

# BRIDGE



**MARCH**

**2021**

The monthly newsletter  
published by the

The  
**Grantham Canal**  
Society

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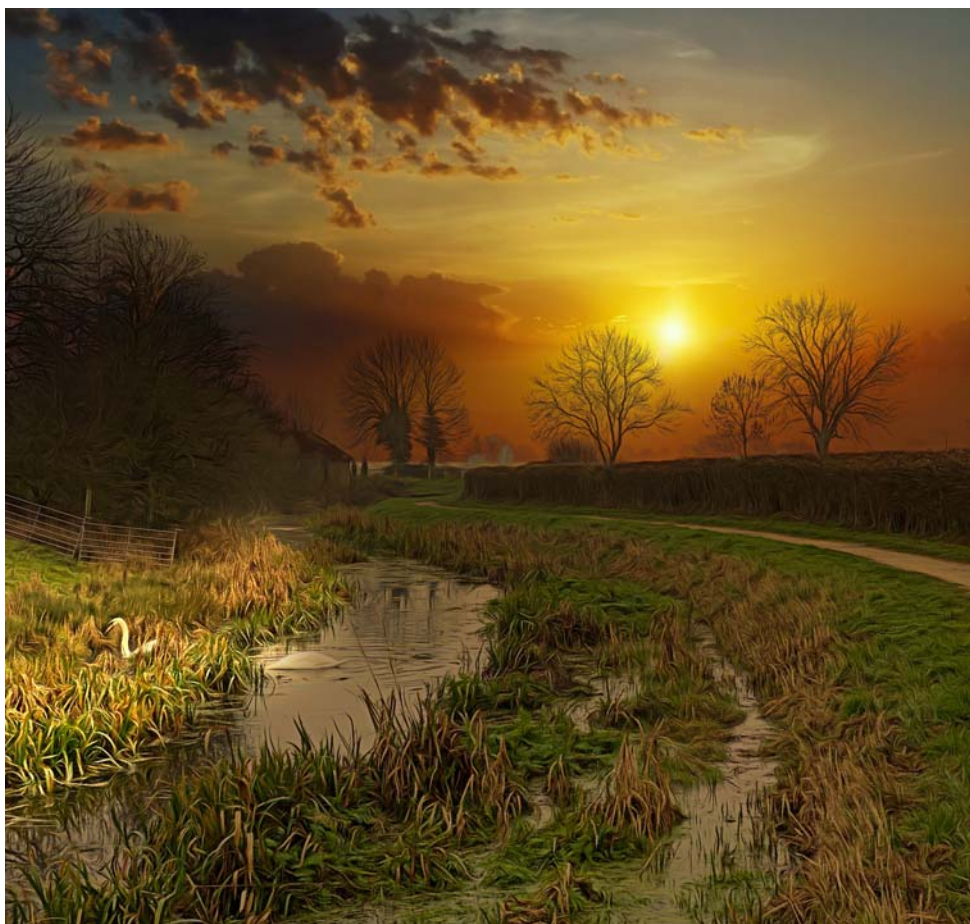


Photo by David Gray  
See page 9 for details of  
David's photo book

## This month's update from Mike Stone (Chairman)

At least the gloom of winter lock-down is disappearing into the sunshine of spring and GCS volunteers are appearing on the canal again!

Work re-started last week at various sites along the waterway and received an enthusiastic welcome from those travelling along the towpath.

**The GCS Restoration Plan – 2021 to 2030** has been well received by a wide audience. Already there are committed volunteers keen to move progress forward but we do need some new faces to add a little professionalism with some expertise in a number of business areas.

If you are able to help by contributing a couple of days per month mostly working at home we would really like to hear from you. Business areas where assistance is required include procurement, land surveys, construction drawing and silt removal.

To succeed in moving forward the Society must expand its support for those who are delivering change.

**Please can you respond to a call for help?** There are more details elsewhere in this edition.

If timing follows to the Governments' plan I hope we shall be able to offer you cruises on the Three Shires by April and that later you will be able to enjoy our famous tea and homemade cakes at the Depot. We value your support for these activities and look forward to welcoming you.

Sadly I have to report the passing of our former Company Secretary, Michael Oliver, who was instrumental in the restructuring of the Society over a dozen years ago.

I hope many of you have received your first jobs!

