

BRIDGE



The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society

SPRING 25

In this issue:

Grants & more Grants

Crowdfunding restoration

New boats

FREE



Published quarterly by



CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

I think that many of us have already experienced some of the changes that have applied under the new Government e.g., winter fuel support but we may not expect that some of possible future changes may impact upon the Grantham Canal Society. The Editor has requested that I am writing this prior to the planned announcements our Government makes before the end of March, so I am unable to be specific so am suggesting likely topics that could relate to the GCS activities.

Clearly the financial position of our nation affects everyone so it would be surprising if the Society did not experience a reduction in our income. As you know it relies on donations, in various forms, that we receive to fund all the restoration work we undertake on the Grantham Canal. We also apply to a wide range of trusts and funding bodies seeking donations to fund activity on major projects e.g., Lock 13, Trent Connection, etc. Our landlord, Canal & River Trust, is an agency supported by a Government which has already indicated it is expecting most departments to reduce expenditure.

So how can GCS react to these financial pressures?

By doing what we do best and increasing our income from established sources:

- Selling more cruises on Three Shires
- Marketing to raise the attendance numbers at our events
- Increasing the collection of fallen timber so GCS can maximise the sale of dried firewood
- Importantly adding new names to our Membership lists
- by encouraging greater participation in volunteering

I hope that there is some way you can help the Society.

Things may get more difficult in the future but I know the Society will demonstrate its strength and resolution in positive outcomes.

Please continue to support the Grantham Canal Society by whatever means you can.

Best wishes for a Happy Easter

FROM THE EDITOR

CONTENTS

<i>Chairman's Letter</i>	2
<i>Three Shires</i>	5
<i>Thanks for the Grants!</i>	7
<i>Workparty & Construction News</i>	8
<i>Events</i>	14
<i>Crowdfunding help</i>	16
<i>Mikron are back!</i>	19
<i>FaceBook photos</i>	23



NOTTS CC AWARD GCS £12,700

**Nottinghamshire County Council
have awarded us £12,700 for
new Information Boards in the
Rushcliffe Area of the canal.
GCS will match fund with £8,500
which we will get back from
sponsorship by companies and
organisations that we deal with.**

Cover: Louise Lunn took this stunning photo
of the sunset over the canal on 20 March.

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Change is often met with resistance, yet it is the one certainty in life (along with taxes and death!). Whether it comes as a slow evolution or an abrupt shift, change forces us to adapt, rethink, and grow. While it can be uncomfortable, it is also undeniably a catalyst for progress.

I recently experienced this firsthand when I moved to a new home. Leaving behind familiar surroundings, favourite local spots (aka pubs!), and the comfort of routine was daunting. The packing, the uncertainty, the emotional weight of closing one chapter and beginning another – it felt overwhelming and not to mention endlessly searching for things packed away months ago in boxes! But now I've settled in, I know now how much change can open new doors. A fresh perspective, new opportunities, and even a sense of renewal came with this shift. What once felt like a loss became an exciting new beginning.

The same can be said for the restoration of our canal. Once a thriving waterway, fallen into neglect and disrepair, seemingly left behind by modern progress. Yet, rather than letting it fade into history, our passionate volunteers are working tirelessly to restore it, recognising the value of preserving the past while embracing the future. The canal's revival is not just about nostalgia – it brings new life to local communities, boosts tourism, and reconnects people with nature.

Like moving house, change can feel unsettling at first. But with vision and determination, what seems like an ending can become a powerful new beginning. Instead of fearing change, we should embrace its potential, because without change, there is *no* progress.



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



Get the App ...



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

Elizabeth Bland



Our 2025 season started with a full day of 30-minute trips on Mother's Day – a lovely time was had by all and we hope that this season we will be blessed with warm sunshine and just enough rain to keep us afloat!

As usual prior to the start of the season, volunteers were on hand to give the Three Shires a 'sprucing up', painting both the interior and exterior where required, cleaning throughout, and servicing the engine. Thanks to all those who helped – very much appreciated!

