

BRIDGE



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society

WINTER 24

In this issue:

The Gamston Ranger

AGM report

Christmas cards

FREE



Published quarterly by



CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

I must commence on a very sad note and tell you that one of the Society's longest-serving members and volunteer, Fred Marsh, died recently. Fred had more knowledge and experience of the closed waterway than anybody and kept recorded data in a form that we could readily interpret. His knowledge freely given when I first was appointed was a great benefit and I, for one, will miss Fred.

That reminds me that recently a number of our volunteers have experienced health issues and I hope their recovery is heading in the right direction. I would add our thanks to those individuals who have, in the created gaps, stepped forward and ensured that leadership of our volunteer teams enables them to continue normal operations.

As I have said before winter is a period when most of the action maintaining the waterway occurs. We are able to work without upsetting too much the natural habitat of other waterway users. To those of you going to the gym why not save the subscription and spend a winter's day volunteering on the Grantham Canal? You would have a high quality workout in fresh air and lose lots of calories as well. A 'no brain' decision isn't it?

Looking forward to winter and beyond GCS teams will be working on behalf of South Kesteven DC on the stretch of the canal east of the A1. A general tidy up is required to enhance this length; if you live in Grantham why not pop along and support the volunteers?

For those at the west end of the canal the good news is that the possibility of opening a volunteer base gets ever closer. We are awaiting a confirmation from Morrisons Stores that we can instal a unit at their Gamston store. It is early days but I hope operations could be active by March. We hope to support this action with a regular stall at the Farmers Market on Central Avenue.

I hope that you and yours enjoy the Festive season and I wish you all a fruitful and active New Year.

Merry Christmas

NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY MIKRON THEATRE

will be returning to
The Plough Inn at Hickling on Wednesday 4th June at 7pm

FROM THE EDITOR

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

Cover: autumnal canal scene (Helen Burke),
back cover: Otter being hauled out of the
water (Alec Hampson).

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Heritage preservation and volunteer-led restoration projects are not easy and are by their very nature slow. But I do believe that our volunteers at GCS are getting there.

Recent initiatives, such as our efforts to restore historical structures like the Duke of Rutland's Canal Wharf and the Weigh House have made significant contributions to preserving the canal's history while fostering local engagement (see elsewhere in this issue for a photographic record of some or the initial works carried out by our volunteers).

In 2023, 18,600 hours (equating to £930,000) of labour was recorded by volunteers, underscoring their dedication to preserving the canal's legacy.

Whilst working closely with commercial firms such as Greenfields will only further benefit our mission to restore this canal, more must be done to keep this momentum going. Can you help? Could you become a volunteer? Can your business offer support?

The Grantham Canal is not just a waterway; it's a living piece of history and a beacon of community spirit. Once an industrial lifeline, the canal has become a symbol of restoration and renewal, thanks to the tireless efforts of our (unpaid) volunteers, but we need your support – please consider to becoming a volunteer – costs nothing, just your time.

Why don't you join them and become part of something that's of benefit not only to the GCS, but also to the environment, the community and even your own well being?

Shoot off an email now to our volunteer co-ordinator: volunteer@granthamcanal.org



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



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



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THE GAMSTON RANGER WRITES ...

My name is Gary Dykes, and I am a volunteer Ranger with the Grantham Canal Society (GCS), responsible for the Gamston section of the canal.

Having lived in Gamston for 26 years, I've always enjoyed walking along the canal, or wildlife haven on the edge of the city. After retiring two years ago, it was an easy decision to make my regular walks more meaningful by becoming a Ranger. While I look after this section, Mike – another resident of Gamston – is the Bassingfield section Ranger.



The canal stretches for 33 miles, with each section cared for by a dedicated Ranger, with some longer sections paired with another Ranger.

WHAT DOES A RANGER DO?

Rangers perform litter picks, minor maintenance, e.g., cutting back brambles and nettles encroaching on the towpath, etc., and reporting larger issues to the Canal and River Trust (CRT) or GCS. Community members also help by reporting concerns on the Gamston Community Facebook page.

WHO LOOKS AFTER THE CANAL?

The CRT, is a charity that owns and is responsible for most of the canal network including our section of the canal and is legally responsible for ensuring towpath safety. Each autumn, CRT employ contractors to cut back towpath verges after the bird-nesting season. Meanwhile, GCS focuses on restoring and maintaining the canal, such as recently replacing fencing at Lock 2.

WeBCan, a community group, has adopted the Lady Bay and Gamston sections, hosting public meetings at the Poppy & Pint for updates and community input. You can follow them on Facebook for more information.

