

BRIDGE



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society

WINTER 22/23

In this issue:

Our youngest volunteer

Dig ... Dig ... Dig ...

It's a new year!



Published quarterly by

The
Grantham Canal
Society

RESTORING THE NOTTINGHAM TO GRANTHAM CANAL

Philip Redford



CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

A New Year! New Projects! New Ideas! New Members! New Volunteers! I hope you are looking forward to 2023 as much as I am with a very positive opportunity to deliver further progress in the restoration of the Grantham Canal.

Already plans are in place to increase the length of restored canal and to widen the area of the Society's activities in Rushcliffe. Progress at both ends of the waterway from Nottingham to Grantham.

Let's look at the New Projects in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire which build on work already achieved:-

- Our professional development of Woolsthorpe Depot as our main base continues and we already have an effective slipway for craft maintenance and good storage for our equipment. Improvements are now focussed on the original building where the floor is in need of improvement to create an acceptable marketing, visitors and volunteer centre. Following that work there will be further enhancements.

- We are well aware that the Locks 18 to 16 require some TLC and that to achieve this we need to obtain at least two sets of stop-planks so that the locks can be de-watered safely. Coincident with their use, the fish need to be removed by specialist contractors before draining the locks. We hope this work will significantly reduce the loss of water in this area.

- The top length from Lock 18 to the A1 needs some spot dredging to maintain sufficient depth of water for the Three Shires to continue its very active trip schedule.

- Working parties, supported by Belvoir Estates, are clearing the Knipton Feeder from the reservoir outlet and, where necessary, rebuilding the underground lengths. This should enhance the water level in the 19 mile pound at least as far as Kinoulton.

- However, there are still some areas of the canal in both Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire with significant issues. To enable the water from Knipton to reach Redmile some spot removal of mud and reed will be required to permit water to flow. In both counties some leaks need attention and, of course, there is the 'dry length' to be addressed. That is a project for future years.

- Thanks to support from the Environment Agency, working parties have already commenced actions to improve the local area and towpath at Lock 1 where the canal originally joined the River Trent. The groups have included local supporters from Lady Bay and Gamston who are concerned at the

🗨️ p 4

FROM THE EDITOR

CONTENTS

Chairman's Letter	2
Easy Online donating ...	5
Our youngest active volunteer Michelle Storer reports	6
Dig this! Tony Jackson	7
Workparty & Construction News	8
Trending with Tony Jackson	18

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

Thanks to IWA Warwickshire for their generous £100 donation which will go towards the costs of the Knipton Feeder works

ADVANCE NOTICE

Make a note in your diaries:
The Mikron Theatre Co will be performing 'TWITCHERS' at The Plough Inn, Hickling on Tuesday 6th June at 7pm.



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.

Printed by Flexpress Ltd, Leicester LE4 3BY

Are you reading this and not yet a member? Listed here are a few facts which may hopefully persuade you that joining the GCS is a 'good thing':

- your £20 donation is for the betterment of the entire community
- the restoration of this lovely canal is for the benefit of all, walkers, cyclists and boaters alike
- your contribution is essential – you will become a vital cog in this restoration

Contact our membership organiser today at membership@granthamcanal.org for further info or go to: www.granthamcanal.org

Ah! so you *are* already a member ... thank you for your contribution and continuing support, but can I ask you to spread the word and invite family and friends to also join? This will help us enormously.

So have you thought about volunteering? No? ok there are numerous opportunities to help the society and ultimately the restoration of the canal to regain its rightful position within the British canal network ... and the great thing about volunteering is that it costs you nothing, only some of your time. The rewards are, in my opinion, huge:

- the satisfaction that you've made a positive difference to your community
- the benefit to the environment by restoring the canal and protecting wildlife habitats along it (and making sure those areas stay protected)

Email volunteer@granthamcanal.org now!



Write to me at:
bridge@granthamcanal.org
with your comments, ideas, news, submissions, articles for inclusion, etc.

Brian Cantwell (Editor)

condition of the western end of the canal. Let's hope they are encouraged to continue their excellent work moving east towards Cotgrave.

• We are keen to locate a site in West Bridgford for a Western Depot and Volunteer Centre. We have targeted a couple of sites and are awaiting formal responses from the organisations involved. If you know of a potential place near the route of the canal please let us know.

We regularly receive new ideas and suggestions, etc., for various improvements and projects from members of the public and other interested parties. These are very welcome but unfortunately the GCS simply does not have sufficient active volunteers to enable them to be taken forward. Ideas need to come with somebody who is willing and able to act as a Team Leader to help develop all the suggestions we receive. Please don't be surprised if, in response to your suggestion, we say "can you please come and implement it as we don't have the resources?" All of us are getting older and what we need is New Blood in the form of more volunteers who will form the nucleus of a team to deliver new ideas. Sorry if our response appears ungrateful but we have physical limits!

