

BRIDGE



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society

SUMMER 24

In this bumper issue:

*The National Waterways Museum
The 2024 CANALATHON
100 Club Lottery
Tea & Trains!*

FREE



Published quarterly by

The
Grantham Canal
Society

RESTORING THE NOTTINGHAM TO GRANTHAM CANAL



CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

Greetings readers on this bright and sunny morning,

First a big 'Thank You!' to all who organised, prepared and delivered the recent Craft Fair at Woolsthorpe and all our supporters who attended. It was an excellent event full of interest and enjoyed by all but particularly the stall-holders who attended and asked us to organise another event that they can attend!

The wet weather has passed – or has it? – and if you haven't seen the impact our growing number of maintenance teams have had on the canal – you need a trip on *Three Shires*. They have been hard at work removing fallen timber, clearing canal banks of self-set trees, removing mud flushed out from field-drains and a range of other less obvious tasks all of which I hope add to your enjoyment of the canal. *Three Shires* is already busy with bookings thanks to all the crews for their commitment.

Our construction teams are not readily visible to towpath travellers as the restoration of Lock 13 continues behind safety fencing and other activity to maintain water levels continues at sites along the waterway as far as the River Trent.

We have new volunteers joining our teams and I thank them for their commitment to the Society and their contribution in different ways to the restoration of the canal.

Perhaps some more new faces could come forward as we need all the help we can get with 30 miles of waterway to look after!

I have not forgotten the volunteer effort that has been required to formally identify a way of re-connecting the canal to the river. That continues to produce the necessary surveys and strategies required to meet current regulations and has received initial support from both Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. We thank both councils for their support and encouragement.

I will once again make a plea for some technical help as we need a person with IT skills and flair to develop our communication and media output. In this field the requirements are well beyond the experience of our senior volunteers and offer a real opportunity for youth to shine. Perhaps mention the opportunity to your grand-children? Please!

Enjoy Summer on the Grantham Canal.

CONTENTS

Chairman's Letter	2
Canalathon	5
Upcoming events	6
Mikron Theatre	7
FaceBook photos	8
Workparty & Construction News	10
Tea & Trains!	19
National Waterways Museum	21
Trending	25

READ ALL ABOUT IT

In the next issue of BRIDGE, John Leighton will take us down the rabbit hole ...

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

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FROM THE EDITOR

Following a short stint recently as a crew member on my friends' narrowboat, churning through the flotsam & jetsam swirling around (usually just beneath the surface or at least partially submerged!) the Trent & Mersey, Coventry and Oxford canals, it occurred to me that the general state of the canal system is quickly reaching a critical stage of degradation and deterioration.

General maintenance of the infrastructure appears to be mostly reactive with many locks leaking badly and gate paddles either broken or inoperative, only being rectified after reports to CRT. Navigation stoppages are posted daily at an alarming rate. Of course, most of these are 'nature-induced' such as fallen trees, not enough or too much water, etc. But many stoppages are due to a lack of foresight and planned maintenance. Earlier in the year we were stuck in the centre of Manchester due to a broken lock mechanism and CRT couldn't get at it without jumping through a huge amount of bureaucratic red tape nonsense, such as temporary closure of a bus stop so that a crane could park near a bridge!

To be fair to the organisation they are on a hiding to nothing especially since Government funding is actively being reduced and reliance on volunteers to carry out much of the day-to-day work can only mean a huge struggle to 'stay afloat' operationally.

Our canal, on the other hand, must be one of the best maintained canal on the system, if the magnificent work carried out by our workparty volunteers is anything to go by.

What do *you* think dear reader?



Write to me at:
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



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- 2 Search for (The Grantham Canal Society)
- 3 Your favourite brands donate to GCS

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THE 2024 'CANALATHON'

On the 29th June 2007 Apple launched the first iPhone and revolutionised the world of mobile phones. It was an auspicious day.

On Saturday 29th June 2024 the Grantham Canal will see a group of happy walkers from Greenfields Countryside Limited & GCS walking 26.2 miles along our quiet, meandering and beautiful canal in their own 'Canalathon', to raise funds for the Grantham Canal Society. We are hoping that this day will also be an auspicious day and boost GCS projects funds.

