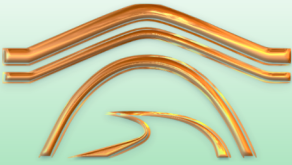


BRIDGE



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society

AUTUMN 23

In this issue:

IWA appeal

When two worlds meet

Duke's Tramway

GCS and CRT working together

Otter doing her best to keep the canal clear



Published quarterly by

The
Grantham Canal
Society

RESTORING THE NOTTINGHAM TO GRANTHAM CANAL



CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

Greetings from a rather damp and battered garden following very heavy rain showers! Your Management team has planned a very active workload for the remainder of this year; key features are several projects including:

- An investigative survey of Lock 13 to ascertain if it can be restored by GCS without major destruction of the basic structure.
- Removal of shallow stretches of the navigable canal.
- Continue the development of the Trent Link Project.
- Repairs to Locks 18, 17 & 16 to minimise the loss of water through leaks.
- Seeking a solution to retain water levels in the canal below Bridge 6.

In addition, the Society volunteers will assist CRT with necessary repairs to maintain the water integrity in various lengths of the canal.

The Society can only achieve the projects above if there is income to meet the costs of raw materials, equipment and essentially the skills of GCS volunteers.

Additionally everything above needs supportive management within the GCS who can both lead and back up the projects and to ensure that:

- Projects run to time,
- Have access to the necessary resources,
- Are supported through publicity,
- Have received the required levels of approval,
- All items mentioned must meet the requirements of the H&SE

Our most urgent requirements now are for individuals who understand:

Communications & Publicity – we have stories to tell

Administration – keeping the society on track

Ecology – the canal is a 30 mile environmental park

IT Skills – GCS needs a new website

Relaxation from work – delivering small Social Activities

Health & Safety – importantly needs a supervisor

When? N O W – if we are to meet your expectations

PLEASE HELP – like all voluntary groups we need more bodies at the helm

Please, please, please if you are able to assist the Society to move forward contact membership@granthamcanal.org expressing your willingness to help.

FROM THE EDITOR

CONTENTS

Chairman's Letter	2
Three Shires	4
Workparty & Construction update	6
When two worlds meet	8
The Duke's Tramway	9
IWA Appeal	12
Special Workparty report	14
Trending	15

SUMMER CRAFT FAIR 10-3pm
Sunday
27 August
at the Depot

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

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 (*Social Media Icons Vectors by vecteezy.com*).

Please note that all images are copyright of either the photographer or the publisher unless stated otherwise.

Printed by Flexpress Ltd, Leicester LE4 3BY

Mike Stone continued ...

For volunteers undertaking some roles age is not a barrier and you do not have to live locally as communication is easy in today's IT world. Our responsibilities cover 30 miles of canal and whilst our significant activity is concentrated at Woolsthorpe and West Bridgford we have active members who work from home and never see the canal! I am sure some readers will have skills that could help GCS move restoration forward! Please send an email and show your interest and support. Thank you.

'Trapped' as I am on the Peak Forest (lower) canal for a few days - due to a broken lifting bridge - has led me to dwell on our general reliance on fully functional transport links, not to mention our reliance on IT and their associated benefits and downsides affecting our daily lives ... as I believe transportation links seem to mirror communication lines.

Our day-to-day lives are now more than ever dependent on technology; or maybe it might be more correct to say dependent on *today's* technology; after all technology in one form or another has been part of mankind's makeup for millennia. This fact is of course very evident when travelling (or trying to!) the canal network and no more so than when looking at the remarkable restored Industrial Revolution remnants at Bugsworth Basin.

So here I am tapping the keyboard on my 21st century typing machine, later to send off the resultant text by email using the onboard router and the mobile network. This communication marvel depends of course on the strength and resilience of the mobile network which as we all know can vary tremendously.

In the meantime, the queue of boats at the broken bridge is growing and I suspect tempers may well get somewhat frayed!



