

BRIDGE



APRIL

2020

The monthly newsletter
published by the

The
Grantham Canal
Society

CHARITY No: 507337

IN THIS MONTH'S EDITION

Lock 14 update
Jim's story
A Trent Cruise
It's all in the Head
Meet the Rangers
& MORE!



Martin cleans the invert at Lock 14 ready for a concrete pour
It's a mucky job but someone had to do it!



This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

Covid 19 - a name to strike a chill in our hearts for generations to come!

So what will it mean for a Society that needs funds to operate successfully. True - many others face a similar problem and we appreciate that ours isn't unique.

However it affects the well being of our canal and **we need to have funds available to tackle whatever nature has thrown our way as well as repairing the numerous structures of a 220 year old canal.** The minimum operating cost of the society is approximately £25000 per year. This doesn't include £20000 committed match funding for the lock rebuilding project currently underway, nor does it include the £20000 needed to reinstate the slipway.

How long will these situations prevail?

None of us know but Society management are assuming that **we could lose several months of fundraising activity.**

So what are the implications for this year?

With little money available to purchase materials for physical restoration we need to raise funds to prevent it having a massive impact on our financial position this year. **Please could you help the Society** by raising an amount, however small, to off-set this reduction? Your fundraising ideas would also be helpful.

The particularly good news is that the Society has been approved as a contractor to CRT. This means the GCS can deliver properly planned and managed projects using volunteer labour without CRT staff present. This represents both a significant cost saving to the Society and much greater flexibility to volunteer teams.

In priority order we will concentrate our efforts on the following?

- Clearing the navigable length after a period of neglect. This will require a herculean effort after the weed, trees and silt has had free reign for several months.
- Completing Lock 14 and, importantly, meeting our remaining financial commitment of £20,000 to matched funding.
- Restoring the slipway at Woolsthorpe Depot will cost £ 20000 in materials. This project is required urgently as, without a slipway, we will have to hire cranes to remove craft from the water for maintenance this coming winter – a potential cost of up to £10,000.
- Repairs to the cills and gates of locks 18, 17 and 16 which could cost in excess of £14,000

So for now please stay safe, Stay at Home and 'Keep Your Distance'

A Happy Easter to you all



Mike Stone.

Sadly I have two recent bereavements to report and offer our sincere condolences to their respective families:

Tony Pitman

Tony had been a committee member and great asset to the society for many years. More recently he had undertaken the role of Environmental Officer and pursued this with great enthusiasm.

Bev Richardson

Bev was one of our highly committed stakeholders who farmed the land adjacent to the top section of the canal up towards the A1. He was always very supportive of the GCS.

The Chief Executive resurfaces ...

After 18 weeks recuperating from my strokes in last November and December I think most of my brain cells are functioning, if a little erratically. Please have sympathy for my wife who keeps finding pots and pans put away in wrong places around the kitchen.

Several GCS members have rung or emailed in the last few months and I thank them for their concern. I was lucky that the first stroke happened as my train rolled into Moscow, at the end of a journey from China, through North Korea and onto the 5800 mile Trans-Siberian Railway. I flew back to London and home, into the tender embrace of the NHS and my better half.

I could have done without the second stroke just before Christmas but hopefully I am now on the mend and soon I can continue to work with you all on the fascinating Grantham Canal project. **My thanks to Tony Osbond for so professionally taking on my role and responsibilities and to the rest of you who have driven the project onwards.** Pandemic permitting we can look forward to the opening of Lock 14 later in the year and the start of the Lock 13 project. I also hope to belatedly launch the 5-mile Cropwell Bishop project to establish the GCS firmly in Nottinghamshire.

Next month, in Bridge, you will find an appeal for DVDs, LP records and stamp collections to sell on behalf of society funds. Have a hunt round, get friends and relations doing the same - a small distraction to help stop us going stir crazy in these unreal times.

D L-B

LOCK 15 BENCH UPDATE

A lot has happened since the earlier details were given by David Lynham-Brown in early October last year concerning the sponsored bricks at Lock 15.

The design of the bench has had to go through an approval process with CRT and South Kesteven District Council, and those hurdles were successfully completed by mid February enabling us to order additional material and the bench itself. The named bricks are safely stored in our depot at Woolsthorpe in readiness to build the structure which was due to start mid March for the opening as previously arranged on April 26th.

