

Buckingham Canal recent past and future. Restoration and beyond

Tuesday, 06 June 2023

Restoration is a reality



Terry Cavender – who?

- BCS Executive Officer and Trustee
- IWA/WRG/CRT HLP member
- Canal & River Trust East Midlands Regional Advisory Board member since 2020
- PRINCE2 Practitioner
- Day job: Global Senior Projects and Compliance Manager





Historic Timeline

- 1798 Enabling Act
- 1900's a Victorian sewer comes to Buckingham
- 1937 last boat to Leckhampstead
- 1945 dammed up for WWII
- 1950's sheet piled to stop leakage
- 1965 British transport commission – “Remainder Canal” designation
- 1970's A5 cuts it in half
- 1980's housing
- 1990's more housing

“It will never
happen!”

Restoration is a reality



Bourton Meadow
section near Buckingham
restored Spring 2015



Hyde Lane



- Nature Reserve
- Lock gates
- Water source
- NHV/BLCF grant for pump
- Rewatering in progress
- BCS holds lease from BBOWT



Little Hill farm crossing bridge



- Full original condition restored by volunteers
- Completed in 2010



Cosgrove - a dream or a ghost?



“Volunteers
building a bridge
– ridiculous!”

Cosgrove as at December 2020



Stop planks fitted under bridge

65 year old piling removed

Dredging in progress

All by volunteers using our crane work boat donated to us by canal contractor Canal and River Services

All volunteers who operate the equipment have been trained to do so



Cosgrove

- Connection to the Grand Union Canal, adjoining Milton Keynes
- “Bridge One” completed in 2020 by volunteers for £100k using £75k EU grant





Recent history timeline

- 1992 to 2005 – focused on history and memorabilia plus “scrub bashing”
- 1998 – spill weir rebuilt at Buckingham
- 2005-2007 – lock chamber stabilised at Hyde Lane and restoration begun
- 2010 – accommodation bridge restored
- 2015 – Bourton Meadow rewatered
- 2016 - 2020 – Bridge at Cosgrove built and 500m rewatered despite COVID
- 2023 – new narrows constructed to open the 500m to navigation

Piling the narrows



Video: New bridge - please click the > to play



Cosgrove Bridge 1 Reconstruction

Core outcomes of restoration





“Best man made
nature reserve in
Buckingham!”

Biodiversity

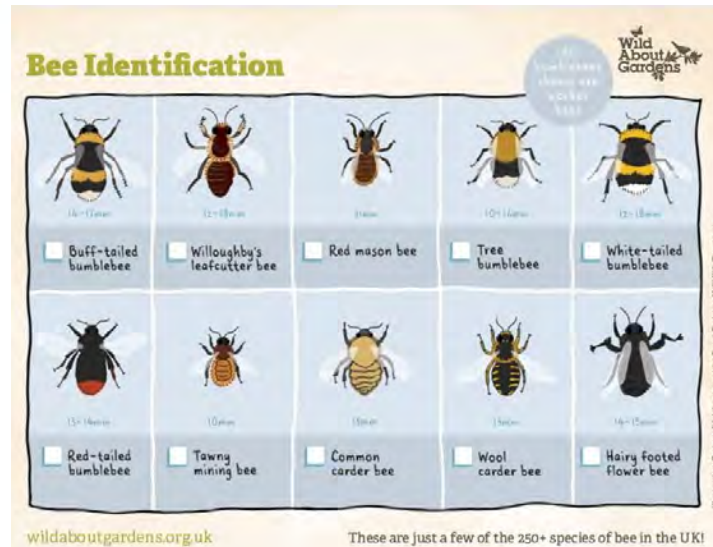
- The restored section of canal have been deliberately planted with locally prevalent species of flora
- This has achieved the aim to restore the biodiversity as well as the canal
- Local wildlife recorders have confirmed
 - Multiple species of butterfly 4 of which are in the endangered “red list”
 - Multiple species of dragon and damsel flies also several of which are on the “red list”
 - African reed warblers nesting
 - Otters
 - Water voles
 - Multiple species of native birds and fish



Future - Green infrastructure and habitat

A few of our neighbours

- Butterflies
 - 8 different recorded 4 of which are on the international red list
- Otters
- Water voles
- Dragonflies
- Bees







Bridleway section Improved by BCS in
partnership with Rights of Way team
for DDA compliant access to towpath
at Buckingham

Annual community festival at Cosgrove



What about the A5?

We can go
under the A5
!!!!

Still have an
Act of
Parliament!!!

