

# BRIDGE



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society

## AUTUMN 24

### In this issue:

*Down a rabbit hole?*

*Canalathon pictures*

*Quick Quiz*

FREE



*Published quarterly by*

*Photo by Julie Blyth*



## CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

There is nothing like the UK weather for uncertainty if you are involved in canals. First it was too much rain, now insufficient to maintain some lengths of the canal in water! Have you had a 'summer' yet? A few odd hot days interspersed between too many cool and dull cloudy days ... the joys of living in England!

Some more positive things are on the horizon:

The search for a site for a volunteer base in the West Bridgford area may be nearing success. Our experienced Company Secretary has commenced negotiations for a possible site.

The maintenance teams have now re-watered the canal between the top of Lock 18 and Lock 16 to ensure that Three Shires could operate from the depot at the August Open Day. Without their magnificent contribution on Friday the event would not have been so successful. It was one of the best prepared and structured events that we have seen at the depot. Well done to all.

Further stoppages will be required to correct issues at Lock 16 – but can the organisers please ensure Three Shires can still access the depot for every forthcoming event! The next one will be on September 15th.

We have been fortunate that more volunteers have indicated a wish to join maintenance and work-parties and we thank them for offering their time and muscles. I just hope they understand that much of our business occurs outside the nesting season i.e., after the end of September!

We also thank several people who have recently joined the society as members and, by doing so they have assisted our progress to achieving our goal of 1,000 members.

From local media you will be aware that Canal & River Trust are concerned that their income from Government is likely to decline in the coming years. As Grantham Canal is a 'Remainder' canal it is therefore towards the bottom of a list when it comes to expenditure. We are therefore likely to be requested to undertake additional repairs along the whole of the waterway so we may expect more varied tasks in different locations. At the same time Health & Safety requires volunteers to understand and assess risks and, for the more complex roles, to obtain certification of individual's skill levels. I am confident that our volunteers will 'step up' and permit us to continue with our objectives of the restoration and repair of our favourite canal.

We are fortunate to be surrounded by a vibrant and ever-changing environment in the Vale and being part of a happy team of volunteers and supporters. Maybe a great reason to hire Three Shires for a picnic cruise along the canal for family or friends? Enjoy!

# FROM THE EDITOR

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### MAKE A NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY

**AGM**  
**Weds 27 Nov 2024**  
**Kinoulton Village Hall**  
**19:00 start**

## 100 CLUB LOTTERY AUGUST WINNERS

1st	No 59	Ruth Kerry	£30
2nd	No 55	Ashley Mather Colman	£20
3rd	No 8	Debbie Stubbs	£10

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

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Recent reports on our social media channels have highlighted a worrying trend, at least in the East Midlands, viz., CRT's apparent inability to cope with managing the canal infrastructure due mainly to a lack of funding.

On 7 August, BBC News (Nottingham) quoted Linn Beumont, East Midlands CRT regional director ... "with rising costs we can do less with the money we've got ... Ultimately, if we don't do something different, some of our canals and rivers will be at real risk because we need that money to keep them open and safe." The article went on to quote a DEFRA spokesperson that CRT receive an annual grant of £52.6m guaranteed until 2027.

A week later West Bridgford Wire carried a similar story adding that old chestnut "climate change" into the mix and again quoting Ms Beumont ... "So every year from 2027 it's going to go down by 5%, which means over the course of the next decade we will have a £300m gap in our funding ..." The article went on to detail some typical costs such as replacing lock gates, rebuilding bridges, etc., costs which we at GCS know only too well!

Doesn't augur well for CRT, does it? Will this mean another government quango will take over the canal network (the Environment Agency perhaps?). Or maybe the new government will consider nationalisation? Or something not unlike the railways with separate and independent organisations being responsible for each canal?

What do **you** think, dear reader?

