A52). National Highways have a pot of money to "put right the things that have been done wrong" over the years; they are already funding a scheme on the Cotswold canal

This is not going to happen overnight but if we could get a safeguarded route for a new Trent Connection then that would be a major step forward but more importantly in the short term establish a working base in the West

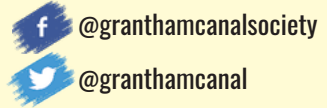
*Tony Osbond*

(General Manager)



# #Trending

by Tony Jackson



Gawd! Tempted to simply leave it at that! With parts of the canal drying up during the prolonged dry weather and swans succumbing to what we think is Avian Flu; some of our social media followers became a little animated!



There wasn't much we could do about either of these situations but to report them to the relevant authorities. Having a greater presence on social media for the Grantham Canal than 'the authorities', much of the anguish felt in the community landed on our plate. Reporting dead or dying swans and attempting to get

carcasses removed wasn't easy nor particularly successful. With so many agencies to choose from and so much misinformation surrounding the process, the system is broken. We never did receive confirmation whether Avian Flu was the cause of death, despite leaving contact details. It's reasonable to assume it was responsible.

Someone must have implored Him on High to intervene, because the recent prolonged rainfall has begun to turn those parts of our muddy ditch into something resembling a canal again.

Not to dwell on the negative; there's so much positivity – oh yes there is! News of repairs to leaks in the canal bank in the Kinoulton area was well received, as was recent news of the £1,841.97 donation from the Co-op Community Fund! Thank you to our Co-op



shoppers for supporting us in this – you keep us working! Residents in Lady Bay rallied to care for a family of swans left high & dry, helped along with the donation of a bag of food from local business Brinvale Bird Food. You continue in delighting us with your fabulous photographs; reminding us we must all continue in our endeavours to restore our wonderful amenity, ensuring its permanence in the Vale of Belvoir for future generations to enjoy.

## BEQUEST

Michael was a steam person through and through and in the 50 years I knew him he was an experienced engineer and a fountain of knowledge for the steam restoration movement. In addition to his undoubted experience of steam ploughing he was a supporter of the Great Central Railway restoration with his interest being both the southern leg from Loughborough and the northern leg at Nottingham. His other passion was the Grantham canal and particularly since the restoration commenced. He has been an active supporter arranging for the society to have stands at Rempstone rally over several years.



Michael Beeby 1937 – 2020

Michael's intention is that his bequest is used to further extended restoration and that others are trained to continue in future years the projects that have already been commenced.

As a personal friend I miss him. He was a great but unassuming character the likes of which we do not see very often today.

*Mike Stone*

## OBITUARY

John Baylis BEM who died on 7 July aged 82, had been an Inland Waterways Association Region Committee member and the WRG representative for many years and was possibly the most influential character in the East Midlands waterways over a period spanning near half a century



John had many connections with East Midlands canals, including the Grantham. Sometime during the late 1970s a Ruston Bucyrus 3RB tracked excavator had been purchased by Dr. John Marshall (a Boots colleague of John's) which saw some dredging for the Grantham Canal Restoration Society at the Fellows, Morton and Clayton Arm in Nottingham.

He will be sadly missed.

From IWA newsletter 'Aegre' Nov 22



## MEANWHILE ... DOWN AT THE DEPOT



Chairman, Mike Stone, thanked those present and all of our supporters for making our slipway construction possible through their generous donations. The hulls of our growing fleet can now be maintained without obscene sums changing hands for craning out; representing huge savings year on year.

The Weather Gods blessed us with sunny skies on Sunday 9 October for the occasion, when we also paid tribute to stalwart volunteer George Gee. George's expertise in operating Mudlark, our dredger, is legendary. He's sorely missed.

George's considerable contribution to the restoration of the canal is now acknowledged with an inscribed plaque affixed to Mudlark. We were pleased to welcome George's daughters: Beverly, Tina and Denise, along with other members of his family for the unveiling.



Our catering team provided us with excellent fare and the BBQ boys were kept busy throughout the day.

It was heart warming to meet and chat with so many of our members, whose ongoing support keeps us working for the good of this great canal. Much of the food and drink was supplied by our volunteers, so with meagre expenses we were able to bank £530 from donations received on the day. Thank you!



Chairman Mike Stone dispensing the drinks