PLEASE! We need new members to join the Society. We currently have nearly 850 members but we need to top 1,000 to demonstrate to Local Authorities, grant fund providers, and others that there is substantial support for the restoration of the Nottingham to Grantham Canal. In 1969 our predecessors stopped the canal from becoming a linear rubbish tip. Fifty years later we still need to protect the route of the canal from predators so that the whole of the 33 mile towpath continues to be available to walkers, cyclists and others who use it for their health and enjoyment. There are already three areas where the current route is interrupted and prevents access by those who are less active and if we must remain alert as there are regular attempts to restrict access.

So new volunteers are both welcome and essential if the Society is to make significant progress. Everyone is welcome and, in my experience, everyone can participate and add something to our little bit of history. We need youth to replace our retiring veterans, those who enjoy meeting people, organising parties or events, like to work at home, enjoy flora and fauna, could organise cycle or running competitions, environmental tasks, are budding new reporters, students where leadership is part of their course, potential project managers, planners ... you name it as with thirty miles of public footpath and an expensive canal to restore there is a role you could enjoy!

Please think how you could make a contribution to an historic project that will last for 200 more years! Then just email your details to: volunteer@granthamcanal.org

Have a great 2023 as a member of or a volunteer with the GCS.



Log on to the GCS page on the Co-op website at <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/70006> to nominate GCS as your chosen charity when shopping at a Co-op Food store – you can also nominate us by calling Co-op Customer Services on 0800 0686 727 quoting our reference number 70006. If you are not local to the Bottesford store, it is only possible to choose us over the Internet by using the link above.



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.

Another way to donate funds via your online shopping is to use www.easyfundraising.org.uk



with easyfundraising, you shop, brands donate to us, it won't cost you anything extra!

- 1 Sign up at: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause
- 2 Search for (The Grantham Canal Society)
- 3 Your favourite brands donate to GCS

7,000+ online brands



Get the App ...



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

OUR YOUNGEST ACTIVE VOLUNTEER

by Michelle Storer

We have about 120 active volunteers currently, these include work and construction parties, Rangers, events and education, boat maintenance and crew and management and administration.

Whilst attending the annual dinner on Thursday 26th January I was lucky to be seated with Jakub Strickland, and to hear all about his personal connection to the canal as a volunteer.

At 26 years old, Jakub is currently our youngest active volunteer; he has been a regular volunteer with GCS for approximately 7 years.

Jakub works full time in despatch for Long Clawson Cheese Factory and is from Melton Mowbray. He volunteers most weekends with the Saturday work party. He first heard about the GCS whilst out socialising at the Plough public house at Hickling where he picked up a leaflet, made contact, was invited along for an induction a week later and the rest is history!

Jakub has also contributed to the Lock 15 restoration, working on the project 5 days a week, his duties included bricklaying and pouring concrete.

Through his contact with GCS, Jakub was employed by the Canal and River Trust on the Heritage Trainee Scheme which he undertook from September 2017 for a year.

During his time as a volunteer Jakub has undertaken training and has completed courses as a banksman (assisting with heavy machinery) and in using a concrete jack hammer. Jake has also had supervision to drive our work boats.

Jakub said "it would be great to see the whole 33 miles of the Grantham Canal fully in water and connected to the waterways network." He feels that a fully navigable canal will be great for tourism and business along the canal, both for Nottingham and Grantham town centres.



DIG THIS!

Tony Jackson has been digging into history ...

Hundreds upon hundreds of illiterate, uncouth roughnecks, with little regard for the law, are rampaging through the Vale of Belvoir! The mania, which has gripped the country by storm, finally arriving in the Vale! Before dashing to lock up your daughters and hide under the stairs – you're too late!

The year is 1793, and these are navigators (navvies), arrived in the area to build the Grantham Canal. The last time all hell let loose on this pastoral landscape, was around 150 years earlier. On this occasion, villagers finding it prudent in keeping their heads down, discovering themselves betwixt opposing factions in the English Civil War.

And so, 'The Nottingham to Grantham Navigation Company', with £75,000 in the kitty from savvy investors and a compulsory purchase order tucked in their belt, got their spades out and started to dig ... and they dug, and they dug, for four years they dug, and they must have had really shiny spades at the end of it! The more skilled, building the locks and bridges, the warehouses and wharves. Lock keepers and their families needed somewhere to live, so cottages too were built. Nor must we forget those lovable providers of motive power, the horses, in need of their stables.

All this building required cart loads of bricks, cart loads and cart loads. It seemed sensible to make these on site where you needed them most, so brickworks were established along the canal corridor. One of these was at Woolsthorpe, where a flight of seven locks, some bridges, a couple of cottages, stables, and a maintenance yard were required.