SOURCES: [bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgrlr1wp01do-westbridgfordwire.com/funding-cuts-threaten-nottinghamshire-canal-with-closure-says-trust/](https://bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgrlr1wp01do-westbridgfordwire.com/funding-cuts-threaten-nottinghamshire-canal-with-closure-says-trust/)



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

Brian Cantwell (Editor)

Another way to donate funds via your online shopping is to use [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://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](http://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 ...



## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS, ETC.

As with all charities, we depend on our members and their subscriptions for a large proportion of our budgeted yearly income, so when we were reminded by one of our members recently of the vast cost of sending out renewal letters by post, we decided to take the suggestion on board.



*we're going digital!*

We have been sending out renewal and new member information to nearly 600 addresses every year, each of which gets a thank you letter from our Chairman and a membership card, which at the current price of 85p per second class stamp, with paper and ink on top, is a big chunk of money – half what was taken at the last Open Day for instance.

Over the last couple of months we've been trialling sending renewal and new member information out by email, and the responses so far have all been very favourable, so in future we will be sending out all this documentation by email. Additional advantages to me, as membership secretary, are that it's surprisingly faster to do it this way, and costs for stationery, stamps and inks will of course reduce considerably.

Could I ask that all our readers check their spam/junk folders periodically, and if one of our emails lands there, make sure your service provider knows we're not junk?

If you haven't let us have an email address, renewal information will be posted out.



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 the app and sit back and let good things happen!

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

## 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

## GCS CALENDAR 2025 LAST CALL FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC SUBMISSIONS FOR OUR UPCOMING CALENDAR PROJECT

Photos should high resolution and 300dpi if possible. Ideally not cropped or digitally enhanced in any way. Files can be emailed to the Editor or by using a file transfer website like WeTransfer.com.

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

# CANALATHON 24

Some photographic memories of Saturday 20 June



The GCS and Greenfields teams (above) and (below) some of our excellent support crew

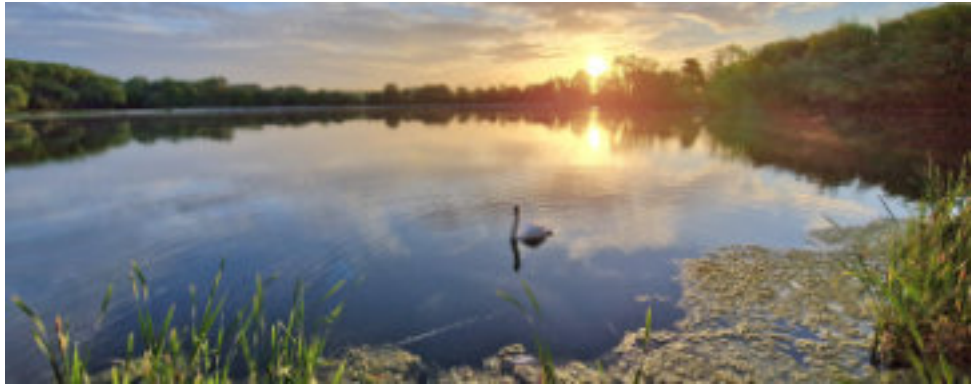


GCS stalwarts John, Anthony and Angie



Weary walkers waving at the drone!