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

Brian Cantwell (Editor)

THREE SHIRES TRIP BOAT *by Elizabeth Bland*

Three Shires is a Travellers' Choice!

The Three Shires team are proud to have been awarded the Tripadvisor 'Travellers' Choice 2023' Award in recognition of us earning 5-star reviews consistently through the 2022 season, and the good news is that this year has brought us many more excellent reviews, both from passengers on the day, and also through Tripadvisor feedback.

Comments on Tripadvisor range from the cleanliness of the boat to the friendliness and professionalism of the crews. One comment referred to *Three Shires* as "a hidden gem."



Further examples cover other aspects of the passenger experience:

"A superb slow cruise along a beautiful stretch of canal along with a highly competent, friendly and attentive crew." , "Beautifully relaxing couple of hours, delightful crew and a lovely cup of tea too. Very peaceful, close to nature" and also this lovely comment: "Great value for money, would recommend to others. Thank you Three Shires for allowing us to make more family memories."



A very happy-looking group on a recent *Three Shires* trip

It's a heartening thought that in addition to raising funds for the Society, we are also enriching the lives of those we carry, bringing them close to nature and indeed helping them make new memories.

Most of our passengers say they will be back for more – so why not join them and book a two, three or four hour cruise and experience the joy of the *Three Shires* for yourself!



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

WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION UPDATE *General Manager Tony Osbond*

The thought of summer when I put pen to paper back in May with warm sunny weather and June didn't let us down. Come July and what a contrast as we finished the month heralded as one of the wettest on record.

The start of August is no better as I write my piece for BRIDGE and Saturday 5th we are expecting Storm Antoni!!

At GCS we are not undaunted and there has been plenty going on:

The workshop fitting out is now complete and Jim and his team are making full use of the improved facility. The Marketing Area now has a screened off section for event material and we can now permanently display photographs and marketing literature.

We are shortly to get a Broadband connection into the Depot so we can then get decent Internet access without relying on dubious 4G coverage.

Preparatory work to the Enabling Works for Lock 13 has been carried out by the Construction Team and diversion of the towpath onto the Sustrans track has now been agreed with Lincs County Council. The Enabling Works package of work is due to start in September and the first item of major plant to be delivered has been a 6 tonne dumper recently purchased at an auction of second-hand plant. We are shortly to take delivery of a second hand 8.5 tonne tracked excavator so we will be fully equipped to get on with bringing Lock 13 back to life!

Work at Knipton to repair part of the underground feeder is due to restart in the next month. Belvoir Castle Estates are paying for the material, and we are waiting their instructions on delivery.

Construction and maintenance teams have joined forces on the repointing of Lock 18 chamber wall on the towpath side. It was found that the existing pointing had deteriorated so badly that canal water was leaking into the adjacent field. Teams are working on a regular Tuesday/Friday/Saturday rota working safely off our boat *Earwig*. Once we have completed this exercise we can position the stop planks just above the top gates to then inspect the paddle gear which we fear is in need of replacement

Otter our boat for clearing weed is out of the canal on the slipway under cover having the hydraulics overhauled. A necessary repair as the performance of the boat was seriously compromised. With a bit of luck and a following wind Jim Gaut and his team hope to have it back in the water clearing the ever-increasing volume of weed that plagues the canal at this time of year.



Earwig waiting patiently at her mooring ready for action, earlier this year.

Canal maintenance continues with the teams keeping the navigation free in the summit pound so that *Three Shires* trip boat can continue with it's full calendar of trips for the paying public. Endless tree branches and trees have to be removed from the canal which goes to maintain and add to our store of logs.

Canal Maintenance away from the Woolsthorpe Depot will be carried out at Cotgrave during the next week before the Cotgrave Country Park Family Fun Day on the 20th August.

Plans are taking place at the moment for winter working on the canal outside of the bird nesting season; we will be looking at projects in Lady Bay and Gamston, Cropwell Dry Section which may include the repairs to Culvert 45 at Owthorpe. Culvert 12 just below Longore Bridge is in CRT's programme to be repaired during this financial year with GCS as the contractor to carry out the work.