Following on from delays caused by an extremely wet winter and now the lockdown over Covid 19 virus we have no alternative but to delay the build until normal work can resume.

Please rest assured that this will be a priority item on our build list and we will get in touch with all the sponsors once a revised date has been established.

We are living in unprecedented times at the moment that the majority of us have never experienced. We sincerely hope to see you all once this pandemic is over. Until then Stay Safe!

Tony Osbond
General Manager

Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative at Lock 14



Many thanks to John Clark, Jim Freeman & Martin Duignan for these photos
Work at lock 14, Kingston's Lock, has now ceased until restrictions are lifted

Jim's Story - how we rebuilt Lock 15

Part 1: GETTING READY



Mike Wiggins contemplates the building of temporary steps on the towpath diversion route



The overall view of the coping stones before removal



WRG & GCS volunteers mix concrete



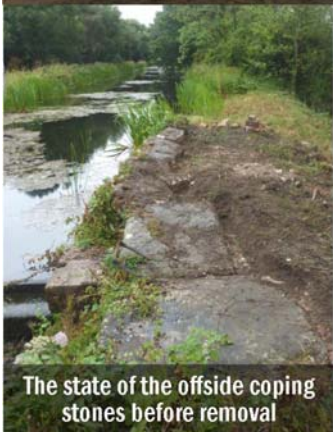
Buttress exposed by WRG. At the time only WRG & CRT were licensed to use the excavators



Mike, Ian, Ralph and CRT driver discuss the setting up of the work cabins



CRT building the lower dam



The state of the offside coping stones before removal



Buttresses exposed to reveal dangerous cracks



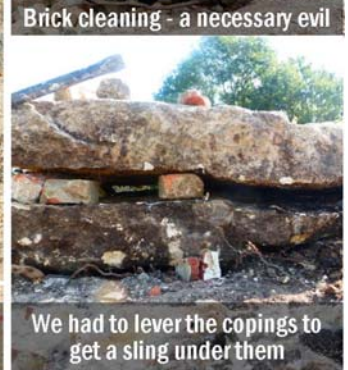
A closer view of the cracks on the towpath side



WRG volunteers build the byewash



Brick cleaning - a necessary evil



We had to lever the copings to get a sling under them

Jim's Story - how we rebuilt Lock 15

Part 1: GETTING READY continued



Sling in place and Geoff takes a rest



Yet more reclaimed bricks



WRG built byewash which was completed by GCS volunteers



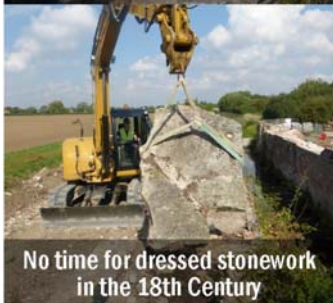
Some of the first copings being lifted



The brick cleaning table



Temporary toilets installed for the open day



No time for dressed stonework in the 18th Century



In readiness for the CRT open day August Bank Holiday



The CRT installed a public viewing platform



Rod works at removing another coping



Exposed areas backfilled for safety during open day



View from the platform. The weir goes next.

A TRENT 'CRUISE'

By Mike Atherley



Mike's story this month describes his trip on the River Trent in his 'Venturer' dinghy.

A couple of years or so before I rebuilt my first canal cruiser about 1969, I had purchased a Venturer dingy with Snipe road trailer from Mountsorrel Marine. It had been built with foredeck and windscreen also four plastic seats. Luckily I had retained my 6hp Perkins outboard and all the other accessories needed for safe cruising. Initially I found it difficult to find locations to launch but eventually trial and error sorted that problem. With visiting Gunthorpe, on the Trent, many times by car I thought that would be a nice stretch of the river to see from the water, so to speak. The only time I had boated on the Trent was as a child from Trent Bridge embankment to Colwick Park on Trevithick's river boats before Holme sluices were built.

