

BRIDGE



SEPTEMBER

2020

The monthly newsletter
published by the

The
Grantham Canal
Society

CHARITY NO: 507337



Our new weed cutter boat
OTTER in action!

Photo by Tony Osbond
See page 6 for details

This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

Sometimes canals with polluted water might appear to have advantages over ones in rural areas and this year is one of them!

Four months of uncontrolled weed growth along the navigable section has really tested the commitment of our Maintenance Team volunteers. The Canadian Pond weed (the one that grows below water level) is so prolific that it has actually stopped the motorised craft from moving. Thank goodness we have a new weed cutter boat! Even with this addition to our armoury constant and repetitive work has been required to clear a reasonable section up to Bridge 62 so that the trip-boat can again operate.

After a formal vote by active volunteers the very appropriate name chosen for the new weed-boat is **Otter**. The craft performs well and the operators are rapidly learning how to achieve a much clearer waterway. We appreciate the support given by the Rothen Group and their staff.

The canal has received several public figures in recent weeks. The new MP Ruth Edwards was invited by CRT to walk a length to see how effective the work of the Lady Bay volunteer group has been in maintaining the canal in their area. The CEO of Rushcliffe Borough Council, Kath Marriott also joined the group which included representatives of CRT and GCS. The new MP for Grantham and Stamford, Gareth Davies, accompanied by Kelham Cooke, Leader of South Kesteven District Council accepted an invitation from GCS to meet members of the Maintenance Teams and see them in action. Both the visitors now wish to put their names forward to operate Otter! The highlight of the morning was a walk in the bottom of the almost completed Lock 14 to see the work of the Construction Teams.

Members of the public have been very concerned with the low water levels along some lengths of canal. Indeed residents living in Kinoulton and Hickling requested a meeting with CRT management. GCS is supporting the residents and endeavouring to ascertain the cause of reduced water levels may have resulted from leaks, but we suspect other causes may contribute.

We thank the number of individuals who have been in contact to join as members and to offer their time as active volunteers. Indeed one induction session was taking place at the time of Gareth Davies visit.

Over the summer period we gained many new members which is very heartening. We have decided to include names of all new members each season welcoming them to the Society. A full list can be found on page 14.

There are several new opportunities for participation in the forthcoming months so if, after reading this, you want a change of scenery, why not consider becoming an active volunteer with the GCS?

Enjoy autumn!

Mike Stone.



Support the IWA & become a member

<https://www.waterways.org.uk/account/register/>



Another GCHI project nears completion at Lock 14



The Quoins fitted, pointed & gate anchors in place. CRT fitters install the bottom gates which open onto a cleared lower approach.

Many thanks to Jim Freeman, John Clark, Bob Terry, Martin Duignan, Dave Cross.

Ongoing work at Lock 15



The engraved bricks are being placed in the display wall at Lock 15. It is expected to be completed very soon.

He was there just now!

Many thanks to Michelle Storer for the above photos. Sorry - couldn't resist adding the caption! Ed

My diary from the Isles of Scilly by James Faulconbridge August 2020

I write this on a break from spreading nets over the vines here on the vineyard on St Martin's to save our harvest! The bird populations here are a fantastic pest-control team throughout the summer but unfortunately they share a taste for the grapes as they begin to ripen. Verasion is the name given to the onset of ripening of grapes – red grapes beginning to take on their pink tinge is the most obvious example of this. This is when we begin to have an eye towards harvest dates, but also when the birds begin to take note of the berries so we're trying to keep ahead of the flocks of thrushes, blackbirds, sparrows and starlings!

We have a refractometer which measures the sugar levels in the grape juice and we spend some time walking around the vines with the previous owner to see how they're coming on. We are hoping to be harvesting our first grapes from the Siegerrebe and Regent varieties in just a week or two's time, but other later-ripening varieties such as Orion and Seyval blanc will not be ready until mid-October. We are managing the vineyard organically and so far we have managed to avoid disease, but autumn is the season for fungi as cooler temperatures and damper conditions encourage their growth. It's great to see mushrooms and toadstools such as puffballs popping up around the site, but this is also favourable to some mildews so we're not being complacent just yet! The mornings here have taken on that indefinable yet unmistakable note of autumn and we have noticed the pattern of visitors change with it - the family groups walking the sandy tracks here on the island have been replaced by younger or older couples who can take advantage of opportunities outside of the summer holidays.