*Mike Stone.*



**Three CRT employees cutting the reeds.** They were in a very small craft and it was amazing how they maintained their balance. However, they have done a good job of clearing a channel through the reeds in most places. It will provide an easier path for the flow of water from the Polser Brook at Skinner's Lock to the Lady Bay Section, We could do with this work on the sections from Muston Gorse through to Hickling, some of which are very heavily congested with reeds.

*Ranger Rob*



**Support the IWA & become a member**

[https://www.waterways.org.uk/  
account/register/](https://www.waterways.org.uk/account/register/)



## Colin Ansell

I am pleased to announce that Colin Ansell has agreed to take on the role of **Operations Manager** for The Grantham Canal Society. Colin will take over the responsibility of all things regarding Canal Maintenance. He will be supported by our energetic work team leaders Kevin Weston and Bob Terry as well as Jim Gaut who looks after our Boat and Machine Maintenance. He will continue to be our maintenance contact with Jeremy Coleman at CRT in respect of CRT's Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) schedules along the canal

I am positive he will continue to get the full support, as I and former Operations Manager Ian Wakefield received, in respect of furthering the aims of GCS to develop and extend the navigable waterway of the Grantham Canal to its eventual connection with the River Trent.

***Tony Osbond***  
***General Manager***

## Flora & Fauna along the Grantham Canal by James Faulconbridge

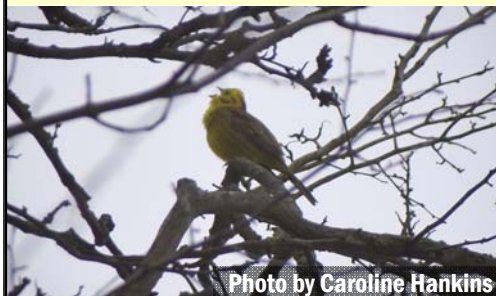


Photo by Caroline Hankins

### Yellowhammer

I spotted this lovely photo of a yellowhammer in full song along the Grantham Canal, posted by Caroline Hankins (@cazhankins) on Twitter. Throughout the winter, this species has been moving around the countryside in flocks, feeding on seeds in cereal and grassland fields. As the temperatures warm and the daylight lengthens however, the birds split off into monogamous pairs and establish breeding territories. In this species, it is the female who builds the cup-shaped nest in low vegetation and long grass, often at the bases of hedgerows and ditches.

This diet and nesting habitat makes the yellowhammer superficially well-suited to a farmed landscape where the network of field edges and arable crops provides their needs. Unfortunately however, changes in agricultural practises including intensification have led to this species being on the 'Red List' – this does not mean that the species itself is currently considered rare, but its population is in severe decline in the UK meaning that action should be taken soon to ensure its resilience and recovery. You can help by providing food for yellowhammers, especially in the winter – a good quality seed will tempt them into your garden, especially if you are close to the countryside. Their habit of nesting in long vegetation on or close to the ground also makes their nests susceptible to accidental damage – do take care when managing long vegetation between May and August and look out for birds flushed from cover when you approach as this might indicate their concealed presence!

**The Society requires some assistance.**

**If you could spare a couple of days per month working at home and have access to email communications please read on ...**

**We Need:**

**Company Secretary.** - Ideally somebody with some legal experience

Main areas of activity include:

Records for Companies House, the Charity Commissioners, etc.

Insurance negotiation and records                      Craft licensing                      The

Annual General Meeting

**A Purchasing Assistant:**

To help control the flow of materials required for our new developments

A person with planning and drawing experience in **Property** or as a **Surveyor**

To establish the topography of work sites                      To develop plans for new construction

A **Recycling** person to head a project to review silt removal from the canal.

Offer innovative ideas for recovery and sale of recovered material.

This is a continuous need by all canals to maintain navigation.

All the above roles are capable of being undertaken from home and does not living at a location near the waterway. The recent lock-down has shown how easily some roles can be adapted for home working. There would, of course, be an opportunity to get out onto the canal and meet other volunteers if required.

An interest in and an understanding of waterways would help but is not essential.

The work would suite a good communicator.

Please email your offer in the first instance to

[volunteercomms@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteercomms@granthamcanal.org). If these roles are not for you how about asking one of your contacts or friends? Might be just what they are looking for.