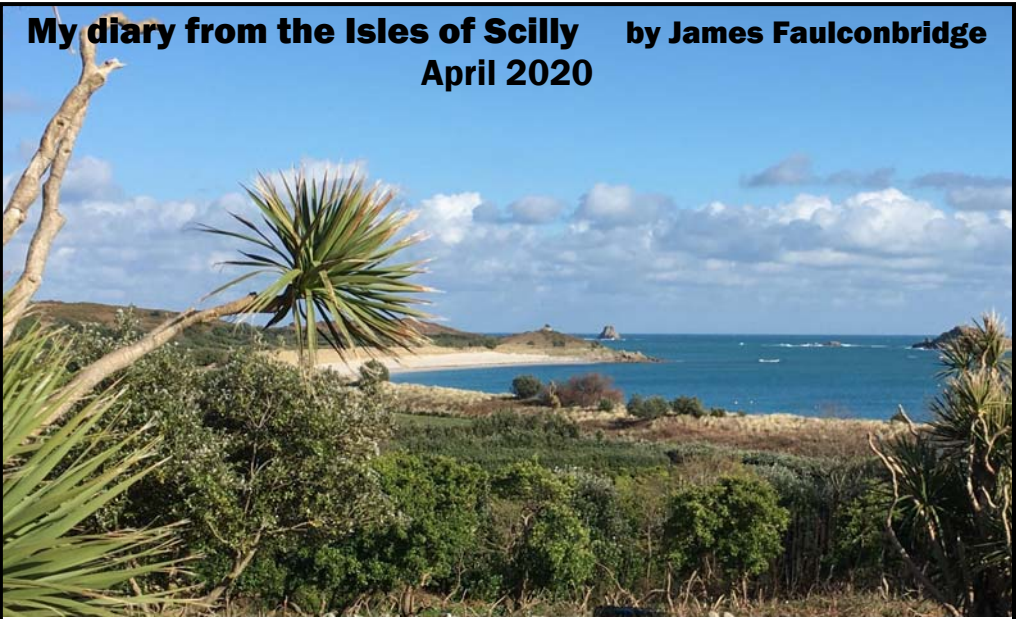
I had heard that there was a slipway at Stoke Bardolph, near the pub, where the ferry used to cross the river to Shelford. So all kitted up I took my Sister and Husband down to the pub but the landlord wouldn't allow us to use the slipway because it had been damaged by recent floods. Undeterred we decided to trail around to the Shelford side and try again. It was quite difficult finding the lane down to the riverbank, just a gravel track, but a nice slope at the riverside made launching easy. The river was higher and running faster than normal but being novices decided to give it a try. We were soon passing Burton Joyce boat club and reached Gunthorpe safely, the delight of passing under the arches of the bridge and cruising up to the lock approach made the trip worth while. I don't think we stayed long at Gunthorpe, possible no easy spot to moor at the time, so set off for Shelford.

It was noticeably slower on the return journey and I found that keeping close to the bank allowed more speed, slack water and shallower probably helped. It seemed to take ages to pass Burton Joyce but eventually we could see the ferry crossing point in the distance. Although the engine was running well and making plenty of noise I noticed we were not moving forward, I leaned over the side to see if we were caught on anything when my sister shouted, 'Mike should your shoes be floating in the back?' At the same time the boat shot forward and beached on a shallow bank. We all piled out and pulled the boat further ashore then removed the engine and all other loose items which then allowed us to tip the boat over. It was obvious then that we had run over a submerged metal fence spike, you could see the score mark along the keel, then finding a thinner section of floor had punched a small hole which had stopped us moving. I was able to find some bits of wood which I hammered into the hole, turned the boat over and all appeared well. The others wouldn't take my offer to continue as being close to the start point decided they to walk back. I cast off and hoped the repair would hold for the short journey. It did and all was recovered safely. The picture isn't my boat but it's similar.



My diary from the Isles of Scilly by James Faulconbridge

April 2020



As I mentioned in my March Flora and Fauna piece, we have moved recently from the Vale of Belvoir (variously Whatton, Redmile, Harlaxton and Bottesford) down to St Martins on the Isles of Scilly off the southwest coast of Cornwall.

Steve – the Bridge Editor – has asked me to write a little diary of life down here!

We are running a small vineyard on St Martins – established by Val and Graham Thomas on Val's father's old flower farm where they celebrated their first vintage in 2000. We have around 2,500 vines of 7 varieties which are suited to the climate, largely whites such as Orion and Seyval but we do have some reds including Rondo and Pinot Noir. We typically sell our wine here on the islands either at the cellar door or through restaurants and pubs, but we are looking to develop online sales this season – watch this space!