Another noticeable change in the makeup of this tiny island is the arrival of the birds, and the birders who appreciate them! Scilly is a good stopping point for summer migrants heading back south to the continent and we are seeing species which have been absent since spring, such as wheatears in the heathland above the vineyard. Yesterday we spent half an hour trying to encourage a pied flycatcher out of the polytunnel – she was far more interested in catching the flies from the top of the tunnel to be chased out the door by us!

www.stmartinsvineyard.co.uk



OTTER



The weed cutter boat is delivered by the Rothen Group to Denton Slipway on 14th August



Many volunteers have now been trained - AND WHAT A DIFFERENCE ITS MADE!



WEED CUTTER BOAT

NAME SUGGESTIONS

OTTER - 31%

SWEEP - 11%

RATTY - 11%

Many thanks to all who
voted

Many thanks to John Clark & Tony Osbond for these photos

Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge



September – Red Kite

Following on from grey heron last month, it feels like a theme to talk about red kite for September! I've seen a few posts on social media from canal walkers noticing these impressive birds of prey - their recent expansion across the local area has been a great conservation success story.

Red kites were on the brink of extinction in the UK but reintroduction programmes have seen them return to the skies. Following earlier re-introductions in Scotland and the Chilterns, seventy red kites were released in Rockingham Forest between 1995 and 1998. These birds were mostly of Spanish origin with some from the population already established in the Chilterns. It is birds from this Rockingham population, expanding from their original re-introduction site, which we are now seeing establishing along the route of the canal.

Red kites are large birds of prey, with an impressive wingspan of 180cm. They are primarily scavengers but they do also eat small mammals, from voles up to rabbits, and even live birds occasionally.

Kites are quite distinct in flight, the deeply forked tail is held flat and rotated from its centre to allow them to soar where they will on wide, angled wings. They can be seen on the ground or roosting in trees, but they tend to be shy and quickly take to flight which is where you are most likely to see them. Listen out for their melancholic, whistling call as you walk the towpath this autumn as a prompt to look up!

Chief Cake Baking Co-ordinator steps down!



Carole Troops has been a key volunteer within the Grantham Canal Society for the last 5 or so years and in the last 2 years has held the role of Catering Team leader. Carole is 79 and is a retired senior civil servant. Sadly last month Carole decided to resign from the role of Catering Team Lead a decision she has not taken lightly but one that has come as a result of the 2020 coronavirus lockdown since which Carole has taken stock of her commitments and hobbies.

Carole was introduced to the GCS following a talk by Rosemary Gibson to the U3A group Carole attended and was originally involved with Rosemary's events team. Carole is also involved with Grantham local history society both this group and U3A have links with the GCS. Carole has led and coordinated a team of circa 20 cake bakers with whom she liaised regularly and significantly contributed to the events team fundraising efforts selling cake and refreshments to volunteers, supports and visitors to events held by the Society. 2019 was a bumper year for events and open days and Carole was involved in all of them in some way. Carole herself enjoys baking and always comes to meetings armed with delicious cakes for the volunteers and we will certainly miss these offerings! Carole says that "the Grantham canal society has been like a family in itself". All is not lost though as Carole will retain a contact with the organisation and will continue to bake cakes and volunteer at events in the future.

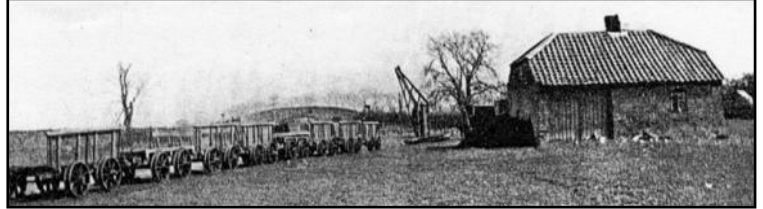
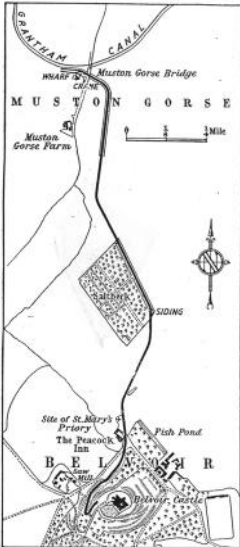
We wish Carole all the very best and hope to see her back very soon on the other side of the cake counter.