**Mike Stone**

## CANAL MAINTENANCE RESUMES

As I write this article it is great to report that we have resumed canal maintenance work from the 5<sup>th</sup> March after a close down of nearly two months from the announcement in January of Lock Down 3. The Friday/Monday Team led by Kevin Weston got activity moving on the Friday and the Saturday Team led by Bob Terry resumed activity between Mackleys and Spencers Bridge with chain saw work taking centre stage.

A lot of work to do on the canal after this latest Lock Down but time has not been wasted as plans have been put in place after copious amounts of Zoom meetings.

From an Operational point of view I was pleased to announce that Colin Ansell will be taking on the role of Operations Manager. He will inherit a great team of volunteers led by Kevin Weston and Bob Terry with Jim Gaut looking after Boat and Machine maintenance.

Plans are afoot as you all know to complete the Slipway this year and in addition we are increasing storage at the depot as currently we are bursting at the seams. Budgets for the next financial year will be ratified by the General Committee within the next week so further news in the April edition.

Our Expression of Interest for the renovation of Locks 13 and 12 has been submitted to Heritage Lottery as soon as the window opened for projects £250k to £5m. We now await further notification to move to the next stage which will be a highly detailed submission. If all goes according to plan we will be looking to get onto site with Lock 13, which from the structural engineers report is a repair not a rebuild, in the first quarter of 2022.

The Lock 14 Team will be getting back to work on the 8<sup>th</sup> March completing the outstanding work which should see the project complete by the end of April. Landscaping of Lock 15 compound is still to be completed as is the bank raising on sections of the canal above and below Lock 15.

We are working closely with CRT on Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) with GCS handling the jobs to be done between the A1 and Lock 12. We are also looking at other work on culvert repairs along the canal where GCS can provide the labour and CRT the materials and plant. Particular reference here to three major leaks at Irish Jacks Bridge 27 and Wildes Bridge 26.

You may have heard of the Grantham Canal Water Regeneration Group (GCWRG) which was first launched in the summer of 2020 by parish and local councillors in Hickling, Kinoulton, Harby, Long Clawson and Cropwell Bishop after the canal had run virtually dry!!! Never has this been experienced in over 40 years and its plight was brought to the attention of the local TV media. As a consequence, CRT became involved and after a series of meetings they came up with a plan to clear a reed path between two and three metres wide from Bridge 40 Hose Wooden Low Level Bridge through to Spencer's Bridge 24. This has made a positive difference to water levels we now have to get the culvert leaks repaired to retain the water!

So Spring we are told is just around the corner although meteorologically from March 1<sup>st</sup> we are into Spring, it doesn't quite feel like it. We have a lot of work to do and as a good proportion of our volunteers have now had their first vaccine jab, they are eager to get stuck in. Our maintenance days are Friday, Saturday and Monday meeting at 08.30 so if you have not been before come and join us. The craic is good, with a variety of work all preceded by Mary's tea and cake to start us off!!

*Tony Osbond*  
General Manager

## Work resumes at Lock 14



**Upstream landing**



**Landscaping**

**6 months later - but better late than never!  
Photos from Martin Duignan**

## Bird boxes installed



**Blue Tit**



**Sparrow**



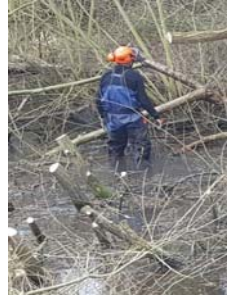
**Robin**

**Phil Wright's Bird boxes have been installed  
downstream from the Depot**

# Mackley's Bridge (25) to Spencer's Bridge (24) Workparty Saturday 6th March



The waders were deployed successfully with some wriggling and clever balancing. Pruning of the trees continued and the timber was placed on the off bank to encourage wild life.



A local landowner visited us and we were able to explain our plans for the future of the canal.

The bottom left picture shows the results of our efforts so far.



Many thanks to Bob Terry & Phil Wright for the photos

## THE WAY IT WAS

### By Mike Atherley



Mike describes some of the work the GCRS undertook in the mid 1970s

In the mid 1970's and onwards we had begun making inroads on the very overgrown canal towpaths, the first two photo's show workparties in Bottesford Cutting between bridges 55 and 56. This section was very thick with bramble, hawthorn and other thick undergrowth. We used Allen Scythes, Slashers and Scythes and in those days big bonfires to burn the cut items. Towards the end of the cutting we revealed a well built workman's brick cabin with well protected door and windows, we asked B.W. if we could use it for our own tools and use but the answer was No!.