This season we are delighted to announce that we have introduced a special 'Cruise and Dine' offering, in partnership with the restaurant at The Duck at Woolsthorpe. The package includes a one-and-a-half hour cruise on the Three Shires followed by dinner at the restaurant. The chef has produced a special menu for us at a special price of £14.50 for two courses, or £19.50 for three courses. The 'Cruise and Dine' trips can be booked through our booking team.

If you would rather take a picnic on board as you cruise along the Canal, you can order our 'Picnic Bag' which again is specially prepared for us by The Duck, and is delivered to the boat prior to your departure. Just order your Bags when booking your private cruise and we will do the rest!

As in previous years, we will be offering days of 30-minute trips throughout the season on Bank Holidays and other designated weekends – please see our website: www.granthamcanal.org for details. 📖



We also offer the two, three or four hour private trips – fully crewed – for you to enjoy the tranquility of a leisurely cruise along the Grantham Canal. These can be booked on any day of the week, and the boat is hired exclusively for your group (max 10 passengers) – an ideal way to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries or a day out with family or friends.

All private hire trips can be booked by emailing bookings@granthamcanal.org or calling 07486 955775.

If you would like to join our team, we are always happy to enlist new crew members! Full training is given so you don't need crewing experience. For further information, please email boatmaster@granthamcanal.org

100 CLUB WINNERS

	JAN	FEB	MAR
1 ST £30	MN	CH	PH
2 ND £20	KH	RK	PH
3 RD £10	PH	CC	JC

To request a number for next years Lottery draw drop a line to 100club@granthamcanal.org

THANKS!

Michelle Storer & Peter Stubbs

Huge thanks to the SKDC's Shared Prosperity Fund and The People's Postcode Lottery for grants of £30,000 and £25,000 respectively enabling GCS to acquire three more workboats, viz., tug boat *Heron* and a floating silt pan aptly named *Peter Pan* along with jack leg boat *Betty*. The grants also allowed us to purchase an excavator, an essential machine in removing silt.

Silt removal restores water depth, prevents flooding and improves water flow. By creating a cleaner habitat, biodiversity is enhanced together with a reduction of pollution and invasive plant growth.

This crucial work brings our historic canal another step closer to full restoration, ensuring it remains a thriving, accessible space for wildlife, boaters and the community.



Betty with the on-board excavator during silt removal works.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION UPDATE *General Manager Tony Osbond*

As I sit here composing my Spring edition for BRIDGE the weather outside is certainly spring-like with daffodils and spring flowers in great abundance.

We have had a busy time over the winter period with canal maintenance and indeed with our fleet of boats and machinery. The highlights over the period were:

- *Corvus*, the boat landlocked in our Depot at Woolsthorpe has gone, sold by CRT and now residing on the Thames at Denham
- A new fleet of silt clearance boats have been obtained courtesy of funding through South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) Shared Prosperity Fund and the Peoples Post Code Lottery
- A booming Log Sales business over the period with revenues in excess of £3000.
- Another successful day of tree and vegetation clearing with the Greenfields team from Cropwell Bishop in the Colston Lane Bridge area on Friday 14th February

With plenty of water in the Summit Pound, vegetation and tree clearance continued in preparation for the coming season of *Three Shires* cruising.



A cruise and a picnic by the canal – what could be nicer? (photo: James Jones 13 March)

Over in Harby the work for Howard Coy in a section of the canal between Bridge 43 Harby Town and Rectory Swing Bridge 44 was curtailed as the land is very wet and therefore getting machinery down to the site was not practical. We will be clearing the residue over the late spring when the land has dried out.

Another successful day with Greenfields Countryside Ltd from Cropwell Bishop carrying on the clearance we started earlier this year (and last year) from Colston Bridge 23 to Spencers Bridge 24. Volunteers from both the Friday and Saturday teams contributed, working in tandem with Greenfields with the chippings from the woodchipper being gratefully received by Belvoir Vale Riding for the Disabled. Greenfields are continuing their relationship with GCS by giving us another days work with their team on Friday October 3rd. A big thank you to them for their support.