Michelle Storer



THE BELVOIR CASTLE RAIL TRACK TO THE GRANTHAM CANAL

THE OLDEST OF ITS TYPE IN THE
WORLD



There are many accounts of early railway systems and the 18th Century abounded with much invention and development in this field. Mining and quarrying were prosperous industries so it's little wonder that the development of wheel tracked 'wagons' rapidly evolved. But who invented what and when is very hard to establish. Iron rails had been produced as early as the 1760s but the first record of William Jessop's involvement was in 1791 when he was appointed engineer to the Leicester Navigation Company for the construction of a railway. This was the same year that Jessop joined forces with Benjamin Outram

to form Butterley Iron Works.

The Leicester navigation was quite an ambitious project as it was envisaged to transport coal from Leicestershire mines to Loughborough and then on to



John, 5th Duke

Leicester via the River Soar navigation. The tricky part was to get the coal from the mines to Loughborough which necessitated building a railway at both ends of a newly constructed canal. Construction was started in 1792 but it's interesting to note that it was not Butterley Iron Works who supplied the rails for the contract, but Butler's of Chesterfield. This seems unusual especially as Outram, Jessop's fellow director at Butterley's, visited the project and was reimbursed for 'carrying out numerous visits to measure water levels'.



Elizabeth Howard

During this period Jessop was also very involved in the construction of numerous canals and, on top of this work, was asked to survey a route for the Grantham Canal. His proposed route passed through the Duke of Rutland's property so he must have made contact with the Duke's agent and Belvoir Estate's manager, William King. King became an enthusiastic supporter of the canal seeing the benefits it could bring to the estate and surrounding farms so he exerted a notable influence over Parliament's decision to allow the project to proceed. Jessop obviously thought well of him for he appointed King to manage the canal's construction from Hickling to Grantham.



Duke's Wharf



The railway as it approached the Peacock Inn with the Castle in the background.

William King continued to manage the Belvoir estate until 1801 after which records show him producing a series of maps for the area surrounding the estate including a hunting map in 1806, presumably a skill he had acquired from Jessop. Elizabeth Howard, of Castle Howard married John, the 5th Duke of Rutland in 1799 and set about redesigning the castle with architect James Wyatt. She also incorporated some of the proposals put forward by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to create subterranean tunnels for the access of servants and produce instead of using the main entrance.

Once these tunnels were completed the order was placed in 1814 for a railway to be constructed which would link the Grantham Canal to the Castle for the supply of coal and victuals. How influential William King had been on the decision to install a Butterley railway isn't clear but maybe his early dealings with William Jessop (Snr), the design's originator, could have been a contributing factor. In 1815 Butterley Iron Works, under the management of William Jessop (Jnr) and his brother Josias, carried out the installation but sadly their father, William Jessop (Snr), never saw it completed as he had died the previous year. The railway continued in service until 1919 after which it lain derelict until being dismantled in 1941 for scrap.



Tunnel entrance for servants and victualling

See the FULL Belvoir Railway Article at www.gcsguide.org

Mike Atherley



Mike recounts an interesting trip to York via the River Trent

In 1995 IWA were holding their river festival (National) at York on the river Ouse so not having cruised north of Torksey I thought I would give it a go. I managed to assemble a crew from GCRS members, Fred Marsh, Jim & Whalley Leafe who had their own boat but didn't fancy doing the Trent in it. We started from Shardlow Marina and made good progress up to Cromwell Lock where we stopped overnight. Cromwell always amazes me on its huge size and weir. We had the necessary river charts for the trip but the lockkeeper was very helpful with tide times and advice about Keadby.



Lady Joyce - at Shardlow

We left at slack water on a falling tide and quickly reached Gainsborough, commercial barges were sitting on sand banks and we were stirring up the mud but passed through unscathed. I tried to out run a large barge leaving the wharf but he shot by like a race car. When we reached Keadby it was slack water again with the tide rapidly turning, the lock was empty but water was lower than the bottom sill so we moored up and Fred and I climbed up to search for the lockkeeper. He quickly appeared and instructed us to return to the boat as the tide rises rapidly. Jim & Whalley had had a problem! A rubbing strake had caught on the piling and broken off but they had recovered it. It was a struggle getting into the lock owing to the fast flow but we managed it & stopped overnight after refitting the broken strake.