Future – route under the A5





Forward Timeline to 2028

Timeframe	Segment	Dependency	Comment
1 to 3 years	A5 underpass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Contractor appointed to design as part of RIS II
2 to 5 years	Descent to A5 underpass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LandownersPlanningFunding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Currently agreed verballyPre application approval and supportLottery bid
1 to 3 years	Rewater rest of original arm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LeaseFundingVolunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Awaiting signatureVarious grant bidsCommunity engagement and corporates
2 to 5 years	A5 to Watling Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LandownersPlanningFunding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Currently agreed verballyPre application approval and supportLottery bid
2 to 5 years	Watling street crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Council Highways and EAPlanningFunding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Currently agreed verballyPre application approval and supportLottery bid
2 to 5 years	Tombs Meadow and Passenham Ascent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LandownersPlanningFunding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Currently agreed verballyPre application approval and supportLottery bid



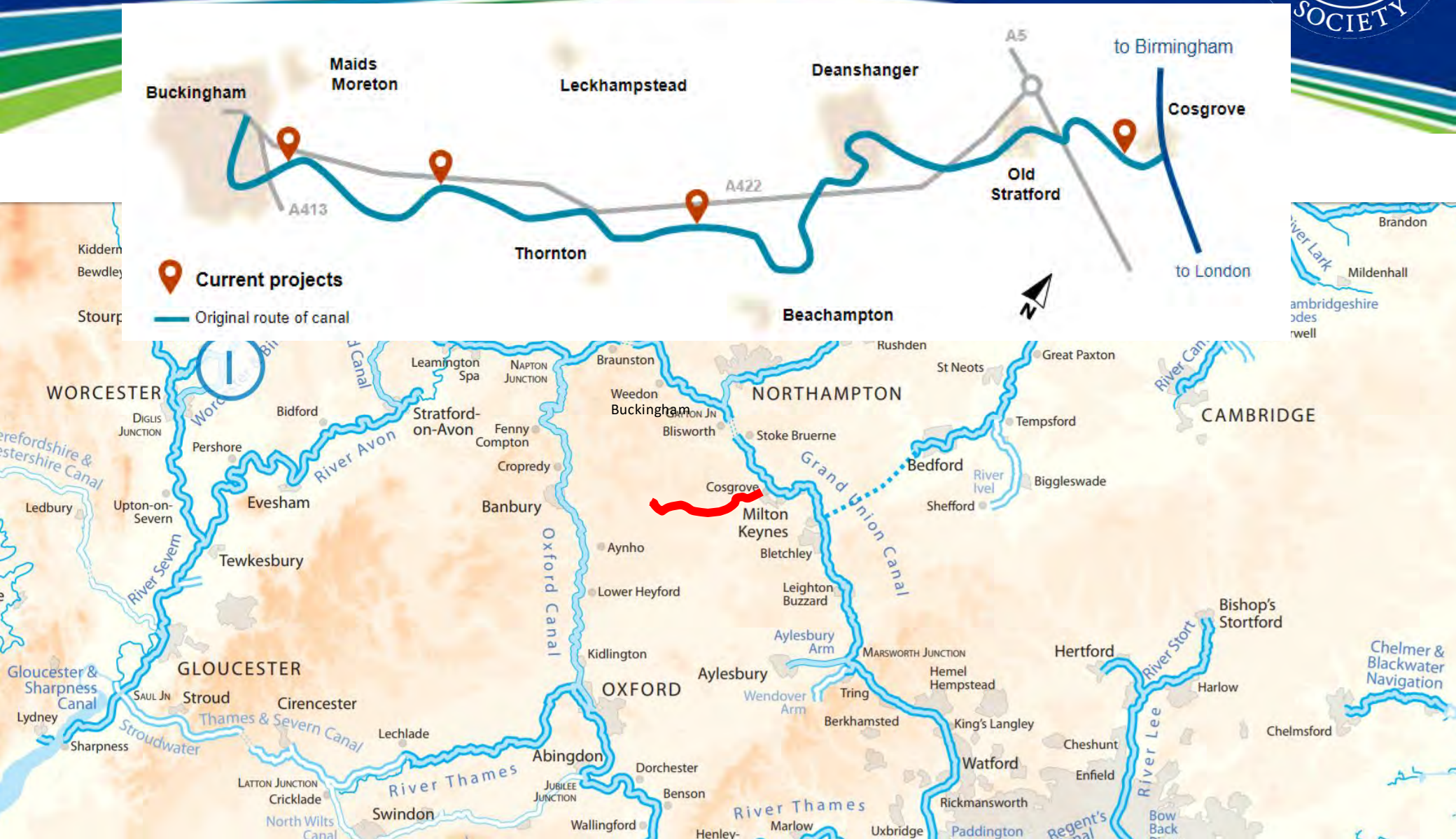
Forward Timeline to 2033

Timeframe	Segment	Dependency	Comment
1 to 3 years	Ex CRT section to county boundary acquired and rewatered	CRT Legal / land registry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently agreed verbally
3 to 10 years	5 miles in Buckinghamshire	Quarry Council Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently agreed verbally• Minerals & Waste policy (25) in place
3 to 10 years	A422 culvert canalisation	Council Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concept
5 to 10 years	4 x minor road bridges	Council Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concept
5 to 10 years	Remaining segments!		