There's many a cottage in the area built of 'Woolsthorpe Brick'. Until Mr Bosch came up with the hammer drill, it was a devil of a job drilling into some of them, as I discovered, as an apprentice electrician in the Swinging Sixties! These bricks were hand-made and with rudimentary control over the kilns, hardness varied from brick to brick.

I don't appear to have any photos of the canal being built, but this one is fabulous: Willis's Lock (17) at Woolsthorpe, undergoing some repair work in 1890.



JANUARY 2023

General Manager Tony Osbond

The first day back Friday January 6th started with the usual chat around the Depot table sharing Christmas experiences, the good and the bad, fortified with tea and a generous helping of Mary's assortment of cakes!

Its been a busy three weeks thus far with an extremely cold spell in the middle of the month with a thickness of ice on the canal that followed and an extremely wet start to the new year.

The canal is full to overflowing in places and the five locks are full and holding water. This is good especially for the bottom gates on Lock 16 as the timber in the gates has absorbed water and expanded and as a consequence water leakage has substantially been reduced.

The new Depot workshop floor has been laid by the construction team and our volunteers are now sprucing the place up with white emulsion paint on the walls. By the time you read this, we will have put the dust treatment seal on the floor prior to Jim Gaut, with volunteer help, getting equipment back in place presently stored in the Depot Marketing area.

The construction team along with David Cross are putting up a covered area between the workshop and Storage Unit 1 so that wheelbarrows and other construction material can be stored.

Maintenance on the summit pound is an ongoing job making sure that the waterway is clear of reed bergs, tree branches, etc., so that our Three Shires has a clear run when the season starts again on Mothering Sunday 19th March.

Using Mudlark we have repaired water leaks from the canal on the offside bank at Casthorpe/Denton Lane Bridge 64 and with Mudlark now positioned in the winding hole at Denton Weir to carry out silt removal.

Construction work to Denton Weir is now complete and repairs to the damaged pontoon at the A1 end of the canal is to be carried out next month.

We have plans to complete maintenance work on the Knipton feeder and having had a meeting with Antony Haslam (Belvoir Estates Manager); Colin Bryan now has a task force assembled to start clearance work on the feeder to ensure that the water coming from Denton Reservoir is not lost by leakages.

Vegetation clearance has been ongoing at Locks 11, 10 and 9 so that CRT can carry out survey work on these three locks. Currently the Friday and Saturday teams have been involved and as I write this we only have Lock 9 to clear. Just before Christmas we did a major vegetation clearance at Lock 3 in the Gamston area and are due to start in early February vegetation clearance from Lock 1 at

👉 p 10



Santa & his elves pose for a festive photoshoot! L-R David Briggs, Tony Fisher, Stephen Pownall, Richard Leonard, Kevin Weston, Colin Bryan; the dude in red is allegedly Alec Hampson.



Knipton Reservoir on a cold & frosty January morning

the River Trent end all the way to the culverted section at Lady Bay Bridge Road. Work will include smartening up the gates and improving the towpath surface which is quite muddy in places. We are working closely with the Lady Bay volunteers on this project as we are with the Environment Agency as the canal in this section is under their ownership.

So a busy start to the year for the teams which I am sure will continue as we move towards spring and the long awaited summer time.



Some photos from a chilly January (clockwise): John T getting down & dirty! Mudlark getting a tow up the canal to carry out some dredging. Volunteers busy working on Denton Weir spillway clearance.



Construction work continues at improving and enhancing the Depot (photos from Fri 13 Jan 23)



Clearing the surrounds of Lock 3 at Gamston on 10 Dec 22 (photo: Anthony Goody)



Jake installing one of the two remaining walk leaflet holders at Redmile and Crowwell Bishop.



Removal of a low hanging branch above the towpath near Denton weir (Sat 7 Jan 23)

David Slater



Lock 11 nearly cleared! Great job by the Saturday team who bravely worked through the freezing fog & frost to finish clearing the lock (21 Jan 2023)



Work on the workshop floor nearing completion - December 2022





Left: chainsaw action on Fri 6 Jan and (above) at Harlaxton Fri 13 Jan



Fully loaded Centauri and the van with a good stack of logs piled up at the depot.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE?

It certainly is down on the canal! The sheer diversity of the works carried out by our volunteer workparty and construction teams is immense: from bilge clearing (ugh!) to removing the seemingly never-ending floating debris (both natural and human-derived variety) that accumulates in the canal and from engineering projects like lock restoration to logging operations that might rival those on the Amazon. Of course we do plant trees as well as remove them!