There was a pub near the lock so we went in to sample the local ale and, not knowing the licensing hours, were surprised when the landlord came in and closed all the curtains, but he never called time. A short time later the Police burst in and ordered the landlord to remove all our beer and pour it away. We were ordered out but could hear them telling the landlord off for not sticking to the strict licensing laws.

The journey to Selby was not easy with poor signage at major junctions. However we did see the Tom Pudding boats being towed in a long train, quite frightening when snaking towards you. We stopped overnight at Selby, the lockkeeper was very helpful with tide times up to Naburn lock. The journey to Naburn was horrendous with heavy floating debris being carried along on the fast flowing tide. When through Naburn the river is wide & pretty. Our booking must have been late because our mooring was about 1 mile from the rally site, on an embankment similar to Nottingham.

I think we only walked up to the site once. I can't remember much about it. We had a look around York and made a short trip upstream. Then it was time to plan the return trip. The IWA had worked out a strict leaving order to enable Naburn and Selby locks to be as full as possible, we were with several other plastic boats so there were quite a lot of us. On a falling tide we quickly reached Selby, the lock was ready and open. The steel narrowboats were being swept past the entrance and had quite a struggle to make a smooth entry into the lock without losing some paint by the time they made it. I only just made it, having to use max power to make the entry safely. At that time my boat still had a petrol engine and we were finding it increasingly difficult obtaining canal side fuel. I checked the map book and thought Thorne would have some but no luck. Checking an OS map there was a village nearby with a garage so two set off with several cans. The filling station was closed but the owners were willing to open up for us and fill the cans. The rest of the trip back was uneventful and we arrived back at Shardlow safely. We all thoroughly enjoyed the trip and experiences en-route.

HICKLING LENGTHSMAN'S HUT REBUILT

In March 2014 a GCS team and members of Hickling Parish Council undertook the first task of the restoration by clearing the surrounding undergrowth which nearly enveloped it. The chimney was then rebuilt by GCS volunteers.



There were many ongoing discussions and proposals put forward for funding the project but ultimately, in 2017, the CRT decided to dismantle it for rebuilding in the Newark workshops by CRT's Heritage Trainees.



A day in the life of the Grantham Canal Society!

First thing Friday 4th September 2020 we welcomed Gareth Davies MP for Grantham and Stamford since December 2019 and Cllr. Kelham Cooke Leader of the Council SKDC to meet us at Woolsthorpe by Belvoir. The uppermost 5 miles or so of the Grantham Canal fall within Gareth's constituency and we were delighted to have the opportunity to share the work and aims of the Grantham Canal Society with both Gareth and Kelham, Kelham is already a supporter of the Grantham Canal Society and the last mile of the Canal is owned by South Kesteven District Council with whom we work closely.

Our visit began with a meet at the Carpenters Workshop at Woolsthorpe, home to the Society where we shared our short, medium and long term plans for the restoration of the Grantham Canal and its ultimate reconnection to the broader waterways network at the far end at the River Trent at Lady Bay in Nottingham. Some of our greater hurdles include completion of the bottom locks at Woolsthorpe (locks 13 and 12) and the raising of bridges along the length of the canal as well as our hope to reinstate a wharf within Grantham Town at some point in the future, notwithstanding the need to reconnect the canal underneath the A1 at Earsfield.

During the morning our visitors were able to see the Friday work party in action, strimming and clearing weeds along the bank, maintaining the Woolsthorpe depot and observing our latest fleet addition 'Otter' the weed boat cutting and removing seeds from the canal to allow wildlife to flourish and our trip boat Three Shires to resume cruises for the public.

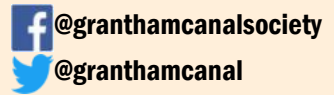
We were then absolutely thrilled to be able to showcase the fabulous work underway at the almost complete lock 14 (3rd of 7 locks on the flight and the 5th to be rebuilt/restored) lock 15 was officially opened in September 2019 and Lock 14 one year down the line is near completion and we are expecting to fill with water later this month. It is a rare and unique opportunity to walk in the bottom of an empty lock and see first-hand the huge amount of work our volunteers alongside the Canal and River Trust have achieved. Lock 14 is built with approximately 25,000 bricks and involves reinstating original workings designed by William Jessop, new lock gates have been commissioned and are in the process of being installed as the finishing touches are made to this huge project.