At the main road end of the cutting was a meadow with Donkey's grazing and they must of enjoyed human neighbours because they would run over to the fence hoping for a snack. This particular project took several weekends of work because of the density of the overgrown vegetation .



This photo shows a 360 deg. Excavator on hire to B.W. in the days when they would dredge sections of the canal which had become blocked by reeds etc. These short reach machines could only tip the spoil on the towpath side and then run over it to compact the dredging's until grass regrew and recovered the mess. It took many months before the towpaths could be reopened for walkers. The later long arm machines enabled dredging's to be placed on the off bank side allowing early reopening of the towpath.



My Land Rover is in its rebuilt guise which we used for towing the tool trailer and any other job where access was possible.

This photo is of a work party of the same period scrub basing near bridge 50.

Note the type of protective gear worn then and people of all ages got involved. More of a fun day than perhaps now!





CREATIVE LANDSCAPE  
PHOTOGRAPHY



**Download my Book  
for only £1.99**

**CREATIVE LANDSCAPE  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
THE GRANTHAM CANAL  
by DAVID GRAY**

I will donate all profits for any book bought from Amazon or Apple. For every book bought I will donate £1 to the Grantham Canal Society and their fabulous bunch of volunteers.

Some of the photos have appeared on the Facebook site and there is a preview copy available on both Apple Books and Amazon.

**The book is downloadable onto any Apple or Android device, iPad, tablet or Phone and can be viewed on any device via *iBooks* on Apple or *Kindle App* on Android devices.**

Available from **Apple Book Store** on the following Link:-

<http://books.apple.com/us/book/id1555740163>

Also available on **Amazon Store**: Type "Creative Landscape Photography-The Grantham Canal" in search Bar

OR FOLLOW THIS LINK:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/CREATIVE-LANDSCAPE-PHOTOGRAPHY-GRANTHAM-CANAL-ebook/dp/B08XPJJ43D/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=Creative+landscape+photography%3Athe+Grantham+canal&qid=1614633328&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/CREATIVE-LANDSCAPE-PHOTOGRAPHY-GRANTHAM-CANAL-ebook/dp/B08XPJJ43D/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Creative+landscape+photography%3Athe+Grantham+canal&qid=1614633328&sr=8-1)

## My diary from the Isles of Scilly by James Faulconbridge March 2021

We've been treated by still weather and calm winds for the last few weeks – though by the time you're reading this, I think the next storm will be passing through! I've still got much to learn about the dynamics of the weather patterns here, but the cyclical appearance of storms which develop over the Atlantic and blow over Scilly from the south-west is the prevailing character of the winter!

March is all about winter pruning here on the vineyard – this is key to ensuring that the vines are productive both this year and next; it's a little like chess, you need to think at least two moves ahead! Vines fruit on the current years' growth which means that you need nice new shoots to produce your grapes. However you also need to consider the structure and training of the vine for both the year ahead and the year after that! I would try and explain the principles here, but I have yet to find a written description which makes sense to me, so I have no faith in my ability to succeed where others have failed. If you are interested in the technique, look up the 'Double Guyot' pruning method and there are some great videos out there which make it all clear!



We have also been cutting paths into the 'wilderness' parts of the site – this has allowed us to explore the upper slopes of the vineyard for the very first time since moving here. There are no vines but plenty of bracken, bramble and honeysuckle. We were worried about nesting birds in the summer, but now that we have our winter-cut paths, we can keep them clear for the rest of the season without worrying about destroying nests of wrens, yellowhammers or blackbirds.

We're preparing too for the islands' re-opening in April for self-catering and more significantly in May for hotels, B&B's and campsites. The shepherd's hut here on the vineyard now has walls, windows, doors, a roof and most of its cladding - we're hoping to have it up and running for accommodation in a month or two's time.

Vaccinations have been rolling out across the islands according to priority – like the Mediterranean, Scillonians seem to live long and healthy lives meaning there are many 'at risk' even though they are active and energetic well into their 90's! We're looking forward to welcoming visitors this year in the knowledge that the most vulnerable will be safe and well.

### Hedgehog Welfare

As the weather gets warmer we can expect to see hedgehogs out and about. If they have been in hibernation for a long time, or even just a couple of weeks, they will be disorientated, hungry and thirsty. So, please ensure that some dried chicken-based kitten or cat biscuits is left out for them and of course, some clean water.