A bit of precision trimming to make a stopper for the hole where the lambs fall into the culvert at Knipton feeder - Fri 10 Feb (photo: *Hugh Crawford*)



Love on a Cold Canal? Spotted at a frosty Lock 18 on 12 Dec 2022



Great photo by Alec Hampson of the canal water spilling over the gates at Lock 17 (1 Feb 2023)



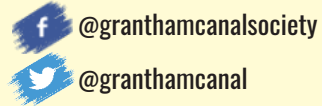
A very tidy-looking Lock 3 at Gamston (10 Dec 2022)



Start of reed clearance east of Hickling Basin (19 Feb 2023)

#Trending

by Tony Jackson



Signs of new life are beginning to appear along the towpath, birds are becoming excitable in seeking mates and casting a beady eye over potential nest material. Lambs tails on the Hazel are not so monogamous, practising free love in casting their pollen to the breeze.

Reminding ourselves winter is still with us and mother nature, even in these global warming times, might still have a trick or two up her sleeve.

Our followers have delighted us with their winter pictures adding a little cheer through the dull dark days. Gary posted this fabulous acrylic on paper frosty scene, while, prompted by this, Laurence showed us this wonderful crocheted blanket inspired by the canal.



Twitter follower Paul ran the whole canal in one go recently, being gracious enough to offer his admiration for our volunteers working on Lock 11 in such icy conditions.

Your love for the canal is demonstrated almost every day on our social media. Do make 2023 the year you make a difference. Do something positive to support the canal. Help us move this job on!

You can support the canal in many ways:

- Join us! More members gives us more influence with authorities and funders
- Sign up for one of our online shopping schemes. I find the 'easyfundraising' one intuitive
- LotterySK provides us with ongoing income, giving you a chance to win £25,000
- The Co-op scheme worked well for us last year – lets see if we can replicate this for 2023!
- A one-off donation?

Do visit our website (www.granthamcanal.org), where you'll find the 'Join us' and 'Donate' tabs; If you'd like to discuss your donation, email Jane at treasurer@granthamcanal.org

For those who've been supporting us through Amazon Smile, you'll no doubt be aware that Amazon are pulling the plug on this. By the time it's wound up (20 February 2023), we should have netted a little over £400 for the cause. Thank you all so much! Amazon's so damned convenient to use, but I'm certainly going to re-evaluate my online go-to places to make more use of 'easyfundraising' – so the canal gets the benefits!

VOLUNTEERING – ONE OF THE REAL VALUES

The spreadsheet data below (supplied by Rod Gordon) shows a summary of hours recorded by our volunteers for the last two years and it makes quite interesting reading.

2021													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
General	246	173	638	1205	1037	759	1115	1705	1310	1246	1148	614	11196
Skilled	30	125	225	211	172	143	165	130	515	603	276	109	2704
Professional	65	43	62	98	51	54	43	46	55	55	47	49	668
Total	341	341	925	1514	1260	956	1323	1881	1880	1904	1471	772	14568
Individuals	7	7	7	7	5	4	6	7	6	5	5	5	
Teams	1	1	5	6	12	9	9	8	10	11	9	8	

2022													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
General	1021	881	482	1110	1395	586	852	1062	582	825	800	434	10030
Skilled	259	260	101	310	441	604	510	707	547	437	310	210	4696
Professional	55	60	70	79	72	65	42	84	66	72	82	50	797
Total	1335	1201	653	1499	1908	1255	1404	1853	1195	1334	1192	694	15523
Individuals	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	3	
Teams	9	8	5	9	11	7	8	8	6	9	5	6	

Now a little dabble into simple mathematics

(it has to be simple for me!)

Let's take the 2022 total 15,523 hours and apply the UK government's "National Living Wage" (*which is the minimum applied to those aged 23 and over*) of £9.50 per hour, then our total wage bill for 2022 would be at least £147,468. In reality of course, it would be much, much more as many of our volunteers are either fully active, semi-retired or retired highly-skilled professionals who would command salaries far in excess of the Government's standard. Think about it!

Editor

How nice to receive a letter from one of our readers (Chris Hassall of the Rolle Canal & Northern Devon Waterways Society who lives in Bideford, Devon) – proof that at least one person does in fact read this babble ...

Dear Editor,

Referring to the report on the Lady Bay end of the canal and progress towards connection with the Trent, I was about to ask for a map to be circulated to show the proposed route.

Then I scrolled down, and there it was!

I can remember in the 1970s and 80s we considered various routes to bypass the lowered A52 bridge (now A6011) and had great schemes for incorporating the Polser Brook – that being long before the Lings Bar road was built effectively blocking any further attempt.

But in those days the GCRS (as was) had nothing like the clout the GCS can demonstrate through the fantastic on-going lock restorations at Muston and Woolsthorpe. The thought that the Lings Bar culvert could one day be raised is mind-blowing.

Keep up the good work, (but of course you will !).

CAPTION THIS!



CAPTION THIS!



*Michael Hibbert was the only reader to respond and came up with this witty riposte to our summer CAPTION THIS!
George ... I said hit the nail on the head!*

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