COVID-19 has hit us strangely; lockdown restrictions feel much less onerous as we have a 5 acre vineyard requiring constant tending and managing, and beyond the farm gate there are 7 miles of coastline to explore - with only 120 people you can easily walk without risk of bumping into anybody else! However it has hit the economy hard – the majority of the island is dependent on visitors between April and October and tours/tastings was to be the mainstay of our first year income. The island has a great community though, and like everybody else I'm sure we'll pull through this together!

Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge



April - Swallows

April brings the first sightings of swallows in any year – I do wonder what they'll make of the canal when they arrive, without its usual compliment of walkers, runners and cyclists! Whilst COVID-19 has led us to restrict our movements and practise social isolation, the natural world carries on much as normal with swallows travelling vast distances to cavort, breed and bring up their young here in the UK.

The swallows arriving now have spent the winter in Africa, Arabia and in the Indian sub-continent. Those which are appearing around the midlands now have undertaken an amazing journey across Morocco, eastern Spain and western France to be here. They fly at low altitudes, feed along the way and can cover 200 miles in a day! Swallows are incredibly agile birds, able to catch their small insect prey on the wing – the canal is rich in such creatures and you will often see them skimming and soaring low across the water.

The majority of swallow nests are found associated with buildings and other man-made structures – they like to fly inside outbuildings and barns to find a secure, safe ledge on which to build the bowl-shaped structure from mud pellets where they will typically incubate a clutch of 4-5 eggs.

The swallow is a member of the hirundinidae family of birds along with superficially similar sand and house martins. The swallow in flight can be distinguished from the martins by their slender body, long pointed wings and long forked tail.

Mary is worried that some of her volunteers are missing their breakfast treat! She wishes you all a Happy Easter and to stay safe.

Mary's Oat Delight

Ingredients:

8 oz Sugar

8 oz Margarine

3 dessertspoons water

14 oz porridge oats

4 oz sultanas

2 dessertspoon cocoa powder

7 oz plain cooking chocolate

Method:

Put sugar, margarine & water into a large saucepan & bring to the boil stirring occasionally.

Add oats, sultanas & cocoa powder to saucepan and mix well.

Put into greased and lined swiss roll tin (20 cm by 30 cm approx.) and spread out evenly.

Melt chocolate and spread over the mixture.

Put into fridge to set.

Turn out onto board and cut into fingers.

Enjoy MN



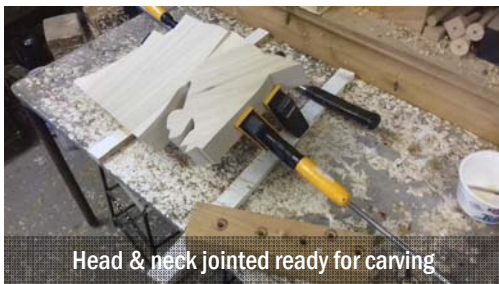
Unfortunately we are not able to include this article at present as the castle is closed. However we will publish it later in the year and reveal some interesting facts.



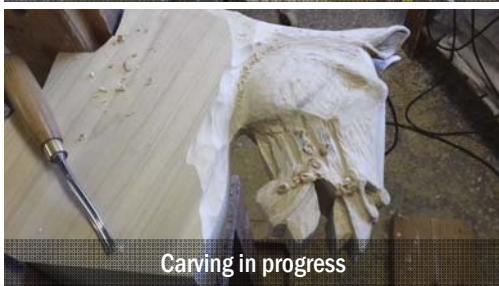
It's all in the head!

*The making of Traditional English Rocking Horses
By Tony Jackson*

When in Lockdown, the logical thing to do is make a rocking horse! Welcome to my world of traditional English rocking horses; my business for 25 years.



Head & neck jointed ready for carving



Carving in progress

A traditional rocking horse is a fiery, primeval and absolutely enchanting beast - it should make you sleep with one eye open. This fiery nature is given to him by the carver; those flared nostrils and bared teeth – the painter too, plays his part, giving him those characteristic wild eyes!

As you can see, it's all in the head, where the more intricate carving takes place. This is carved first, before being built into the body. Notice the tongue and the turn of the head – mirroring top of the range horses of old.