 **Greenfields Limited** Tel: 0115 989 0447  
www.greenfields-countryside.co.uk  
enquiries@greenfields-countryside.co.uk



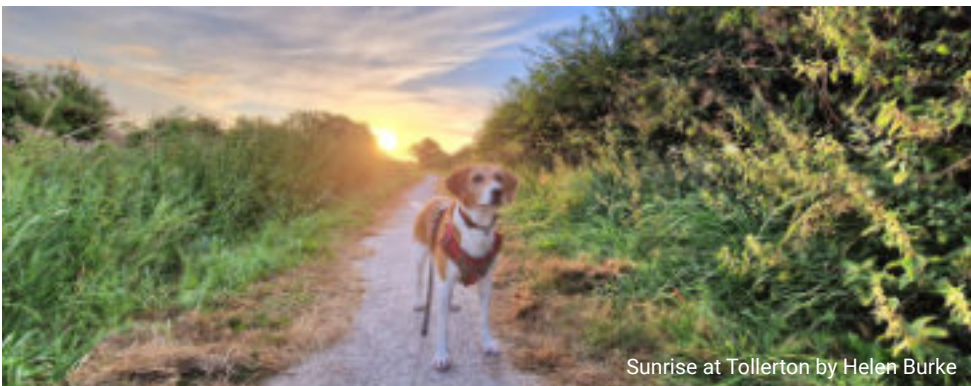
Denton Reservoir 29 June by Helen Burke



Photographed (near Owthorpe) by Ian Marshall



This beauty by Sarah Cherrill



Sunrise at Tollerton by Helen Burke



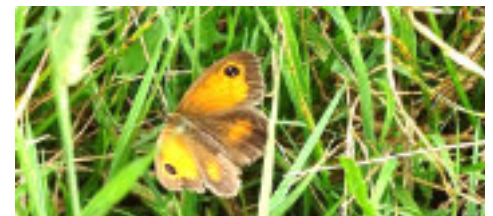
Photo by Helen Burke



Photo by Andrew Pile



Photos (above & below) by Ian Marshall



Five Shires? Mr & Mrs Shires on a recent trip (photo by Jane Grylls)

## WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION UPDATE *General Manager Tony Osbond*

As I write this report on Wednesday 22nd August what a complete change from the weather I reported in my May report.

Lack of rain over the last two months with some very welcome summer weather has reduced water levels the whole length of the canal. We are getting the maximum of water from Denton Reservoir, but this facility is compromised with CRT carrying out essential maintenance work to maintain the integrity of the reservoir.

We are struggling for an acceptable depth of water in the Summit Pound (above Lock 18) with our *Three Shires* trip boat having to cancel boat trips. Something we are very reluctant to do in the normal course of events but a necessity as *Three Shires* was getting grounded on certain sections of the canal.

Operationally all our teams have been busy with canal maintenance clearing fallen trees returning them to the depot to add to our upcoming Log business.



Tree work along half mile pound and a novel way to transport some of the logs (28 June 24)

*Otter* our weed boat was briefly returned to water having hopefully been cured of its mechanical problems. This was short lived, and it very quickly returned onto the slipway for further repairs to the hydraulics. Jim Gaut and his team have spent the last couple of months sorting out the problems and hopefully as I write *Otter* will again be back in water for trials and then put to work on weed clearance.

We are looking to increase the mechanisation of our dredging and silt removal activities. We made a trip down to the Cotswolds Canals Trust to view their activities on silt removal which formulated our decisions on where we go next.

Funding on the purchase of equipment has been boosted by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) awarding GCS £30,000 from their Shared Prosperity

Fund to facilitate silt removal and dredging in the Summit Pound essentially in the SKDC area.

We have visited Land and Water and Rothen Engineering to look at their second-hand equipment and are in the process of putting a submission paper together for the General Committee to approve.

Our Log Business is taking shape with GCS now an approved 'Ready to Burn' firewood supplier. Thank you to Phil Radford for completing all the paperwork; sales will shortly be commencing with Eric Holden taking charge of the sales. Keep a look out for details on the sales which will be featured on our media streams and in a separate article in Bridge.