Finally, background work on the Trent Connection is moving forward. Larry Greenwell, a new volunteer and a Project Manager by profession and with vast experience of handling projects of this nature (previously with Turner & Townsend an international company) has joined the GCS team as our Project Coordinator.

We need to carry out a feasibility study for the link and after interviewing a selection of consultants we have appointed a chosen local company to start the procedure. Our plans are to have this study ready for our next meeting with Notts County Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council, National Highways and the Environment Agency in early November.

So hopefully this brings you all up to date with operational issues. There is a lot going on now and a considerable amount in the planning stages. That said nothing would get done without the dedication of the volunteers that contribute to the delivery so thank you all for what you are doing.

ASHLEY MATHER WRITES ...

Where two worlds meet and you get your friends and colleagues from different aspects of your life together, it can be a nightmare, but I was extremely fortunate that my proposal for an all-day summer outing at Woolsthorpe including a trip on our trip boat *Three Shires* on 20 July worked so well. I am lucky enough to be on the Committee of the Huntingdonshire Local History Society (HLHS) as well as being Company Secretary for the Grantham Canal Society, so it seemed like a match made in heaven, though if it all went badly awry, would I be chucked in the Canal twice over?



Sixteen intrepid HLHS souls beetled up the A1 and avoided going to the first Woolsthorpe they saw despite the historical connotations and on arrival at the depot were rewarded by tea/coffee plus Mary N's homemade cakes (no less than 5 varieties) all beautifully set out on tablecloths in a sparkingly clean depot. Jane G made an excellent tweeny maid.

Their fears that civilisation might be wanting north of Huntingdon were further allayed by a fascinating illustrated talk from Rosemary G in her period costume and a round up from Tony O about the most recent restorations and our plans for the Trent link.

The group mellowed further thanks to a good lunch at the Dirty Duck and the sun shone for our trip on *Three Shires*. The crew were extremely obliging as ever despite having to turn around in interesting places as the group split in two and had an hour each aboard. We were lucky with the weather and by that stage I felt confident enough to let GCS take credit for that too. Two life members were signed up and a donation commensurate with all the TLC we received was rightly paid over to Jane in her other capacity as treasurer.

The moral of the tale dear readers is if any WI, Probus, local history group or other interest group is looking for a splendid day or half day outing, don't hesitate to get in contact with the GCS events team.



THE DUKE'S TRAMWAY *writes Tony Jackson*

Our canal's engineer, William Jessop, must have sucked a fair amount of air through his teeth when tasked with providing a branch of the canal up to Belvoir Castle! The Duke of Rutland was the largest investor in the canal and much of it went through his own lands. He may have wished to have barges unloading on his doorstep, delivering his own coal from his own coal mines. After all, he was talking to one of the country's eminent canal engineers.

Its lofty position 150 feet above the canal, meant the castle would have required 18 or 19 locks to reach it. While this was probably achievable, finding enough water to service them was a challenge too far.

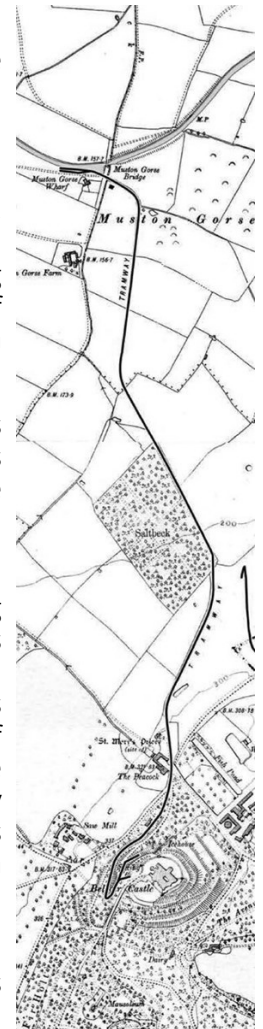
Eminent engineers aren't easily put off ... William came back with a plan.