Exciting improvements to the canal are on the horizon, and future newsletters will provide more details. To learn more about the GCS and its work, visit granthamcanal.org or follow the GCS Community Group on Facebook. Let's work together to preserve and enhance this cherished local amenity.

Adapted from an article by Gary published some time ago by the Holme Pierrepont and Gamston Parish Council in their newsletter [Ed]



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 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

THREE SHIRES NEWS

The Three Shires cruising season ended on Sunday 27 October. There was a 2 hour cruise on this day and the weather was perfect – sunny with light winds. Our chairman's brother Peter and his family very much enjoyed the day. A great time was had by all. A fitting end to our year!

The 2024 season has not been without issue: bookings were down during the wet May and June and then perversely there was not enough water in the canal to keep cruises going in August.

Three Shires performed well, only having one prop shaft issue which was solved in a morning.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the skippers and crew who made the year possible and a huge thanks goes out to all those who have supported GCS by booking a short trip or cruise with us.

Please make a note that the 2025 cruising season will start on Sunday 30 March, so book your cruises soon!



John Trigg (Senior Skipper)

GCS CALENDAR POSTPONED

We have had to reschedule production of the calendar which will now happen next year – plenty of time for suitable photos to be submitted for consideration, so get snapping!

The theme is obviously Grantham Canal-related but can include your pets and wildlife and the more seasonally-focussed the better.

Photos should be high resolution (ideally ≥ 12 mp).

Please do **not** crop or digitally enhance the photos in any way.

Files can be emailed to peter.gs@icloud.com with the subject CAL26 or by using a 'free-to-use' file transfer website such as WeTransfer.

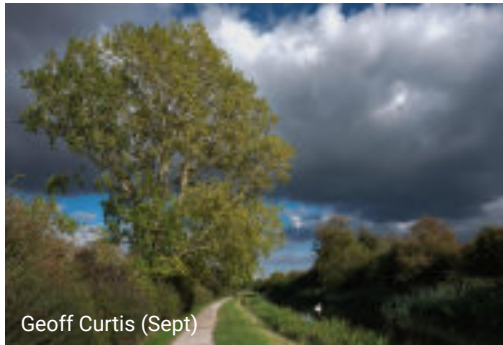
Christmas Cards

GCS Christmas cards are still available from the Canal Shop (£3.50 for pack of 6 plus p&p): canalshop.co.uk/acatalog/Christmas-Cards.html and they are a great way to spread the word about the Society and what we do, so please consider supporting us by sending GCS Christmas cards this year.





Julie Watson (Aug)



Geoff Curtis (Sept)



Andrew Whelan (Oct)



Amanda Johnson (Oct)



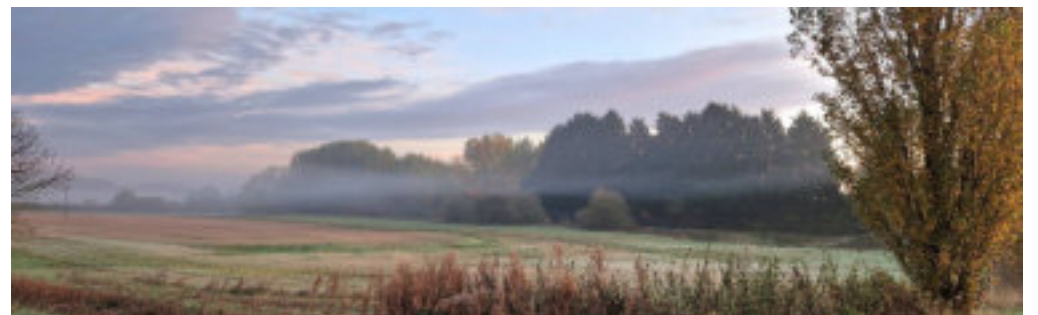
Julie Blyth (Nov)



Alan Napier (Sept)



Helen Jackson-Kelham (Oct)



Helen Burke (Oct)

WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION UPDATE *General Manager Tony Osbond*

We are now well and truly into the winter period with Christmas now looming large as we approach the end of November.

Water issues are now history as we have had copious amounts of rain and the first falls of snow this winter.

Summit pound is full as are the pounds from 18 down to 16 and reducing the flow is now paramount as we tackle some repair work on Lock 17 bottom gates.

Operationally all our teams are involved in winter working programmes with activity happening far and wide.

Over in Harby we are clearing a section of the canal in an area between Bridge 43 Harby Town and Rectory Swing Bridge 44 in an area of land owned by farmer Howard Coy. We are working in with Howard to suit his programme, but our Friday Team have made great progress with the work completed so far.