More logging operations on the towpath near Harby Town bridge (8 June 24)



Felled ash tree near Denton winding hole providing even more logs (24 May 24)

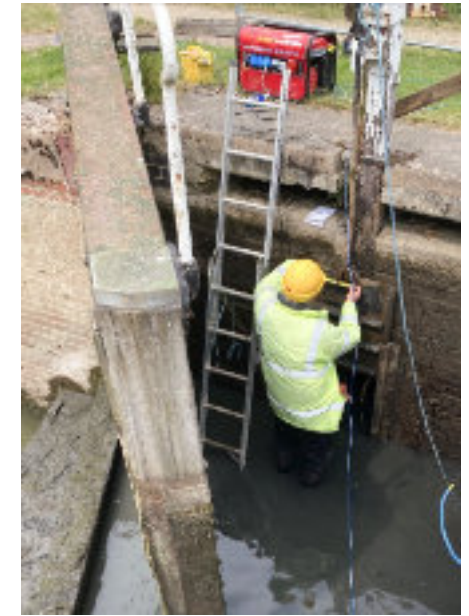


Digging out the offside of Lock 13 the old-fashioned way! (14 June 24)

Construction work on Lock 13 after further excavation work either side of the existing lock walls was completed to expose the counterforts with the aim to reduce the pressure on the existing walls; work has now stopped pending discussions with CRT on the Principal Contractor Role. We have had a joint meeting with CRT and Arcadis reference the appointment of Arcadis to act as designer to approve anchor systems and propping of the lock walls whilst maintenance work is carried out inside the lock. We await a further meeting with CRT to finalise these appointments.

The work to Lock 18 paddle gear replacement commenced in July as the work to Lock 13 was stopped. We have produced the paddles ourselves with the material being supplied by a local manufacturer for a very competitive price. Both paddle posts have been renewed and the changeover has been completed.

The offside paddle is fine, but the towpath side still has a water leak problem. Water is getting round the paddle and coming through the brickwork so after a meeting with CRT Engineer we are putting the stop planks in again taking the paddle out and sealing the aperture to then remove the stop planks to see where the problem is. We may be in a situation where a towpath closure is needed to allow excavation alongside the Letterbox wall to see where the water is escaping.



Extract from the Construction Workparty report 28 June 24:  
Today was a three phase operation: (i) build youngman's bridge (ii) put in stop planks (iii) remove youngman's bridge. All phases completed by the team working in unison. Once the stop planks with tarpaulin were in place John R came to take measurements of the offending paddle.



More work at Lock 18 on 5 July 24



Whilst the construction team were on site at Lock 18 and the water level was much reduced on the pound Lock 18 to 17 we also carried out the renewal of the paddles on Lock 17. In addition we will be carrying out maintenance work on the top and bottom gates at Lock 17.

Work to the repairs of Culvert 12 are in abeyance. After further meetings in early June and July to finalise logistics of carrying out the work CRT have now postponed this work until financial year April 2025 to March 2026. Again, as in the work to Lock 13, this is to do with the role of Principal Contractor. CRT are still to resolve who will act in this role whilst working with societies such as GCS.

We are not on our own with this problem of course, it is something that CRT need to address nationally as to how they work with the societies on construction projects.

WeBCan, the Lady Bay action group, still continue to make progress on reed clearance in the Lady Bay/Gamston area making a considerable difference to the aspect of a canal in water. GCS are carrying out repairs to fixed weir eleven in Lady Bay so that when the water returns to this section of the canal water is not lost through leakages.

The Trent Connection project, whilst having support from both Rushcliffe Borough Council and Notts County Council following our feasibility study, now awaits National Highways to commit to a feasibility submission for the Gamston Lings Bar box culvert to get under the A52 ring road. With a new Government in place it will be interesting to see what comes out of the Chancellors Budget on the 30th October in respect of funding for National Highways in the foreseeable future.



Work on constructing a ramp (22 June 24)



Volunteer John "making hay" on 24 June 24



## TEA & TRAINS DAY OUT

Several members enjoyed a fabulous day out with the Great Central Railway on Sunday 20 June. The photograph here showing the locomotive which hauled the train, a standard Class 5 built for British Rail at Doncaster in December 1956. Of the 172 of this class only five survived into preservation. On the day, the driver was Alan Butler and fireman Pete Hackney, both of course volunteers at GCR.