Colston Bridge section following the combined efforts of GCS volunteers and Greenfields (14 Feb)

Bringing back to life the Weigh House down at Muston Gorse Bridge 57 is now a project that will be funded by a Crowd Funding exercise. Currently this is on-going where just under £1000 has been given to the project by the general public with match funding being sought by an application to AVIVA from their charitable giving page.

We will soon be in a position to start detailed planning for the repairs and refurbishment to begin in the near future.



Workparty & Construction continued

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 between Swingbridge Road and Earlsfield Lane.

This work was completed successfully to the extent that SKDC have approached GCS to carry out ongoing maintenance on the canal eastern side of the A1. We await to see the action plan on this exercise from SKDC

Our maintenance boats went through a period of being out of action but as I speak they are all back earning their keep!

We took delivery of our three new boats purchased through the Shared Prosperity Fund promoted by SKDC and the Peoples Post Code Lottery. Boats *Betty*, *Heron* and *Peter Pan* are now in the water and training on the boats for selected volunteers has been organised by John Robinson and Colin Bryan. The main silt removing exercise will now be planned for next winter (2025/26) in the summit pound when the bird nesting and fish spawning season for fish has finished. In the summer period this year *Betty*, the jack leg boat, will be helping out with maintenance work on Lock 16.



Betty



Heron



Peter Pan

Our log business is booming with £3000 in revenue taken over the winter period. Plans are now in full swing to create a much-improved log store over the summer period so that come winter we will have sufficient stocks to sell to the public.

Construction work generally has come to a halt due to CRT not having proper support in place to adhere to the principles of the 'Construction Design and Management 2015' regulations (CDM). This support is essential for managing and supervising construction activities being carried out by Canal Societies.

We understand that the launch of CRT proposals will be made at the Waterways Conference at Ellesmere Port at the end of April. GCS will be at the conference to hear first hand how the principles will be managed.

In the intervening period design work on Lock 13 is in its infancy as GCS will be in control of appointing a Principal Designer. We have approached JBA Consulting of Peterborough to carry out this exercise with CRT being the Client and approver of the design. As it stands at the moment, we are awaiting CRT notification that CRT Heritage are in favour of the initial thoughts of replacing the existing brick design with a reinforced concrete structure.

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 on Lock 13.

Priority this next financial year is to carry out urgent maintenance on Lock 16. Top gate paddles to be replaced together with lock gate cills and mitres to be refreshed. Bottom gate paddles, cills and mitres to be worked on with brickwork pointing in the lock chamber. Stop planks to be in place at the top and bottom gate positions.

Maintenance work on Lock 17 is being planned for the next financial year 2026/27.

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 are in abeyance. CRT have postponed this work again until financial year April 2026 to March 2027. Precise programme dates to be agreed nearer the time.

The water leakage problems in an area of the canal that is parallel with the Nottinghamshire Golf Course just downstream from Skinners Lock 4 has been completed by Oxford Hydrotechnics working for CRT. Hopefully this will now improve the amount of water that reaches the Lady Bay section

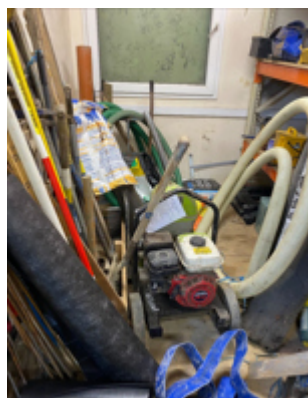
WeBCan – the Lady Bay action group – still continue to make progress on reed clearance in the Lady Bay/Gamston area making a considerable difference to the aspect of a canal in water.

The Trent Connection project, whilst having support from both Rushcliffe Borough Council and Notts County Council to our feasibility study, we now

Workparty & Construction continued

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 happening to determine when we can commission this study and further meetings with National Highways will be happening to take this further.

Finally the Duck Pub is now under new management with the owners of the Unicorn at Langar and the White Horse at Ruddington being the new landlords. Simon Barnes, one of the joint owners, has today told me that he is talking to a number of his breweries to initiate a draught beer in support of the Grantham Canal and the Three Shires trip boat. A percentage of the sales of the beer will be donated to GCS. SO PLEASE GET INTO THE DUCK and order a pint of Grantham Canal bitter!!