The idea was proposed by Greenfields Countryside Limited following their very successful Corporate Volunteering day in February and has been ably organised by team member Caroline Stevens-Turlington. Well done Caroline and thank you for doing the recce!

The walk will start at Tollerton Lane Bridge, Gamston at 07:00 and will finish 26.2 miles later at Woolsthorpe Depot at roughly 18:30. Along the way refreshments will be dispensed from the GCS caravan, with Greenfields particularly requesting Mary's Victoria Sponge cake! (a well-known high-energy food as all Workparty volunteers are aware).

We have our fingers crossed that the weather will be kind – no rain thank you, and not too hot.

Walking 26.2 miles will be no stroll in the park and will require a BIG effort from those taking part. No doubt there will be a few blisters, aches and pains on the day and one thing that I am confident of is that every one of the walkers will sleep well after that walk. Remember these are just ordinary folk like yourselves going the extra mile or in this case 26.2 miles!!

You can show your support for the Canalathon by donating via this website:
www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/granthamcanalsociety

If you are out along the canal on that day do cheer us along – I know that it would be very much appreciated by all.



RESTORING THE NOTTINGHAM TO GRANTHAM CANAL

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

Event Dates

 **Cream Teas**
Sunday 9th June

Activities Day 
Sunday 11th August

 **Produce Fair**
Sunday 15th September

All 10am-3pm - Boat Trips Available
Woolsthorpe Depot - NG32 1NY
www.granthamcanal.org

Charity No. 507337



The
Grantham Canal
Society

Restoring the Nottingham to Grantham Canal



MIKRON THEATRE – THE PLOUGH INN, HICKLING

Friday 31st May 2024 • The Plough Inn, Hickling LE14 3AH • 7pm to 9pm

Don't miss out on the hilarious Mikron Theatre at the Plough Inn, Hickling.

Their performance of "Twitchers" last year was very well received and a great success – Brian Rogers, a member of the Grantham Canal Society declared that it was the funniest thing he had seen in years.

This year their play is called "Common Ground" and is about rambling and rights of way. Why not join them for a 'hill-arious' ramble through the history of land access in England? From ze Norman Conquest to loitering in lockdown, via The Mass Trespass at Kinder Scout. The Pendale and District Ramblers are looking forward to celebrating 'in stile' on their 50th anniversary walk, but the path has been blocked by the landowner. How will they find their way through? Their quest for freedom and fresh air won't be we easy, as they navigate bulls, beavers, and wandering sheep. Grab your boots and waterproof for a meander with Mikron on a hike though history.

The show starts at 7pm; there is no reserved seating or tickets, and a 'pay what you feel' collection will be taken after the show. The performance will be outside so you may want to bring a chair and a blanket; refreshments and food will be available from the Plough Inn.

For more information about Mikron Theatre visit their website mikron.org.uk





A selection of by Ian Marshall taken long the stretch near Wild's Bridge and Kinoulton



Volunteer Nick spotted this pike basking in the water at Denton Reservoir this month



As ever, a beautiful composition from Julie Blyth

WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION UPDATE *General Manager Tony Osbond*

It's Wednesday 22nd May as I write this ... just a month away from Mid-Summer and we have another day of rain!!



Despite the rain, not much water here! (22 April24)



Marquee erecting ... (15 April24)

After a very wet and windy spring (nearly lost the marquee before our April Craft Day) the weather of late has been very kind with a hint that Summer is here.

Operationally all of our teams have been busy both on the water maintaining navigation on the summit pound for *Three Shires* our trip boat and on land building our stock of logs for the coming winter period as well as localised maintenance on our machinery.

Otter, our weed boat, is now back in the water having gone through a major maintenance schedule and is busy on the summit pound clearing the incessant weed that is prolific at this time of year. *Mudlark* went through a series of major repairs and servicing in late winter and has joined *Otter* on the Summit pound clearing localised build-up of silt.