# 100 CLUB LOTTERY

Join the excitement of the 100 CLUB LOTTERY!

Become a founder member and support the canal restoration

Open to Society members and the general public

**Players must be 16 or over**

For just £24 per number for the entire year, you could win BIG!

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Month 12 will be our BIG PRIZE

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Please make the email subject "100 CLUB LOTTERY"

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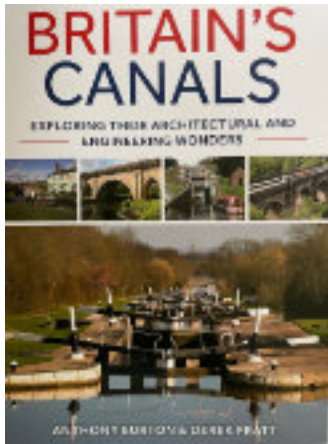
*Including, but not limited to: Grantham, Sleaford, Newark, Stamford,  
Peterborough, Oakham, Melton Mowbray, Spalding, Boston and Holbeach...*

## DOWN A RABBIT HOLE!

John Leighton

I joined the GCS last November knowing very little about canals. I do have a childhood memory of walking under a canal bridge every morning to get the bus to school and it was always dripping water which used to irritate me. One time, I remember climbing the embankment to look at the canal (the Tame Valley canal in Birmingham) but I must have been unimpressed because I never visited again.

Since joining GCS I have wanted to find out more about the history of canals, after all, they have been an important part of our history. So, I thought that I would share my journey so far.



I found a book by Anthony Burton and Derek Pratt called 'Britain's Canals' which is nicely written with super photos. They explore locks and lock cottages, bridges, aqueducts, tunnels, water supply, wharfs and warehouses amongst many interesting chapters. It does what it says on the cover - explores the architectural and engineering wonders of the canals.

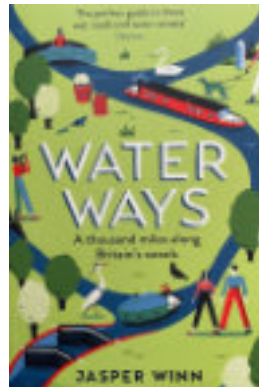
Following this book I read another book entitled 'Waterways' by Jasper Winn. Appointed 'Writer in Residence' by CRT, he spent 2 years exploring over 1,000 miles of our canals by kayak, cycling, walking and by boat having many adventures along the cut.

This book is the story of that journey. I found it a fascinating read, both engaging and educational at the same time.

He has a useful 'further reading' section at the back together with a films/documentaries section which I made use of.

Two of the films recommended were 'The Bargee' and 'Painted Boats'.

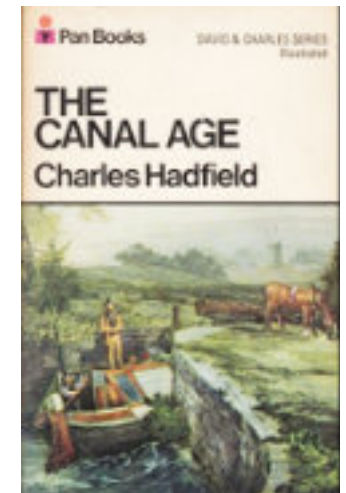
'The Bargee' is a 1964 comedy starring Ronnie Barker and Harry H Corbett who play boatmen working a canal boat and its butty along the Grand Union Canal. One of the pair (I will leave you to guess who!) has a complicated love life with a girl at every overnight stop. Eric Sykes makes an appearance as an eccentric skipper of a boat and he had me in stitches. It's a window into a time when there were working boats.