Container No 6 ... before tidying ... and after (January).



The management! (March).



John and Lou scrape the area at Alladins (Feb)



Steve finding things tight on Betty! (Jan)



Exciting new trolley building! (Jan).



Stop planks storage shelter (Jan).



Neil, John W, Lou, John T, Ralph, Stephen, Steve, Keith, Al, (Jim took the photo 7th Feb)



Fence construction (Mar)



Shelter completed (Feb)

Events

Make a note in your diary for the next event:

Ceilidh with live band

FRIDAY 11 JULY 2025

from 7.30pm to 11pm

KINOULTON VILLAGE HALL NG12 3EL

Professional barbecue and Licensed bar

Further information from gcsevents@granthamcanal.org

All proceeds to Grantham Canal Society



GCS Events Team on their first outside event of the year, we joined Hickling WI and some amazing craft stalls at Kinoulton Village hall on 15th March. Two new members and a lot of chatting about the canal later, and of course we enjoyed the great snacks on offer!

FRED MARSH OBITUARY

by Mike Atherley

I was saddened to read the passing of Fred Marsh; I also heard recently that Ian Goodson of Wartnaby had also died – there can't be many of us left that were members in 1971.

I first met Fred at the Hickling Boat rally that year. Fred was one of a small group of HGV drivers and had the use of a flat bed lorry which proved very useful over the years. He was also the Society's painter and kept the mile posts, sign boards and lock names in readable condition. During the period that I was in charge of work parties, I think Fred attended every one, a very reliable man. Many of us tried to get him to join the committee but no luck there.

Fred was a jolly man, always happy whatever the job or weather but could also act silly and play tricks on us, but underneath was intelligent and would stand no nonsense.



Fred (middle)



Fred (right)

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WE NEED YOUR HELP TO RESTORE THE HISTORIC CANAL WHARF & WEIGH HOUSE AT MUSTON GORSE

This restoration will breathe new life into a vital piece of our local heritage, creating a vibrant visitor attraction for the community, history lovers, and canal walkers alike.



The History

The Duke of Rutland's Grantham Canal Wharf, located at Muston Gorse near Bottesford, was historically connected to Belvoir Castle via one of England's earliest horse-drawn railways, established in 1815 by the Butterley Ironworks Company. This tramway facilitated the transportation of various goods between the canal and the castle.

While coal was a primary commodity transported to the castle, the tramway also carried other essential supplies. The Grantham Canal played a significant role in regional trade, bringing in materials such as fertiliser (notably night soil from Nottingham) and building materials. Additionally, the canal facilitated the movement of agricultural products, including ground corn, rolled oats, and malt for local beer production.

At the Muston Gorse Wharf, a weigh bridge was installed to measure the weight of goods being transported. This infrastructure ensured accurate accounting for various commodities, including coal, fertilisers, building materials, and agricultural products.

The establishment of the Grantham Canal and its associated tramway significantly enhanced the efficiency of transporting goods to Belvoir Castle, reducing costs and improving accessibility to essential supplies beyond coal. *(Extract courtesy of the Bottesford Living History)*

Your donation will fund:

A new roof, brickwork repairs, and restoration of the 1815 Weigh House.

Removal of overgrown bushes along the wharf, new fencing enhancing the overall appearance of the site.

Our wonderfully skilled volunteers will provide much of the labour required to carry out the work.

We desperately need your help to provide the heritage materials needed.

We will also erect a sculpture depicting the original wharf crane, heritage displays with historical photos, information boards and more.

Every contribution gets us closer to preserving this unique educational site for future generations to enjoy.



Nineteenth-century image shows the canal, wharf, crane, tracks and a stable block for the horses.

PLEASE DONATE NOW

and help us bring history back to life!

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/gcsweigh-house

For more information on the project go to:

www.towpathtalk.co.uk/belvoir-castle-railway





The wharf exposed

If you wish to get involved you can become a member here:

www.granthamcanal.org/join-us

Peter Stubbs

MIKRON THEATRE CRACKS THE CODE!