We are looking to increase the mechanisation of our dredging and silt removal activities. We need better equipment and have been visiting restoration societies such as The Cotswold Canal Society to understand the solutions they have come up with. Visits also to contractors such as Land and Water that carry out this work have been undertaken and the team now have a better understanding of what is needed.

This will be a costly exercise but the summit pound needs machinery to carry out the work so we are busy with bids going in for funding to help with this expense.



Otter (above) at work and *Mudlark* (below) now fitted with an outboard!



Tree clearance from the canal is an ongoing exercise where in recent times through heavy winds trees have fallen into the canal. Locations at Harby, Kinoulton and Lady Bay have been cleared and where possible logs have been brought back to the Depot to be put through our logging splitter and stored for drying out.



Workparty & Construction continued

Developing relationships with local companies is very important to GCS and as such we hosted a company from Grantham called Genie.

Eight of their staff joined our Friday Maintenance Team in March and spent a day clearing vegetation up at Harlaxton and also assisted in crewing our maintenance boat *Centaury*. A successful day enjoyed by Genie and our volunteers who supervised their work,



Mid-stream chainsaw action (24 Feb)

Construction work on Lock 13 is moving on well with the two dams now in place at the top and bottom of the Lock chamber. The temporary by wash is in place and commissioned which has now allowed the canal water between the top dam and the top weir to be drained. This was successfully carried out with the help of Bottesford Angling who helped with rescuing the fish as the canal area was pumped out.



View of Lock 18 showing barely a trickle of water leaking (11 Mar)



Volunteers Nick & Stephen installing a winding post (crafted by Nick) for Lock 16 (29 Apr)

Temporary propping of the lock walls is now in the design stage. Before we start dewatering the lock chamber the construction crew are involved with reducing the ground levels around the lock chamber to assist with the measures we need to implement with the propping solution.



Happy volunteers! L-R Peter, Bob, Jon, Phil, Dave & Charmian (9 Mar)

Workparty & Construction continued

The work to Lock 18 paddle gear replacement is in abeyance waiting for CRT to come back on the replacement paddles for the top letter boxes. We are looking to produce the paddles ourselves and have approached a local manufacturer for a price. A decision from CRT is awaited on the supply of replacement balance beams to the bottom gates on Lock 18. Supporting timber work is in stock for the paddle gear.



Before and after photos where an ivy-clad log straddled the canal, near Rutland Road bridge (4 May)



Volunteers on painting duty at lock 17 (29 Apr)



Volunteers removing moss growth and vegetation from the lockside stonework (25 Mar)

We still have a problem with water leaking into the adjacent field towpath side despite the repointing we completed. The leak is emanating from the towpath side letterbox by the top gate. CRT are looking into the use of a resin-based solution that was employed successfully on Culvert 13 a few years ago as a solution to the problem.



Keith gives the pump an oil change and Otter is in the dry dock again (4 Mar)

Work to the repairs of Culvert 12 is in abeyance. CRT have still to complete the designs and we have a meeting in early June to see how this is progressing. Meetings with Belvoir Estates have been carried out with a tentative start date after harvest (late July) on the project.

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.



More volunteers working hard to remove weeds, etc., from the canal (25 Mar)

The Trent Connection project continues apace with meetings with local authorities together with meetings with the developers of the Tollerton Lane housing development.

We now have a letter of support from Rushcliffe Borough Council for the scheme; it will now go forward to be included in the Rushcliffe Plan due to be updated in 2027. Further meetings with Notts County Council are continuing to support the conclusions of the feasibility study working towards the authority protecting the route from further development.



Move over Jakub!
Meet our new youngest volunteer - Tom Tyler



Low tide?

TEA & TRAINS!

We are delighted to say that we are arranging a special treat for all our members – afternoon tea on the celebrated Great Central Railway, to take place on 20 June.

Participants will have the opportunity to spend the whole day on the railway, provided they arrange to get to Loughborough in time to board the 2pm Afternoon Tea service, for which we have booked a whole carriage. Trains usually start running at 10am from Loughborough. A full timetable will be available nearer the date, but it would seem that 4 full round trips might be possible for the enthusiasts!