Working at Kimberley Farm, Harby in October

We have had another successful day's vegetation and tree clearance with Greenfields Countryside Ltd from Cropwell Bishop carrying on the clearance we started earlier this year from Colston Bridge 23 to Spencers Bridge 24. Volunteers from both Friday and the Saturday teams contributed working in tandem with Greenfields with the chippings from the wood chipper being gratefully received by Belvoir Vale Riding for the Disabled.



Greenfields' monster chipper devouring another small tree (November)

We have also started the work in bringing back to life the weigh house at Muston Gorse Bridge 57. We have had approval from Belvoir Estates to clear the building of vegetation and if costs allow, carry out repairs to the roof and the superstructure.

In addition the Saturday Team have also carried out vegetation clearance to the wharf exposing the structure so that we can evaluate just what was happening when narrow boats came up from





Aerial view (above) of the work in progress at the Duke's Wharf and (below) a close-up view.



Nottingham with supplies to Belvoir Castle. With the help of Richard Marshall who has investigated the history of the wharf and weigh house we can piece together a significant historical event in the working life of the canal.

We were approached by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) to carry out vegetation and tree clearance on the canal at the eastern side of the A1 into Grantham. We have gone through an approved contractor procedure with them and have now started work on the areas of the canal between Swingbridge Road and Earlsfield Lane so that SKDC Engineers can investigate the culverts and to also establish the problems of water leakage from the canal.

Otter our weed boat has gone through a trying time this year with numerous problems but finally Jim Gaut and his team have succeeded in curing the problems that have blighted the craft for such a long time: it is now back in water and revving up to do some work.

Centauri has also been out of action for a month or two but with the help of a Lister engine specialist its mechanical problems have been successfully sorted and is back on the summit pound earning its keep.

We have now moved on with the mechanisation of our dredging and silt removal activities and after trips down to the Cotswold Society to view their activities on silt removal, we have now agreed the purchase of a second hand tug, 40'00" pan and a jack leg platform with a 2.5 tonne digger from Rothen Engineering. The funding on the purchase of the equipment has been boosted by SKDC awarding us £30,000 from their Shared Prosperity Fund to facilitate silt removal and dredging in the Summit Pound (essentially in the Council's area). Delivery of the equipment is being arranged as I write this report to coincide with the removal of *Corvus*. Yes you heard it correctly! *Corvus* has been purchased by Denham Boatyard in North London in an auction conducted by CRT (the owners of the vessel).

Our firewood log business is taking shape with GCS is now an approved 'Ready to Burn' firewood supplier. Eric Holden is conducting the business with the help of Phil Radford and Alec Hampson and literally logs are flying out of the depot in an ever-increasing number of builders bags, contributing to our funds.



Construction work on Lock 13 and indeed construction work generally has stopped, due to CRT not having the right support in place to adhere to the principles of the Construction Design and Management 2015 regulations (CDM). That support needs to be in place to manage and supervise construction activities being carried out by Canal Societies. We are waiting to hear from CRT when they expect their procedures to be in place - which will dictate when we can recommence work. In the

meantime we are putting two of our site managers through the SMSTS (Site Managers Safety Training Scheme) and two of our Supervisors through the SSSTS (Site Supervisors Safety Training Scheme) so that we are ready for the start of construction activities.

Before Construction activities stopped the work to Lock 18 paddle gear and Lock 17 top gate paddles was completed.

Still to be resolved by CRT and an action plan to be agreed, is the leakage of water from the towpath side letterbox at Lock 18 into the adjacent field. Dye tests have been carried out and has confirmed that the letterbox is the problem.

Work to the repairs of Culvert 12 is in abeyance. CRT have now postponed this work until financial year April 2025 to March 2026. Once the procedures appertaining to CDM Regulations have been agreed with CRT then it is likely work to repair this culvert will start after the summer harvest in 2025 as access to the site will be over Belvoir Castle land.

We are assisting CRT with the water leakage problems in an area of the canal that is parallel with the Nottinghamshire Golf Course just downstream from Skinners Lock 4. A considerable amount of water is being lost in a 40m length of the canal which is pouring into a dyke on the golf course. CRT are in talks with the owners of the course to repair the off-side bank.

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 have carried 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 feasibility study has support from both Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, we now also have some positive communication with National Highways concerning a feasibility submission for the Gamston Lings Bar box culvert to get under the A52 ring road. Email exchanges are now determining when we can commission this study and further meetings with National Highways will be taking this further.