He proposed a two mile long tramway linking canal and castle. No ordinary tramway; a world's first of its kind tramway! Its wagons were rudimentary to say the least, without the refinement of brakes, which could be found on wagons of contemporary tramways. Instead, a trailing sprag (length of timber) was attached to the rear of wagons at the beginning of the climb preventing them rolling backwards.

The rocket science was the rails. Rectangular section rails had been invented, tried and dismissed. 'T' section rails had been invented, tried and dismissed. Rails with a flange on them (rather than on the wheels) had been tried and dismissed.

Enter the era of the 'I' section rail, still in use today keeping high speed trains on the straight and narrow. It's reasonable to believe, these were the first of their kind in the world. They're first which can be accurately dated. This rail was developed and produced at Butterley Ironworks of Ripley, where William Jessop was a principal partner. He wasn't just an eminent engineer, he was a canny businessman. By the time this tramway; or waggonway as it was described when construction began in 1814, William Jessop's place had been taken by his 3rd son, also called William.

The spelling of waggon with its double 'g', now archaic, was in use at the time.





Termed 'fishbelly' rails (photo above), each was 3ft long weighing in at 40lbs and were cast at the Butterley Ironworks.

The Butterley Company also undertook the installation of the tramway, the total sum being £3,272 in 1814/15. Rails were mounted on square section stone blocks, i.e., not sleepers lying across from one side to the other. This allowed the towing horse to travel unimpeded between the rails. The end of each rail was designed to fit dovetail fashion into the next, being fixed with an iron spike driven into a hardwood plug in a hole in the sleeper block.

Production of these rails continued for 10 – 12 years, being used in other installations before the new kid on the block – malleable iron, ousted them. Malleable iron allowed longer lengths to be produced.

The castle, when the canal was built, wasn't the grand red sandstone Windsor lookalike we see today. When the 5th Duke inherited the title he was still a minor when the canal was being built, reliant on the services of William King, his agent, to look after his interests.

There have been four castles on this site. When our 5th Duke married, his new bride had designs on the place, selling off villages to pay for extensive alterations. Nearly complete when, in 1816, it was almost destroyed by fire.

Other than that which can be found at the castle itself, the weigh-house is the only infrastructure to remain of the tramway. I believe the purpose of the weigh-house was to establish the weight of loaded wagons, i.e. maximum

weight the horse/s could manage for the climb up to the castle.

Opening in 1815, the tramway likely played a part in transporting construction materials for the extensive repairs following the fire in the castle.

The 19th century was a time of plenty at the castle, which would have required an army of servants and vast quantities of food, fuel and other commodities. In one 4-month winter period, more than 15,000 meals were provided, 2,400 bottles of wine and more than 28,000 pints of ale were consumed.



Next to the Peacock Inn, where a second horse would be added for the steepest part of the climb - note the trailing sprag on the waggon.

The tramway's 103 year life is a record in itself. Many contemporary tramways being short lived or converted to steam haulage. This tramway survived horse-drawn 50 years into the steam age.

In June 1941, The Railway Magazine reported "The Belvoir Castle Railway is being dismantled. The rails, ironwork of the wagons and the wharf crane have already been disposed of for scrap metal. Mr. G.E. Dixon of Melton Mowbray is working on the demolition". It is thought this was government requisition for the war effort.

Sources: Robert Humm (a great railway book shop in Stamford, Lincs), The Railway Magazine March 2011, Leicestershire County Archive



The weigh-house, near the wharf.

ONLY IWA – PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS

Sarah Niblock, CEO of Inland Waterways Association

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) is the only independent, national charity dedicated to supporting and regenerating Britain's navigable rivers and canals as places for leisure, living and business.

IWA was formed to protect our inland waterways in 1946 at a time when they were under threat. As a result of IWA's work many navigations that would have closed remained open. Appreciation of the value of our waterways began to grow and restoration schemes got under way. We can now say proudly that since IWA was formed 500 miles of waterways have been restored and another 500 miles are under restoration.