This looks like being a fantastic day out, those who know the Great Central railway will be aware that as the UK's only double track, main line heritage railway, this is the only place in the world where full size steam engines can be seen passing each other.

Numbers are limited, so please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to join us. Payment and choice of menu are needed to book your place, please email to membership@granthamcanal.org. We would be grateful if you could respond promptly to ensure your place is booked.

The normal cost is £42 per person, fully inclusive of fares on all trains on the day, however the Society has paid for all seats, so we are asking participants to pay £50 each to reduce any potential loss to the Society. Should any money not be used we would ask that might be counted as a donation.



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CLASSIC

Selection of freshly made
Finger Sandwiches:
Roast Beef, Rocket,
Tomato, Horseradish
Mature Cheddar,
Caramelised Onion Chutney
Egg Mayo Cress & Mustard
Gammon Ham and
Grain Mustard Mayo
Bellini of Cream Cheese
and Smoked Salmon

Scones:

Plain and Fruit Scone served with
Strawberry Jam & Clotted Cream

A Selection of locally baked Cakes:

Mini Bakewell
Lemon Butter Cream Sponge
Mini Carrot Cake
Mini Millionaires Shortbread
Chocolate Butter Cream Sponge
Strawberry Tart

Served with Tea and Coffee

VEGETARIAN

Selection of freshly made
Finger Sandwiches:
Mature Cheddar,
Caramelised Onion Chutney
Falafel & Humous
Savoury Rice & Bean pâté

Scones:

Plain and Fruit Scone
served with
Strawberry Jam
and Clotted Cream

A Selection of locally baked Cakes:

Mini Bakewell
Lemon Butter Cream Sponge
Mini Carrot Cake
Mini Millionaires Shortbread
Chocolate Butter Cream Sponge
Strawberry Tart

Served with
Tea and Coffee

Please make payment to:

Account Name: Grantham Canal Society
Account No: 00401364
Sort Code: 30-96-18
Reference: AT200624

Parking at the Loughborough station is limited; it is considerably easier to park at Quorn & Woodhouse, LE12 8AG [/// extend.carriage.froze](#)

or at Rothley, LE7 7LD [/// glass.horses.drain](#)

There are two set menus as above, but Non-Gluten and Vegan options are also available, please advise on booking.

We very much look forward to seeing old friends and new on the day

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

1st Prize: £300 • 2nd Prize: £100 • 3rd Prize: £50

THERE'S NO LIMIT TO YOUR WINNING POTENTIAL – BUY AS MANY TICKETS AS YOU LIKE!

READY TO JOIN THE FUN?

Email peter.gs@icloud.com for your application form

Please make the email subject "100 CLUB LOTTERY"

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL WATERWAYS MUSEUM

John Leighton

The rain was persisting down on a cold March morning as myself and Angela drove from Manchester to the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port. I have never known a place like Manchester – it seems to rain continuously [*having lived there, I can testify to John's perception! Ed*]. I can see where it gets its reputation from!

I joined The Grantham Canal Society last November and along with volunteering I find myself going down a particular rabbit hole delving into the historical aspects of canals – hence, I was looking forward to our visit to the Museum.



Ellesmere Port was an important Dock back in the day, situated by the Manchester Ship Canal and the Shropshire Union Canal. The dock is now the site of the museum where many of the old buildings remain.

The museum was easy to find – it's just off the M53 and well signposted. It was interesting to see the chimneys billowing steam as we passed numerous chemical plants adjacent to Manchester Ship canal.

The rain blew us into reception where we were given some bad news – the main exhibition hall was closed because there had been a theft of several artefacts and CRT were reviewing their security arrangements. I hadn't anticipated that there was a market for such artefacts – it's such a shame that this happened. This exhibition hall houses most of the museum's collection so we will have to visit another time to see these. The good news is that we can visit again using the tickets bought today.