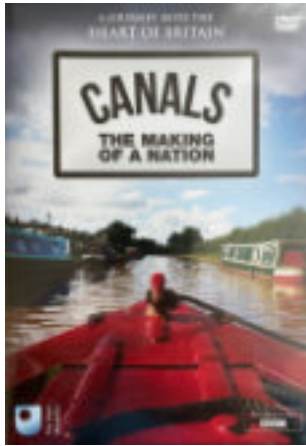


'Painted Ladies' is a poignant 1945 film following two working families. One uses a traditional horse-drawn narrowboat while the other has an engine boat. It has a semi-documentary style looking at canal life and culture and showing the hard life of boating folk. I particularly liked the scene with the boat being 'legged' through a tunnel. It shows a traditional way of life now lost but we can glimpse it in this film. I highly recommend it.

Charles Hadfield is a renowned canal historian and a co-founder of the initial Inland Waterways Association. I enjoyed reading a book of his called 'The Canal Age' which was a deep dive into canal history. I wanted to know more.

I watched another recommended DVD called 'Canals The making of a nation' and thoroughly enjoyed it. Liz McIvor, curator of Bradford Industrial Museum, did a sterling job presenting this DVD. The DVD has stunning aerial photography showing the beauty of our waterways and a series of 6 programs delving into all aspects of canal history. It covers funding the canals at the start,





building the canals (including the evolution of the science of Geology), heritage, boat people (enjoyed this section the best) and the workers.

What did it take to build a canal back in the day? A book called 'The Canal Builders' by that man Anthony Burton provided the answer. I loved this book.

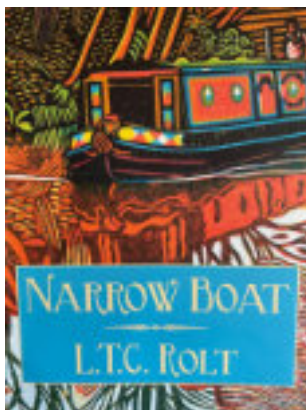
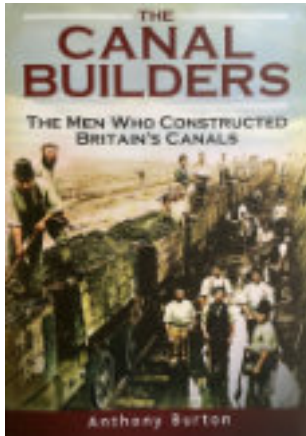
It discusses all the key roles involved in building the canals. It was fascinating reading. I am beginning to feel like I am achieving my objective of learning more about canal history.

My next read was probably *the* classic canal book – 'Narrow Boat' by L T C Rolt (another IWA co-founder). This book is beautifully written. First published in 1944, with numerous editions over the years, the book recounts Tom Rolt's story of buying an old wooden canal boat *Cressy* in 1939 and getting it renovated in Tooley's boat yard at Banbury – he did the inside himself, including fitting a bath!

Tom and his wife then set off on a 400-mile journey along the canals of the Midlands. It recalls the boatman and their craft and explores how the countryside they travelled through was changing. Visiting market towns, churches, shops, villages, and lock-side pubs it is a lovely nostalgic read on canals towards the end of their working lives before their current use for leisure had evolved. I particularly enjoyed his tale of getting ice bound for weeks during a rough winter.

And so, my journey down this rabbit hole continues. I have just checked my 'books awaiting reading' pile and find that I have 5 canal related books in that pile! However, for now, I think that you, dear reader, have had a sufficient glimpse into my journey down my particular rabbit hole.

Maybe some of you will have read these books and this article has brought back some memories. You might have some recommendations for me? If you do, please let me know.



## CALLING ALL KEEN GARDENERS!

Do you have a glut of fruit or vegetables?

Have you plants to spare, or are splitting some? Would you like to help raise vital funds for the Canal Society?

If so, bring them down to the Woolsthorpe Depot for our Produce Fair on Sunday 15th September. We're hoping to have a 'Bring and Buy' stall for local produce and would be very grateful for any donations, large or small.

Failing that, come on down to enjoy our home made cakes, barbecue, and a wide variety of other local produce. Water levels permitting, we are also running our ever popular boat trips!