Old Tram Bridge carrying the tramroad linking the two sections of the Lancaster Canal across the River Ribble in Preston.

But, gravely, the clock is starting to turn backwards. The government has announced it's cutting its grant to Canal and River Trust, putting the network's future in peril. IWA is very concerned that without adequate funding our waterways will again face closures and the millions of hours of volunteer time spent restoring and protecting waterways will be lost.

We launched the "Protect Our Waterways" campaign in March 2023 and, by joining IWA, you will strengthen our voice.

Your society is doing a sterling job of restoring your stretch of the navigation and IWA is proud to support the work of societies across the country. Our support includes:

- Educating politicians about the many and varied benefits of our waterways
- Access to expertise to guide your projects through the planning system
- Engineering and heritage expertise to call upon
- Practical Restoration Handbook – the 'go to resource' for all volunteers involved in waterways restoration
- Help with construction costing and planning
- Help with construction projects through WRG camps and weekends
- Sharing knowledge and ideas through the Restoration Hub
- Technical expertise – engineering, planning and heritage etc.
- Provision of cost-effective insurance for restoration projects

Only IWA provides this range of support to the waterways family, but now we need every member of this society to help to reverse this damaging decision. Restoration projects will become untenable. You know better than anyone that it is far more costly to repair and restore than to prevent decline in the first place. Here is how you can – and should – support our campaign:

As well as being an individual society member, please join IWA. You will have access to all the benefits above and more. Your membership will help strengthen our voice to protect the network and ensure another 500 miles are restored.

- Make a one-off or regular donation to IWA towards our campaign costs.
- Sign up for our mailing list where you'll find links to our petition and how to write to your MP.
- Spread the word – please use your communication channels to engage as many of your local waterways users as possible and direct them to our website.

It will only take you a few minutes via our website www.waterways.org.uk, but could put the waterways on the right path for years ahead.



GCS AND CRT WORKING TOGETHER

Monday 10 & Tuesday 11 July

GCS volunteers Stephen Pownall, Brian Robinson and myself, Colin Bryan, met with senior CRT staff to visit all (except dry section) spillweirs and faults/overlooking areas etc., along the entire length of the canal, to update CRT's water control hydrological models to reflect the current events and levels. CRT staff Sarah Edwards (senior hydrologist) and Mike Collins (senior water manager) were accompanied by their colleagues Matthew Pickering and Jeremy Coleman (soon to retire but currently being head hunted for GCS).

Starting at Mow Beck on Monday taking measurements at Denton spill weir, observing Denton feeder, Locks 18 & 17, then on to the failed culvert 12; also looking at the overtopping section and Knipton feeder outfall, then on to fixed weir 2 on the Easthorpe Road and weirs 3 & 4 at Redmile (3 were unreachable because of vegetation).

Tuesday we started at Plungar spillweir 5. I can say proudly still in excellent condition as I led the GCS / WRG team who did a complete rebuild back in 2004. Next on to Hickling where Sarah took more measurements at the Dalby aqueduct weir. Then on to culverts 39 & 42, recently repaired but needing more attention in this area.

Hollygate feeder was next followed by Cotgrave feeder at Skinners Lock (which was flowing well at the time of visit).

Then parking near Morrisons to visit all locks and weirs until meeting up with Paul of the Lady Bay group who gave his thoughts and measurements of fixed weir 12; notes and suggestions taken and given by the CRT team.

At this point the clouds above decided to take revenge, so the 3 GCS team had to take shelter at the Poppy and Pint [*how awful! Ed.*], leaving Paul heading toward a downed willow with CRT staff looking drenched.



My thanks to Richard Bennett or CRT for setting this up, and allowing the CRT water control manual to be brought up to date/digitized, this should allow a clearer understanding amongst both parties for dealing with events/queries and funding opportunities, especially now given the government's latest funding statement.

