

## Befriend us as a Member

Demonstrating public support is key in attracting funding for our canal restoration work. Fund raising activities and grant applications are the main sources of finance and many of these require our current membership figures. Every member counts! We cannot restore this canal on our own and your membership is truly valued.

As a member you have the option to receive our quarterly newsletter "*The Buckingham Navigator*", either by email or post. This gives updates on the Society's progress, as well as informative articles on the history of the canal and waterways news.

Membership applications and payments can be made via our on-line shop:

<https://shop.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/>



## Befriend us as a Volunteer

Most of the Society's work is performed by our band of volunteers. They are a lynchpin in our restoration work. Voluntary work falls into roughly three categories:

- **Workparty volunteers:** We run regular work parties throughout the year, both on weekdays and at weekends. Tasks vary from routine maintenance of our sites to major building projects.
- **Corporate days:** Many local companies release employees for community service days. We welcome many such groups during the year. Tasks can be found for any level of ability.
- **Management team:** The Society does not run itself. We need people with a wide variety of office and management skills to assist with the operation of the society.

To find out more, please get in touch:

Email: [info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk](mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)  
Phone: 01908 888439

## The Buckingham Canal Society

The Buckingham Canal Society (BCS) was founded in January 1992. It is a Registered Charity, number 1156662 and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It is affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association and has members all over the UK.

The Society's aims are as follows:

1. Promote the restoration of the Old Stratford and Buckingham Arms of the Grand Union Canal to good and navigable order and to promote the maintenance and improvement of the Waterway for the benefit of the public.
2. Promote the fullest use of the Waterway by all forms of water borne traffic and for all forms of water-related commercial, local amenity, tourist and recreational activity for the public benefit.
3. Promote the education of the public in the history and use of the canals and waterways and Buckingham Canal in particular.

Restoration work has commenced at a number of sections of the canal, including Bourton Meadow, Hyde Lane, Little Hill Farm and Cosgrove. Plans are being prepared for creation of a new channel to replace the section from Old Stratford to Deanshanger. Regular maintenance work parties take place along all sections ensure the paths are clear of vegetation re-growth, providing free access for visitors.

The Society knows that none of this would be possible without its volunteer team. Regular friendly work parties are held each month, where you can learn many new skills, such as hedge-laying or bricklaying. If you'd like to support us, please contact us. See overleaf for membership information.

Email: [info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk](mailto:info@buckinghamcanal.org.uk)  
Website: [www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk)

Social links: [www.linktr.ee/bcsocietyuk](http://www.linktr.ee/bcsocietyuk)

Buckingham Canal Society is a  
Charitable Incorporated  
Organisation: no 1156662

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Buckingham Canal Society

We are Social



We Support:



## Information & Membership



# Buckingham Canal Society

**Restoring Canal Heritage  
for Future Generations**

# History of the Canal to Buckingham

The canal arms to Old Stratford and Buckingham were built in the 1790s as part of the Grand Junction scheme and were promoted by businessmen and financiers, including the Marquis of Buckingham. The Grand Junction (now the Grand Union) ran from the Oxford Canal at Braunston in Northamptonshire to the River Thames at Brentford. A branch line led from Cosgrove to Old Stratford where goods could be transported to and from the important highway of Watling Street.



The extension of the arm to Buckingham opened, with much ceremony, on 1st May 1801 and soon proved to be both a financial success and of

To protect important war-time trade between London and the Midlands a “temporary” dam was bulldozed under the first bridge in 1944 stopping any movement on the branches. In 1960 a report compiled for the nationalised British Transport Commission (now The Canal and Rivers Trust) recommended closure of the arms. The Buckingham Arm was officially abandoned in 1964.

Since then ownership of much of the canal land has passed into private hands although the former towpath within Buckinghamshire is a public footpath and forms part of the Ouse Valley Walk.



immense community value by allowing cheap transport of coal, stone, and manufactured goods to the area.

A high level of trade was maintained for almost 50 years with hay, straw, and other agricultural produce being exported, mostly to London.

The Bletchley to Banbury Railway, opened in 1850, soon drew trade from the canal. Also, problems at Buckingham were caused by the canal silting up with detritus from the supply water from the river and sewage dumped by the Buckingham Corporation. As a result, navigation over the last mile to and from Buckingham had ceased by 1900. Trade along the rest of the line as far as Maids Moreton Mill continued in a desultory fashion into the 1930s.

With the loss of the water supply from the river at Buckingham, silting, and leakage due to poor maintenance, the arm began to draw water from the main line.

The Buckingham Canal Society (BCS) was founded in 1992 to protect the whole of the canal from Cosgrove to Buckingham, until it can be restored to navigable condition. The restoration of the canal would bring new life, new recreational opportunities, and new environmentally-friendly businesses to the local countryside and towns.



Work has started in some sections. There are a number of physical obstructions to restoration of the original line, but there are technically feasible ways around these. Awareness is growing of the benefits a restored waterway will bring. Progress with

sections as they are restored will demonstrate publicly the potential which exists for an attractive leisure amenity in this rural area.

# Why restore the canal to Buckingham?

## Leisure and Health

BCS believes that restoration will provide important benefits to all communities along the canal whatever their interest. The canal corridor will bring much-needed green infrastructure to the area and provide leisure opportunities such as walking, fishing, boating, and wildlife study, which are recognised to promote the health of the community.

## The Natural Environment

A good variety of wildlife already inhabits the rich, diverse surroundings of Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire. A restored canal will increase the diversity of the natural environment by providing additional and enhanced habitats. Biodiversity will benefit from the connection of habitats along the route of the canal.

## Heritage

Conserved and restored structures, such as stone bridges and the Cattleford Aqueduct, will again be seen in a “living” setting, carrying out the function for which they were built more than 200 years ago



## The Rural Economy

The Grand Union Canal is well used as a tourist amenity. A restored canal would provide an excellent destination for boaters, walkers, and others in the historic town of Buckingham. The canal and its heritage will be a significant tourist attraction for the area.

## Drainage and Flood Relief

Originally the canal provided drainage along the northern side of the Ouse Valley. The restored canal could again contribute to local flood relief for Buckingham and some of the villages in the Valley. Research into water supply and rainfall run-off has identified possibilities for mitigating flooding in Buckingham. Discussions are ongoing with the Environment Agency via the Buckingham Local Area Forum.