The hedgehogs may appear wobbly, this could be because they are dehydrated. Please be on the lookout for hedgehogs in trouble., especially when some days are warm and the nights frosty.

**If you are concerned please telephone Hedgehog Welfare on 07940 714830 after 9 AM**

### D of E Award Scheme

Photo below of two boys from Gamston who have taken on the task of painting one of the steel barriers adjacent Lock 3 This work has enabled one of the boys to complete his Bronze Report having previously carried out a bridge & milepost survey and the other is keen to continue with similar work also for his Bronze Report. **Ranger Rob**



### Grantham Canal Talks

We have really missed going out and giving talks about Grantham Canal to a wide variety of groups during the pandemic and look forward to face to face meetings again, but after a little training, we can now offer presentations by Zoom.

A virtual talk is less interactive than a real life performance, but provides an opportunity to get the word out there and welcome donations to our funds.

If you know of anyone that can host a Zoom meeting and would like information about the past, present and possible future of the Grantham Canal, please get in touch or pass on my contact details.

We have a couple of talks already in the diary. The more the merrier.

*Rosemary Gibson*

(Grantham Canal Society Community and Education Team Leader)

[communityandevents@granthamcanal.org](mailto:communityandevents@granthamcanal.org)

Tel: **01476 978896** or **07971173069**



**Rosemary with Suzy Sparkles at a Discovery Day event**

## Fundraising for the Grantham Canal March 2021

The last 12 months has been difficult year for all businesses and charities as a result of Covid 19 which is not going away anytime soon. 2021. GCS has had a challenging year in respect of income due to cancellation of the majority of events scheduled throughout the year and the inability to organise private or shared cruises on the trip boat Three Shires; events and boat trips provided a steady flow of income that we just have not had in the last 12 months.

Canal Restoration ticks lots of boxes, heritage, education; ecology, nature, green, waterways and volunteering to mention a few, which opens up many potential grants we could bid for. In addition to the themes we are also 33 miles long with almost a third of the canal in Leicestershire (circa 11 miles) just over 7 miles in Lincolnshire and approximately 15 miles in Nottinghamshire we could also tap in to local funds too.

There are lots of ways to raise funds, we are now a small team of 5 people, myself since summer 2020, then Polly Brown, Paul Philips, Ashley Mathers all offered their help late in 2020 and in the last month Max Cliff has also signed up to supporting the fundraising team.

Fundraising is not just about large bids – these are of course essential for major projects such as Locks and Bridge rebuilding as well as dredging and clearing the canal but we also need equipment too, a welfare van so we can venture further from our depot, we need a range of plant and machinery to become self-sufficient in the longer term, we need small equipment and health and safety items which are currently purchased from unreserved funds raised through events and activities.

We have so many exciting challenges ahead of us on the whole length of the canal and we need your support to make that happen!

Do you have bid writing skills, are you good at organising events, have you a fundraising background – would you be interested in joining our team if so please email [volunteer@granthamcanal.org](mailto:volunteer@granthamcanal.org)

If you don't want to formally volunteer think about how you can support us as an individual/family:-

Become a member – membership is an important steady income and shows community support [membership@granthamcanal.org](mailto:membership@granthamcanal.org)

Consider a donation, regular or one off (one off payment, regular payment, online donations, bequeathals – please see our website [www.granthamcanal.org](http://www.granthamcanal.org) don't forget the gift aid

**Sign up for Give as you Live, Amazon Smile etc.** and name the Grantham Canal Society as your preferred charity - it all adds up

**Lottery SK** – and Support Grantham Canal [www.lotterysk.co.uk](http://www.lotterysk.co.uk)

**Hold an event/fundraiser**, open your garden, take part in a sponsored activity in aid of the Grantham Canal we would be most grateful and we will definitely promote you on our social media pages

**Book a trip on our boat *The Three Shires*** – take your family (and friends when permitted)

**Buy our Merchandise and Publications**

*Thank you so much for your continued support.*

## Belt 'n' Braces!

In February's edition we talked about the needlework extravaganza; the frills and furbelows of the boatwoman's bonnet. I said then we'd look at the men another time.

The men weren't entirely outdone. Whilst the boatman's attire largely reflected that of the working man's of the day; there was an exception - the spiderwork belt.