We would absolutely not be able to achieve any of this without the relentless support and work carried out by our volunteers and the volunteers within the Canal and River Trust. The Grantham Canal Society would welcome enquires for both new members and volunteers to join us in our quest to have the full 33 miles of the canal navigable to boats and be reconnected to the wider waterways please do get in touch if you would be interested in volunteering in any of a number of capacities, marketing, fundraising, events, restoration and maintenance, fleet engineering and ranging are a few of the many roles we have volunteer@granthamcanal.org the Grantham Canal Website can be found at www.granthamcanal.org

Michelle Storer

#Trending

By *Tony Jackson*



Julia posted a picture of a plant on Twitter, asking if anyone could identify it? It was a new one on me – and judging by the few replies, not many knew what it was. Yet, google it, and it will tell you it's widespread in the British Isles!

Celery Leaved Buttercup – also known as Celery Leaved Crowfoot – is poisonous. It will give you skin blisters which are difficult to treat. So don't go seeing if you like butter with it! Certainly don't eat it!



I had to smile though – it likes to grow in muddy ditches! It should feel very much at home in the canal!

The scum got a lot of shares on Facebook. This wasn't the little darlings who really aren't mature enough to be out on their own – leaving all their litter behind at Denton Wharf, following an overnight camp. This scum was blue-green algae on Denton Reservoir. The worst I've ever seen it.

My Lockdown rocking horse which was featured in its early stages in Bridge – finally got finished. Our Facebook followers will have already seen it – so for those who don't follow us on social media, there you go!



SUMMER

The Grantham Canal Society

2020

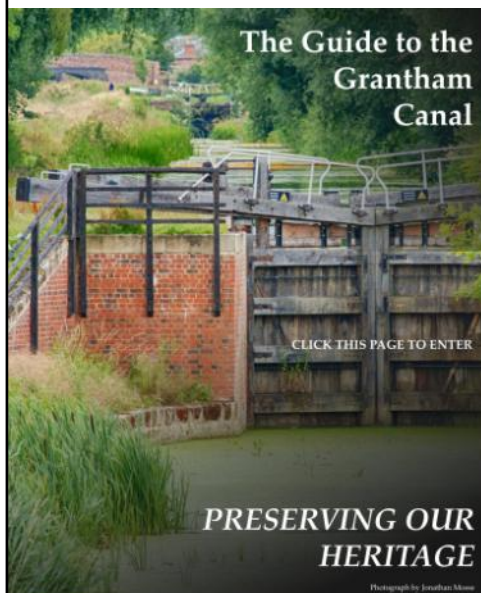
WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Mrs S Archer, Mrs M Brooke, Mr T Coole, Ms A Prothero, Mr W Barnes
Mr N & Mrs J Berry, Mr P & Mrs S Bulmer, Mr A & Mrs P Ford
Mrs S Handley, Miss R Hickling, Ms M Isam, Ms E Isam, Mr D Isam
Mr R Parker, Ms L Stretton-Downes, Mr J Sykes-Wood, Mr M & Mrs J Wade
Mr N Fletcher, Mr I Gaskell, Miss C Lawson-Dick, Mr R Morris, Mr J Teeman
Mr D & Mrs I Turner, Mr C Ansell, Mr J Cork, Mr M Holman , Ms A Mather

This is our new on-line guide to the Grantham Canal.

After entering the guide there are interactive maps which, when clicked, enable both past & present photos to be viewed together with a whole host of interesting detail.

Give it a try: <http://www.gcsguide.org>



The Grantham Canal

As the Canal is 33 miles long we have divided it up into five sections below.



Click on the section of map above that you wish to view and it will open a straight line representation of the canal. There you will find photos of present day views and some from our archive.

Click any photo for a larger view - sometimes shown

Those with a rounded edge, when clicked, provide a lot more detail.



Click the portrait of William Jessop to view a time line of the canal's rise, fall and restoration.



Click the above for acknowledgements and feedback



Click the above to view a Google Map for the area of the canal





In Praise of our Rangers

Over the past few months of Lockdown life for everyone has been somewhat different. Many of us oldies dared not go outside during the early days not wishing to fill hospital beds and create more work for the severely over-stretched NHS workers.