Future – community and intergenerational



Where is the Buckingham Canal?



Flooding



- The restored canal can be designed and used as a linear flood attenuation channel along the Upper Ouse Valley This can help as a flood management tool similar to an aqueduct
- Creates fluvial capacity in the river to expedite water from upstream communities
- Holds water until river can take it to assist with flood management for communities further down stream
- Allows for more rapid discharge of surface water from villages such as Thornborough, Wicken and Deanshangar by mitigating effect upon downstream such as Olney, Newport Pagnel and Stony Stratford
- Conceptual use of restored canal as an aqueduct
- As per Lord Pitt recommendations to Gloucester flood enquiry (2007)
- Balancing lakes for water store
- Micro hydro for discharge
- Back pumping into canal both arm and network sides

Near term

- MK Canalside Forum
 - Forum exists to raise the profile of canals in MK with multiple parish councils and other organisations
 - John Best chairs
 - Tracy Darke (Growth and Economy)
 - Looking to engage with Michael Bracey (CEO) / Tracey Aldworth
 - Lots needs to be done for the waterways to maximise their contribution to MK
 - Forum would like MKC to help promote canals in MK.
 - MK is now right at the boundary of larger CRT regions, having been at the centre of a region until their reorganisation two years ago
 - The proposed MK Community Boat based out of Campbell Wharf Marina will hopefully change public perceptions of all of MK's canals if it's anywhere near as successful as BMK's boat at Bedford, the John Bunyan.
- B&MK waterway:
 - Separate group
 - Jane Hamilton chairs
 - Sarah Evans
 - Diane Evans / Kelda Hudson (ecology)
- BCS Support
 - Four restoration sites
 - The Buckingham Canal should be seen as an integral part of the "MK canal offer"
 - even though right on the edge of MK's area;
 - Add Canalside signage for BCS to the MK forum project
 - MKC support for the restoration principle
 - Flood betterment
 - The Parks Trust route
 - River diversion at Old Stratford
- BCS Community partnership grant application
 - £20k ish
 - Staff eg 0.2 FTE etc
 - MK as part of focus
 - Funding signage on red ways for Buckingham Canal towards Cosgrove and Old Stratford
 - Map leaflet and community engagement
 - MK based canal events
 - Tourism promotion etc

Doing the impossible???



“Impossible is just a big word thrown around by people who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing.” - *Muhammad Ali*

*Restoration is **not** impossible. Its a reality!*

Do you dig canals? We do !!!

Email notimpossible@buckinghamcanal.org.uk

Thankyou for your time

Questions?



Appendices



May 2021 Trustees of BCS



Rob Morris	Anthony Smith-Roberts	Athina Beckett	Terry Cavender	Richard Dwight	
Chairman	Trustee, H&S Manager & Quality Manager	Trustee & Work Party Leader	Executive Officer & Trustee	Trustee, Finance Manager & Treasurer	Vacant



Paul Sayer	Colin Levett	Lee Whiting	Gerry Millard	Jo Lynch	Amanda Robinson
Trustee & Construction Engineer	Trustee & Grant Manager	Trustee & Equipment Manager	Trustee & Construction Manager	Trustee; Marketing & Communication	Trustee; Archaeology and Heritage



Restoration Programme

Restoring the waterway from Buckingham to Cosgrove



Buckinghamshire

Northamptonshire

Buckingham
Terminus

Bourton
meadow

Lock Meadow
Farm

Maids Moreton
Mill

Canal Field

Hyde Lane
Nature Reserve

Hyde Lane
Farm

Cattleford

Little Hill Farm

Mount Mill
Farm

Passenham
Quarry

Passenham Mill

Old Stratford

Cosgrove
Descent

Cosgrove Arm

IN WATER

REWATERING
PLANNED

CONCEPT

CONCEPT

PLANNING

PLANNING

Work experience / Community project

- Bridge 1 was excavated in 2016
- Bridge abutment remains of old bridge “ruins” restored with MK College bricklaying students during 2017/18 alongside our own volunteers



Work experience / Community project

Modern bridge built upon the remains in 2018/19 by volunteers and students



Cosgrove as at December 2020



Stop planks fitted under bridge

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