Spiderwork belts were largely worn by midland boatmen as a colourful addition to their Sunday best. Very few of these belts have survived, and all vary a little in their construction. This variation is due to them being individually made and, from whatever materials were to hand – an old piece of linen providing a base on which to sew the spider's web embroidery. Scraps of leather for the fastening were probably begged from a saddler or harness maker. Braces too, could be colourful, either spiderwork or woven. Belts were worn with buckles to the side.

If few belts have survived – then photographs of them being worn are even rarer. We've done our best with this original photograph. Being black and white, you don't appreciate is how colourful these belts were – so we've made one to enable you to have some appreciation of their vibrancy, and also to show the detail of the stitch – thank you to Rosemary, who is rarely seen without a needle in her hand! Yours truly doing the leatherwork.





*Tony Jackson*



# #Trending

By *Tony Jackson*

 @granthamcanalsociety  
 @granthamcanal

Brick making along the canal has been featured on our Facebook page. Before the likes of the London Brick Company (now Hanson plc), if you wanted a brick, or millions of 'em for building a canal, you made them with your own bare hands.

No better evidence of handmade, than to leave your finger marks in the bricks! These finger marks made by a brickmaker 220 years ago, remain for posterity. Possibly those of a woman, or even a child. Women and children were often employed in brick making.



Given the power, I'd freeze the world in the 1960s. The canal, lying in obscurity, wallowing in the beauty dereliction can bring and where sheep may safely graze. Getting real, doing nothing isn't a realistic option. Doing nothing would result in the canal silting up, the eventual result becoming dry land. Only restoration will ensure our canal will remain for future generations to enjoy.

We're so fortunate to have such a fabulous amenity – sadly, some are unable enjoy this as many of us do. Our ranger team have made representation to the Canal and River Trust to ask if something can be done about the wooden kissing gate at Woolsthorpe. There are issues of ownership around this gate, but let's hope we can find a way through...



She loves you yeah, yeah, yeah...okay, the 1970s then?

# RECENTLY SPOTTED ON THE CANAL



This photo of a **Mandarin Duck** was taken on the stretch of canal between Hickling Basin and Clarkes Bridge



Video of an **Otter** seen at Clarke's Bridge. Sent in by Phil Bulmer

You can watch the video by visiting our guide using this link

<https://www.gcsguide.org/m3.htm>

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

You can search the guide for details about the canal together with interactive maps which, when clicked, enable both past & present photos to be viewed.

Give it a try: <https://gcsguide.org>

A screenshot of the Grantham Canal website. The page features a navigation menu on the left with orange buttons for 'CANAL MAP', 'TIME LINE', 'ECOLOGY', 'MINERALS', 'RAILWAYS', 'CANAL FACTS', 'NEWSLETTER', 'ROAD MAP', and 'CONTRIBUTORS'. The main content area shows a photograph of a canal lock with the text 'The Guide to the Grantham Canal' and 'PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE'. A small credit line at the bottom right reads 'Photograph by Jonathan Moore'.

A screenshot of the Grantham Canal map page. It features a map of the canal route through Lincolnshire, divided into five sections. The text reads: 'The Grantham Canal', 'As the Canal is 33 miles long we have divided it up into five sections below.', and 'You can just click on the section of map to view photos of the canal in detail.' The map shows the canal's path through various towns and villages, with a legend and a scale bar.



**View from Irish Jack's Bridge (27) in the evening sun - taken by Colin Bryan**

**ARE YOU A MEMBER OF  
THE GRANTHAM CANAL  
SOCIETY?**

Why not join the 13 new members we gained during January?

It doesn't matter if you live miles away or don't wish to actively volunteer - you will be supporting our efforts

**THE COST IS MODEST!**

The annual subscription rates are as follows:

Single Adult: .....£20

Family: .....£30

Under 18/Over 60: ..£15



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

Margaret Leighton, Paul Finlay, Brian Inglis, Amazon Smile, John Dodwell, Tony Osbond, John Foxon, Tony Binch, John Clark, Norma Varley, D & R Wilcox, In memorium Gordon Wallis, Anonymous, Rev Reginald Rooke, David Gale, Mary Noble, Dick & Vida Smith, Anonymous, Jeremy Lee, John Sentence, Jo & Tim Altham, Chris Cobb, Vale of Belvoir ,