#Trending

with Nikyla Manners



@granthamcanalsociety



@granthamcanal



@granthamcanalsociety

It has been wonderful to see so many of you out enjoying our beautiful canal this summer! We love to see your photos on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Rushcliffe Ramblers and Upper Saxondale Community Hub have visited us for group walks, FLAB Social Rides Nottingham and Grantham Round Table have explored by bicycle and Bhive Community Photography Group have captured some stunning shots of our wildlife and scenery. All of these groups can be found on Facebook so look them up if you are interested.



We would love to thank everyone who attended our recent Open Days and to welcome you all to our Craft Fair which is being held on Sunday 27 August, 10am - 3pm, at our Woolsthorpe Depot (behind the Dirty Duck Pub).

We were delighted to be invited to The Lady Bay Arts Trail and The Lady Bay Open Gardens where we even had musical accompaniment from the excellent Tim Dakin and his squeezebox.

Our work parties have been very busy on all aspects of maintenance, repair and restoration and a big success we have been following on Facebook is the rescue of a broken mooring pontoon. It was taken to our Woolsthorpe Depot, straightened out and put back out on the water thanks to our amazing volunteers.

Rod, our Special Projects Manager, tells us we have enough work to keep us busy eight days a week!

So, if you would like to learn new skills, meet new people and make a difference, email volunteer@granthamcanal.org to get involved.

IWA and its partners have formally announced the formation of the Fund Britain's Waterways Action Group (FBW). We have previously explained how the waterways family is starting to come together in this group to campaign with a single voice for funding for the waterways. We had intended to launch the group in response to Defra's announcement of the outcome of the review of government funding for the Canal & River Trust (CRT) from 2028 onwards. However, despite being due in July 2022, the announcement has been repeatedly delayed. It is now clear that the situation is too urgent for us to wait any longer.

CRT's government grant is fixed at its current level of £52.6m per annum until 2027. This already puts CRT in a difficult financial situation because of high inflation, the increasing impact of extreme weather resulting from climate change, and the substantial additional funding needed for reservoir maintenance in the wake of the near-collapse of the dam at Toddbrook Reservoir in 2019.

A decision by government to further reduce CRT funding would threaten real cuts in maintenance, potentially leading to decline and even closure of some waterways. It was the likelihood of this outcome that triggered the coming together of the waterways family to form FBW. Although it was CRT's funding which provided the impetus, we are only too well aware that inadequate funding is by no means confined to CRT and is risking the whole waterway network. FBW will therefore be campaigning for all navigation authorities to receive appropriate funding.

Our waterways need as many voices as possible to make the case for funding at a level to ensure that all the benefits documented in IWA's Waterways for Today report can continue. FBW already represents hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways, and we will be broadening membership to include any organisation or individual with an interest in using or supporting inland waterways whether canal, river, tidal river or estuary. If you have any suggestions for organisations that should be invited to join, please email info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk

Our waterways need as many voices as possible to make the case for funding at a level to ensure that all the benefits documented in IWA's Waterways for Today report can continue. FBW already represents hundreds of thousands of users and supporters of inland waterways, and we will be broadening membership to include any organisation or individual with an interest in using or supporting inland waterways whether canal, river, tidal river or estuary. If you have any suggestions for organisations that should be invited to join, please email info@fundbritainswaterways.org.uk

Lastly, please do visit the campaign page [fundbritainswaterways.org.uk](https://www.change.org/p/fund-britain-s-waterways), and please do like, retweet and share IWA's posts on social media.

Help by signing this petition:

<https://www.change.org/p/fund-britain-s-waterways>

As the nights are drawing in ...

A short message from Polly Browne about her fund-raising initiative launching hopefully very soon: "We are working on a new project producing Christmas cards this year featuring photos of the canal with profits going to Society Funds... watch this space for further news."

So look out for notices on social media, our website and of course here! Also this is my final appeal for suitable photos for a 2024 GCS calendar: email to me at bridge@granthamcanal.org Thanks [Ed.]



**FUND BRITAIN'S
WATERWAYS**