**The Plough Pub & Kitchen, Hickling
on 4th June at 7pm**

In a daring theatrical mission, Mikron Theatre Company, now in its 53rd year of touring and bringing entertainment to the front lines and beyond, proudly announces the tour of Hush Hush! This vital new production, penned by Dewsbury playwright Lucie Raine, embarking on a crucial nationwide tour until October.



Hush Hush! infiltrates the clandestine world of wartime codebreaking, exposing the vital contributions of the unsung heroes whose ingenuity and unwavering resolve helped secure victory. Eighty years have passed since the joyous celebrations of VE Day, and Hush Hush! serves as a timely reminder of their indispensable service, proving that behind every successful campaign, there are countless untold stories waiting to be brought to light.

In true Mikron fashion, Hush Hush! will tour by narrowboat and van, bringing its unique brand of pop-up theatre to a variety of locations across the country, from village halls and community centres to pubs and outdoor venues. It's a strategic theatrical offensive.

Outdoor show, bring a chair and blanket; food and drinks available.

MIKRON
THEATRE COMPANY

SELECTION OF DONATIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED

AA	£10	JB	£15
CH	£30	ML	£40
DLB	£55	MM	£10
JG	£40	SG	£25
JL	£40	TB	£10
TA	£40	TO	£60
JD	£60	TB	£40

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

VOLUNTEERS CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Job completed – Friday 13 December construction team



Lock 16 towpath side to put in the new steps – Lou completing 2nd step (Feb).



Under Jim's supervision the pan was launched in a true shipyard splash down style (Dec).



14 March ... picked up another Dino hitchhiker!



10 Feb: large tree at Denton



Getting good at digging holes! (Mar)



Who needs a mini digger when you can use 8 old men with shovels? (Dec)



Job done and Nick got to test his new chainsaw!



Fence discussion (Mar)



Mark and John L. fished out five Aldi trolleys (Feb)



Harlaxton Br: moped found; Jon looks proud of his catch! (Mar)



More trolleys – a record haul of seven (Mar)



Phil and Charmian renovating steps (Jan)



Vegetation cleared from spill weir No.5 near Plungar (Feb)



How many volunteers does it take to start an outboard? (Mar)



"You can't park there mate!"

PHOTOS POSTED ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



Cropwell Bishop sunrise by Helen Burke (March)



Christmas Eve 2024 (Julie Blyth)



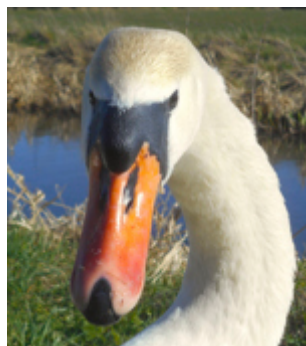
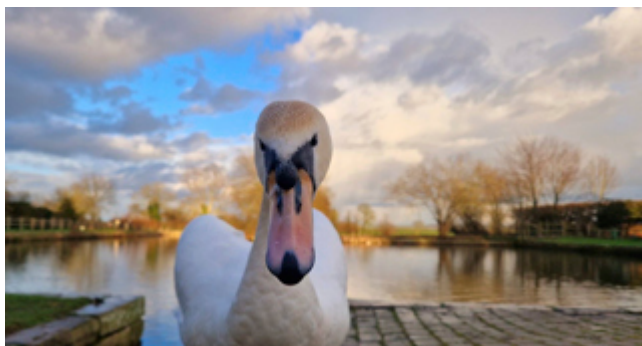
Nick Brocklebank's superb photo taken from Denton Wharf bridge (March)



Centauri adrift – reported & photographed by Sally Warwick (January)



Hickling basin in January (Julie Blyth)



Close encounters with a swan (above left) by Helen Burke (Feb) and this beauty by Julie Blyth (Mar)



Cotgrave by Andy Porter (Mar)



Mallard at Lock 2 Gamston by Alan Napier (Mar)