There's a rocking horse in that pile of wood



Head carving complete

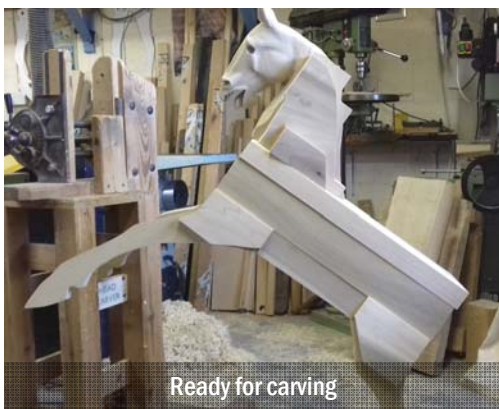
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In all, 25 individual blocks are jointed together to make this medium size horse. The pictures give an appreciation of the work involved in reaching the carving stage.



Middle blocks



Ready for carving



Legs fitted to lower block



Head and body united

Thank you Tony - There's more skill in members of the Grantham Canal Society than meets the eye!
We look forward to seeing the progress of this beautiful beast!
Oh; and by the way Tony is retired & not looking for work!

Ed



Meet the Rangers – Part 1 April 2020

Rob Cook – Head Ranger – Section One River Trent to Gamston

Rob Cook is 72 and has been retired from his role as a design engineer at the QMC in Nottingham for 4 years. Rob lives near the Gamston stretch of the Canal and has always been interested in the Grantham Canal due to where he lives, Rob got involved with the Grantham Canal Society about 3 years ago after he posted some leaflets looking for support as a resident to maintain his local stretch of canal bank. Chris Cobb (then Head Ranger) contacted Rob and immediately introduced him to the Grantham Canal Society enlisted him as a member and Rob became a volunteer ranger for section 1 (River Trent to Gamston) bridges 1 to 6, which also has 3 unrestored locks on the 2.3 mile stretch.

Rob has been carrying out his ranger duties on this patch ever since, this involves him walking and cycling the length of this section noting and reporting issues, picking litter, trimming back branches and promoting the work of the GCS along the way. Rob says he is very lucky as he has a lot of local support from residents in the Gamston and Lady Bay areas who are active in supporting Rob with litter picking, reed clearing, etc. throughout the year. Rob organises 'Task Days' sadly the 12th task day 29th March had to be cancelled due the current Coronavirus situation. Rob has about 30 volunteers signed up for the task days and each day has a target, for example reed clearing, bank tidying, painting when banks shouldn't be disturbed, Rob says these local resident volunteers are a valuable resource and thanks them for their support. In addition to the resident volunteers Rob is very grateful for the support of the Canal and River Trust Volunteering Lead Gareth Carter who provides support and training on Health & Safety for the volunteers on task days. Another local support who has been very helpful is Deanna Hunt – Contracts and performance Manager with Rushcliffe Borough Council who has provided lots of support along the section of canal.

Rob says he most enjoys "the social side of the ranger role, being active and meeting people along the banks", he also said that he finds the "rangers meetings pleasant, meeting others with similar interests and learning so much about the canal". Rob feels his role as Head Ranger and GCS volunteer enables him to better influence decisions about the canal and future improvements, He has aspirations for re-joining the canal on his patch (which is cut off in 3 places by major roads) back to the Trent and fully navigable. Rob only took on the role of Head Ranger formally recently although has been undertaking the duties, collecting rangers timesheets and coordinating rangers and meetings since last summer. The Grantham Canal Society are seeking Volunteers to fill the position of Ranger on section 2 of the Canal which is a 2 mile stretch from bridge 6 b to 12 and incorporates, Bassingfield, Tollerton including Cotgrave Keepers Cottage and unrestored locks 4 and 5.



Lock 2, Bridgford Lock



Michelle Storer



**Win A Year Of
Fruit & Veg
Home Delivery!**

Our local good causes overcome tough challenges every day. Overcoming the impact COVID-19 may have on current fundraising is why we need your support now more than ever.

Every ticket you purchase helps fund the work of local good causes during this extraordinary time of crisis. We would like to say a huge thank you to all of you who have signed up and supported our community through the lottery.

Don't forget to nominate the Grantham Canal Society

We're stronger together, even when we're apart. Click or copy the link below to your browser

<https://www.lotterysk.co.uk/account/login>

Beat the supermarket queues!

Support LotterySK by 27th June and you could win 1 of 3 amazing national prizes. In addition to our £25,000 jackpot, you could win a year of fruit and veg home delivery. If you're one of our 3 winners, you'll receive 12 monthly boxes of mixed fruit and veg delivered directly to your door.