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We needed a hot cup of coffee to warm us up and peruse the site map we had been given in reception. The café is situated next to reception and looks out over an expanse of water. Angela spotted some Welsh cakes so we had a couple – well, it would be rude not to!

Venturing outside with umbrellas aloft, and following the recommended route around the site, we first encountered a horse statue which was a nice nod to the days before boats were powered by engines.

And speaking of engines, we ventured into the Power Hall which houses early steam and diesel engines. It was good to have a chat with the happy volunteers working there and good to see DofE students joining them learning new skills. It was also a nice place to visit because it was warm!



The large slip-way

Continuing on we visited the old slipway, the old messroom and superintendents' office, the blacksmiths forge, and the stables. I loved seeing the old buildings. I smiled when I saw the messroom – the teapot on the table reminded me of the messroom at Woolsthorpe depot.

There are quite a few interesting old boats moored up and several locks on site.



A view of the locks



Superintendent's office



Messroom



Angela by an interesting boat

The rain was getting the better of us so we decided to call it a day and headed back to the reception building where we visited the excellent souvenir shop and had another coffee to warm us up.

We will visit again as soon as the main exhibition hall is open and the weather forecast is good. We noted that the museum runs regular themed-days during the year so that could be interesting too.



Yarwood's compound steam engine at the National Waterways Museum

SELECTION OF DONATIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED

TA	£30.00	JD	£30.00	SM	£120.00
LB	£50.00	DG	£85.00	TO	£30.00
JB	£25.00	RG	£75.00	AS	£35.00
TB	£20.00	JG	£30.00	PS	£10.00
RB	£5.00	JL	£30.00	DT	£10.00
BC	£5.00	ML	£30.00	NV	£10.00
CC	£20.00	DL	£180.00	IW	£20.00

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

#Trending

with Nikyla Manners

[f @granthamcanalsociety](#)
[@granthamcanal](#)
[@granthamcanalsociety](#)

It has been a busy few months on social media; our canal has sprung into action, and I'm not just talking about our volunteers! Daffodils, bluebells, ducklings and cygnets have all been spotted, and our resident photographers have captured some stunning shots. Please keep sharing them: tag us on Instagram or post in the Community Group on Facebook.

We celebrated the contribution of our excellent women volunteers on International Women's Day. We are

often asked if we have many women volunteers, and the answer is a big YES! We have women volunteering in many areas including: marketing, as rangers, in maintenance work, at events, social media, administration, education, fund-raising, treasury and crewing *Three Shires*. You *can* play an active role in taking care of our canal, whoever you are!

If you would like to know more, email Mark at volunteer@granthamcanal.org



Sunset over the Grantham Canal by Debbie Spencer



Committee Member and Chief Baker Mary (*Grantham Journal*)

Our Events Season kicked off with Three Shires cruises (bookable at granthamcanal.org), and she even made her way down to our Woolsthorpe Depot for the Craft Fair! The day was a huge success, with visitors, volunteers and craftspeople all enjoying the offerings from local producers. Everyone was quite taken by the bottle stoppers volunteer Nick makes from old lock gates.

We are blessed with some very skilled folks! We look forward to welcoming you for a Cream Tea on Sunday 9th June, but be warned, boat trips sold

out by midday at the Craft Fair! Get there early to avoid disappointment.

Volunteers have been very busy with the renovation of Lock 13, and have been keeping us up to date with their fantastic progress. The by-wash is now complete, so we will soon be able to have a peek inside to assess the condition. Follow us on social media for updates!

Don't forget, a really important (and easy) way to support the work we do is by becoming a member. This shows community support for the work we



A busy day at the Craft Fair

do, and is the difference between being successful or unsuccessful in our funding bids. Visit the 'Join now!' section of our website for details. Go and pop the kettle on, and sign up whilst it boils.

Your canal needs you.



Jim Freeman - Friday Construction Party at Lock 13

Summer Cream Teas!

+ BOAT
TRIPS!



Sunday 9 June

10am - 3pm

Woolsthorpe Depot - NG32 INY
(behind Dirty Duck Pub)



granthamcanal.org
Charity Number: 503337