Most of the CRT staff and their contractors were furloughed and some of our Rangers, including my wife and I, were following the advice and staying safe indoors so not much was being done on the towpaths. I was still receiving reports from Rangers who walked along their sections but these were reduced from those of more normal times. My time was spent mainly on administration work.

But gradually the Ranger reports started to increase as most of our Rangers continued to walk their sections and report problems; and there were plenty. Among the most significant: flooding, several water leaks from the canal, low water levels in the canal at many locations, barriers placed across canal car parks, access to towpath blocked, broken gates, a person having a very bad fall near a lock, a girl falling into a lock, trees blown down by the dozen and wild animals in distress.

All were reported to CRT but they have only recently returned to something like operational strength.

The Rangers have contributed a total of 548 hours volunteering time for the first 6 months of this year and I think the Rangers have done exceedingly well. If you will permit me, I would like to tell of a couple of incidents which happened recently.

The first was when a lady who was walking along the canal path in Cotgrave Country Park when she fell heavily and broke her arm in three places. She was in so much pain and probably shock that she could only lie there. Two of our Rangers came to help, the first was Jack, who is the Ranger for Bassingfield and the second was Liz Smith. Liz was able to stay with the lady until an ambulance could get to her. That was a problem, no key to unlock the gate! Fortunately that the Park Caretaker had a key and was able to unlock the gate when the ambulance arrived.

More recently, one of our Rangers for Section 12, Norma Varley, was doing her normal towpath walk when she was told by members of the public that they had seen an injured swan and could she help them locate and help it. The swan had flown into some power lines & was stunned. It had then fallen to the ground alongside the old railway line. Norma made her way up onto the railway line and found the very disorientated and angry swan. She proceeded to calm the swan down, (how!), and using a long stick to guide it, managed to walk it back to Lock 15. Having arrived there the swan flew off and landed safely on the canal.

Another swan incident occurred only a few days ago when one of the Rangers for Section 13, Anne Briggs, came across a swan being attacked by another swan at Lock 17. The problem was that the injured swan was in the lock with the lower gates open so had nowhere to go and was entirely exposed to the attacks from the other swan. Ann managed to close the gates preventing access to the attacking bird until the RSPCA arrived. A windlass was brought from the Depot and the lock filled which allowed access to be gained to the injured swan without interference from its attacker.

Anne commented that they could have managed without the RSPCA for, as soon as Jane started filling the lock, the swan seemed to recover and eventually swam off. They were concerned that it might need medical attention as it had large black swellings on both wings from the attacks. However the RSPCA felt it would be better recovering in the wild as it would get over stressed being driven all the way to Norfolk. We were amazed to hear that they didn't have a care centre nearer than Norfolk!

Ranger Rob

**IF YOU SUPPORT OUR
HERITAGE AND GAIN
ENJOYMENT FROM SEEING
THE RESTORATION OF THIS
BEAUTIFUL CANAL -
THEN PLEASE JOIN OUR
SOCIETY**

THE COST IS MODEST!

The annual subscription rates
are as follows:

Single Adult:£20

Family:£30

Under 18/Over 60: ..£15

**Membership is important to us and
encourages our active volunteers with
their various tasks.**

**With your help we can also persuade
the local Parish, County & Borough
Councils to support our efforts to
maintain and rebuild our canal for the
enjoyment of future generations.**

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL



**Leicestershire
County Council**



**Melton
Borough
Council**



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**



**Rushcliffe
Borough Council**

**Please complete the adjacent brief
membership application form and either
post or email it to our Membership
Secretary who will then send you full
details in the post.**

**A full application form can also be
downloaded from our website
www.granthamcanal.org/join-us**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you would like to become a member of
the Grantham Canal Society then please
complete the form below and send it to:

**The Membership Secretary,
340 Harlaxton Road, Grantham, Lincs,
NG31 7JY**

Name _____

Address _____

Phone No _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Please circle which category of
membership you would like:

Single Adult

Family

Under 18/Over 60

**Alternatively you can email the above details to
our Membership Secretary at**

membership@granthamcanal.org

**The
Grantham Canal
Society**

CHARITY No: 507337

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

John Pankhurst, Margaret Leighton,
John Dodwell, Tony Osbond, Hedley Davies,
Tony Binch, Cynthia Snowden,
Carole Troops, Jeremy Lee, Anne Earl,
John Sentence, Jo & Tim Altham, John Clark