Support Us as you Shop

The Coronavirus has changed the way in that many of us now shop. Many of us self-isolating have turned to shopping online and using delivery services. Did you know that you can support The Grantham Canal Society each time you shop online and raise funds for FREE?

Go to <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/the-grantham-canal-society> and create an account – it is that easy!

And furthermore, you can get a handy reminder on your browser which reminds you to donate to GCS every time you make an online purchase.

The Giveasyoulive platform supports all major retailers; Amazon, John Lewis, eBay etc. The retailers will give us a small percentage of the amount you spend.

Thank you.

Neil White
Fundraising





COMPUTER TECH TIPS

BY GILES (giles@jigster.com)

Here are some useful tips from Giles, who is a well regarded Web Designer and qualified Support Technician



30+ Ways to Stop Scams

Rule of thumb: Mistaking the genuine for a scam is nowhere near as bad as mistaking a scam for the genuine.

I'm sure many of you saw the Martin Lewis TV show recently on internet and phone scams. On the show Martin bullet pointed the main things to be aware of but he also provided a web link to a dedicated web page which is a good resource on the subject and well worth a read.

The link is as follows: www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/stop-scams/

Summarised are common ways scammers try to catch you out:

Calls from someone claiming to be from a Government department or representative or even moneysavingexpert.com, talking about reclaiming bank charges.

Pension 'liberation' scams - Don't take any pensions advice from cold callers! (more info www.moneysavingexpert.com/savings/pension-liberation/).

Vishing – where scammers tell you they're from your bank and there's been fraud on your account, asking you to call them back, but instead they wait on the line and then get you to hand over bank details.

Miracle cures or miracle weight-loss pills – ketones are common and appear on many people's Facebook pages.

Fake bank or Apple emails saying you need to re-verify your account details.

Investment scams (the FCA has a site helping you to spot investment scammers – ScamSmart (<https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart>) which includes a database of dodgy companies to avoid)

Deceptive prize draws and sweepstakes and get-rich-quick schemes.

Fake court summons emails (more on this at Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk/alert/alert-notice-to-appear-in-court-email-scam).

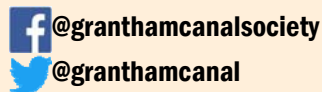
Job scams – the Metropolitan Police's Safer Jobs site (www.safer-jobs.com) has advice for job-hunters, employees, employers, plus it lets you report suspected scams.

Fake calls from someone pretending to be from the Financial Ombudsman Service asking for personal financial details. The ombudsman will never call you out of the blue to ask for information - they'll only ever be in touch with you if you've got a case with them already.

Be aware there are 1000s of ways scammers will try to catch you out, always question any unsolicited communication, even if a message appears to be from your bank or other legitimate source, it may not be, always double check where any web links are taking you.

#Trending

By *Tony Jackson*



My difficulty with Covid-19, was not so much being confined to barracks most of the time, but in my insistence in calling it Corvid-19; bad news for crows!

A compilation of Debbie's fabulous atmospheric photographs romped away with over 1,800 views on Facebook! I've chosen one to accompany this piece.

Posts on our social media have become a little eclectic; by necessity, widening out topics. With all events cancelled and work stopped – there's little to report upon. We've covered things from live footage of tadpoles hatching, rocking horse making and cycle rides.



Jane gave us our first picture of the new seasons ducklings on 4th April! These were on the section of canal within Grantham.

Regular contributor Julie, is champing at the bit to resume her regular visit to the canal – and we're missing her excellent photographs!

We continue to provide Covid-19 updates from the Canal and River Trust on using towpaths:

Twitter: @granthamcanal Facebook: @granthamcanalsociety

Wishing you all a safe passage through this pandemic.

Tony Jackson

I would like to thank all those who have sent articles and information to me for inclusion in this month's edition.

If you have a photograph or any details you think would be of interest to our readers then please send them to me bridge@granthamcanal.org.

Happy Easter & stay safe. Ed

Our grateful thanks to the following who have recently made a donation to the Society:

Grantham Art club, Grantham Breathe Easy, Witham on the Hill WI, Radcliffe on Trent WI, JP Smith, John Dodwell, R. Gibson



Some photos of Western Australia to brighten your day!

Above - Jarrahdale

Below - Swan River, Perth

Many thanks to Ruth - one of our Bridge subscribers in Australia.