Finally we presented Greenfields Countryside Ltd with a plaque recognising their efforts in their on-going support of the Society and in recognition of their support and organisation of the 26 mile Grantham Canalathon – a 26 mile walk from Morrisons in Gamston to the Dirty Duck at Woolsthorpe. The event raised just over £1,600 for GCS funds.



Greenfields and GCS – a *working* partnership!



Events

... with Louise Cooper

2024 has been a busy one for the Events team. We have held no less than four themed Open Days, raising nearly £5,000 in total!

It takes many people pulling together to raise this fantastic amount for the Society's coffers, and I would like to acknowledge everyone for their hard work and team spirit. So thank you to Mary Noble and Jane Grylls for their unending support and patience in keeping me on the straight and narrow, always there to give me a gentle nudge in the right direction, and to the other members of the Events team – John Leighton, Rosemary Gibson, Angie Albery and Mark Cherry.

Thank you to the work parties for getting the depot safe and looking great, for erecting and putting away the gazebos and for the monumental task of raising the marquee – and keeping it there despite the high winds! Thanks also to John Trigg and the skippers and crew of the *Three Shires* trip boat for running the highly successful short trips, particularly on Open Days.

Where would we be without the cake bakers, scone makers, burger flippers, and countless stall holders? Heartfelt thanks once again.

In addition to various pop-up stands at local events aiming to promote the Society, members of the Events team have also hosted post-cruise lunches for groups as diverse as Australian railway enthusiasts, a local vintage motorbike club and a Golden Wedding celebration! If you think you may be interested in having a unique occasion in a unique location – get in touch!

Furthermore, we have provided support to remote working locations, as well as back-up for the amazing Canalathon walkers from Greenfields Countryside Ltd., along with John Leighton, Angie Albery and Anthony Goody from GCS.

Save the date!

In 2025 we already have lots of plans afoot!

We will be hosting two Open Days to open and close the year, with our first event of the year being a Craft Fair at the Woolsthorpe Depot on 6th April. The final event will be a reprise of the highly popular Produce Fair to be held 31st August.

We are branching out by holding two off-site events – a Ceilidh and Hog Roast on Friday 11th July and a Sea Shanty event on 25th May.

We are also working on building links with the new landlords of The Duck at Woolsthorpe (formerly the Dirty Duck).

100 CLUB LOTTERY

Buy Your Loved One a Unique

Christmas Present

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!

Monthly prizes: 1st Prize: £30 • 2nd Prize: £20 • 3rd Prize: £10

Month 12 – December – 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!

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

Please make the email subject *100 CLUB LOTTERY*

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DUKE'S WHARF AND WEIGH HOUSE RESTORATION

Peter Stubbs

We are thrilled to announce our latest heritage project: the restoration of the historic Duke's Wharf and Weigh House at Muston Gorse, near Bottesford. This initiative aims to preserve an essential piece of canal history while creating an engaging heritage site for the community and visitors alike.

Project Highlights:

Restore the weigh house with new roof, door and repairs to the brickwork

Adding sculptures to represent the original canal crane

Transform the area into a heritage visitor site, complete with information boards, historical photos, and, if funds permit, original railway tracks and a restored rail cart

This project will offer a fascinating glimpse into our local history and appeal to heritage enthusiasts, as well as walkers and cyclists exploring the nearby towpath. It's also an ideal educational resource for schools and colleges, inspiring history and arts projects.

We would love your support in spreading the word. Keep an eye out for upcoming Crowdfunding Notices on our Facebook page and WhatsApp groups, along with progress updates in each issue of BRIDGE. Thank you for helping us bring this valuable piece of history back to life!



The weigh house (left) before work started and after (above) now ready for restoration works



100 CLUB WINNERS

AUG	1st	RK	£30	OCT	1st	EAS	£30
	2nd	AM	£20		2nd	CC	£20
	3rd	DS	£10		3rd	AR	£10
SEPT	1st	TO	£30	NOV	1st	NM	£30
	2nd	PH	£20		2nd	MN	£20
	3rd	TH	£10		3rd	CJ	£10

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT SUMMARY

AGM held on 27 November 2024 at Kinoulton Village Hall

Officers re-elected: Ashley Mather, Tony Osbond, Jane Grylls

Accounts

The GCS accounts are in excellent shape, thanks to the diligent work of team leaders managing budgets and financial controls, as well as the Treasurer's efficiency.

Progress has begun on Lock 13, with additional work undertaken on behalf of CRT with conclusion pending their decisions. However, rising costs due to inflation necessitate vigilant monitoring to optimise the use of donated funds.

Overview

56-year-old registered charity with 850 members and 120 active volunteers. Volunteers contributed 18,600 hours in 2023, valued at £930,000 in paid labour.