Don't forget, Grantham Canal Society is 100% run by volunteers and your support is vital for us to help preserve this valuable local treasure.

### SELECTION OF DONATIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED

JL	£30.00	AA	£150.00	NM	£20.12
JA	£30.00	CH	£21.00	RKD	£20.00
JR	£100.00	JG	£30.00	RG	£80.00
JD	£45.00	JD	£5.00	SMM	£10.00
ML	£30.00	JL	£30.00	TO	£60.00
NM	£20.12	JA	£30.00	TB	£30.00
RKD	£20.00	JR	£100.00	VC	£50.00
RG	£80.00	JD	£45.00	VP	£218.00
SMM	£10.00	ML	£30.00		

Some of these donations come by way of monthly Standing Orders, while others were one-off donations - all gratefully received

## QUICK QUIZ

We thought you might like to test your general knowledge about the canal, so here are a few facts and figures for you to check and see how much you know! Answers will be published in the next issue. [Ed]

1. What should you do if you fall into a canal?
  - a. Call the Coastguard?
  - b. Call the Fire Service?
  - c. Swim for your life?
  - d. Try to stand up?
2. What is a gongoozler?
  - a. Someone who won't use Google any more?
  - b. Someone who has taken a trip on a gondola?
  - c. Someone who stands idly by watching activity on a canal?
  - d. Someone who chases geese?
3. Which famous husband and wife team featured in the TV series "Great Canal Journeys"?
4. Where is a tiller located on a narrow boat?
  - a. Stern
  - b. Bow
  - c. Port
  - d. Starboard
5. What is a skew bridge?
6. The Grantham Canal is 33 miles long and has 18 locks. How many feet do they raise the canal from the river Trent at Gamston to Lock 18 at Woolsthorpe by Belvoir, Grantham?

If you enjoyed this little quiz and would like more of the same or something else similarly challenging ... please write to me [editor@granthamcanal.org](mailto:editor@granthamcanal.org)

## SELECTION OF PHOTOS FROM RECENT WORKPARTY REPORTS



Charmian on a tree felling operation (29 June 24)



Essential maintenance work at the depot on 3 August 24 (above & below)



Leaking nearside paddle at Lock 18 (10 August 24)



Today's task was to seal the Culvert 12 leak where a temporary fix had collapsed again causing a huge loss of water (6 July 24)

# HERITAGE & PRODUCE FAIR

by Louise Cooper

**The next event in our very popular series of Open Days will be held on Sunday 15th September 10am to 3pm at the Depot (behind the Dirty Duck pub) in Woolsthorpe NG32 1NY**

There will be boat trips on the beautiful and historic Grantham Canal, demonstrations of heritage crafts such as a blacksmith and traditional dancing displays – maybe even try your hand at a few activities! You will also have the opportunity to examine some of the finds from the bottom of the canal.



Produce will be available to buy from award-winning local artisans, including Brockleby's Pies and The Mouse House Cheeses.



Local artist Colin Henfrey and the Grantham Art Club and will be showing their work and demonstrating sketching.



We have been approved as a log supplier and you could stock up for the winter at a very reasonable price. All logs have been seasoned and come from fallen trees along the canal that have been cleared by the Society – another fine example of recycling!

We are delighted that Grantham Community Books will be joining us, along with a few familiar craft stalls as well as some new faces.

Around this time of year, keen gardeners tend to have a glut of fruit and vegetables. We will have a Bring and Buy stall available for anyone who would like to share some of their garden harvest or cuttings of their plants.



The Barbecue will be fired up serving delicious burgers and hot dogs. The refreshments stall will serve hot drinks and have a wide range of scrummy home-made cakes.



Don't forget – every penny raised will contribute to the valuable work done by the Grantham Canal Society in restoring and renovating this historic waterway, which provides such a wide range of leisure opportunities for all and much needed benefits to the wider community.