The current focus is on the Nottingham end, establishing a depot and boosting volunteer involvement.

Approved contractor for CRT and SKDC, enhancing maintenance capabilities.

Strengthened ties with FOCCP, GCWRG, and Greenfields Countryside Ltd.

Challenges

Maintenance issues with *Otter* and *Centauri*.

Water shortages due to leaks and low rainfall.

Depot roof repairs, ageing machinery, and CRT delays on construction.

Successes

Repairs to Locks 16-18 and Trent Link feasibility study completed.

Partnerships with Greenfields Countryside Ltd. contributed over £1,700.

Fundraising Highlights

£30,000 from SKDC for dredging equipment.

£25,000 from People's Postcode Lottery.

Launch of the 100 Club and applications for further funding.

Log sales initiative launched.

Plans for 2025

Begin dredging with new equipment and resume Lock 13 and Culvert 12 repairs post-CRT approval.

Promote Trent Link restoration and consultations for the Grantham stretch of the canal.

VOLUNTEER TIMESHEETS



The time given by our members when they volunteer for the society is one of the key measures that are used by our fundraising team to demonstrate our commitment to the restoration of our canal.

At present all of the work party / construction teams timesheets are captured along with Rangers & Trip boat hours.

Last year we recorded 18,620 hours and 15,523 in 2022, but there are many more hours that we are not capturing, hours that are spent in meetings, baking cakes, writing funding bids, delivering presentations, manning popup at events, etc., etc.

There are many ways volunteers can submit your hours. By far the best way for the society is to submit a Google time sheet, this can be for you as an individual or for the team you are managing. If you're running a team, you can fill out a paper time sheet which can be scanned / photographed and emailed to Jane.

If you would like to have your valued hours used to support the Society please send an email to timesheets@granthamcanal.org, telling us your name or team and how you would like to submit your hours.

At the moment Jane uploads all the workparty hours to our timesheet program. If anyone would like to help her out by taking on this task, please talk to Jane or send an email to timesheets@granthamcanal.org.

SELECTION OF DONATIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED

BT	£1000	[BEQUEST]	LC	£20	
CG	£190		ML	£30	
JG	£34		MN	£50	
NL	£30		RG	£50	
JA	£40		SB	£2000	[BEQUEST]
JD	£45		TO	£45	
KP	£35		TB	£30	

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

NOVEMBER 1840, THE DUKE'S WHARF *John Leighton*

Hello, let me introduce myself. My name is Thomas Trigg, skipper of the Trent barge *Three Shires* which, unusually these days, is my own boat.

For the past 10 years I have run up and down the Grantham canal moving coal, stone and lime to Grantham and taking agricultural produce back to Nottingham. I make a decent living out of it. Thankfully, I have not had to get involved with the movement of night soil from Nottingham (used to spread on fields in the Vale of Belvoir – good fertiliser apparently). I don't like mooring at Hickling basin when there are 'night soil' boats present – a malodorous odour lingers across the basin and I keep well away from those boats!

Hercules, my horse, likes it when we stop overnight at Hickling because he gets a stable to sleep in and fresh feed courtesy of The Navigation Inn. I get to enjoy a few pints of ale, a nice pork pie and the company of the comely barmaid. I remember last winter the canal froze over and we couldn't move the boat so we were stuck at Hickling basin for a week. There were villagers skating on the ice that covered the canal! Such fun – but not for me.

Today I am headed for The Dukes Wharf at Muston Gorse Bridge 57 with a load of coal from his Grace's Derbyshire mine. The Estate Manager has ordered extra coal because the Duke has a large number of guests arriving for the shooting season. He likes their bedrooms to be nice and cosy. Well, the Castle can be a bit draughty I have heard.

Him that built the canal – Jessop that's his name, he built the tramway to take the coal right up the hill and into the castle. Very clever man and he designed and cast in his own foundry special tracks to take the wagons too. It was built in 1815 so 25 years ago now, where does the time go?

At the Wharf there is a weighbridge for weighing the coal into the wagons. The curmudgeon that oversees the weighbridge is a nasty piece of work and you don't want to get on the wrong side of him! There is a crane on the wharf which is handy for lifting the coal into the wagons and is definitely a godsend.

After I drop the coal off for the castle I am headed for Grantham. They are a rough lot that live there so I won't be lingering. Those railway navies are working in the area and they create havoc when they are paid.

Anyway, I must be off, thanks for the chat. I might see you in that new pub 'The Duck' at Woolsthorpe sometime. I wonder what the barmaids will be like?



WORKPARTY VOLUNTEERS



