

Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative Interpretation & Learning Plan



Interpretation and Learning Plan for The Grantham Canal Partnership

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Grantham Canal is the story of one waterway which spans two centuries across the three eastern counties of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. Historically, the thirty-three miles of the Grantham Canal has specific local interest, which in turn links in to the wider story of England within this period; it echoes her aspirations, decline, regeneration and economic and social change.

It is over two centuries since the idea of a canal linking the rural market town of Grantham to the industrial city of Nottingham some twenty miles to the west was envisioned, and after a several decades of commercial and economic success went in to decline with the arrival of the railways, and later road haulage, and closed in 1929. However, the canal's story does not end with cessation of trade: Over the past eighty years Grantham Canal has transformed to a place with significance for natural heritage and is valued as an important destination for people for enjoyment, leisure and learning.

Prior to the Canal's construction transportation of commodities was undertaken by heavy, slow animal-drawn wagons; their unreliability and high

cost coupled with increasing crop production led to the idea of a waterway to link the Rivers Trent and Witham. It is first recorded in the Grantham Corporation minutes of 1790¹ with the first Bill for construction of the Canal put before Parliament in 1792. Following initial defeat the proposal received Royal Assent in April 1793, with work beginning in the same year under charge of the renowned civil engineer William Jessop, a contemporary and sometimes mentor to Thomas Telford; with James Green and William King in supporting roles. It was envisioned that the Canal would allow trade to flourish, and in particular facilitate cheap transport of coal from the collieries of Nottinghamshire. The sense of hope that the new canal generated to local people alongside the misery of high fuel prices is encapsulated in a song of the time:

*The poor will now be clothed and warmed
'Gainst wintry winds and tempest armed
Snug in their habitation²*

The Grantham Canal was one of nineteen canals authorized in 1793, reflecting a particular boom time for canal construction at this time, but was unusual as it was the first canal to utilize purpose-built reservoirs for its water supply following objections from landowners concerned about loss of water from the River Witham.³ Construction of the Canal took four years, being fully open by 1797 and there is scope for further research to reveal the nature and distribution of navvy camps and living and working conditions through field survey⁴ and documentary research.

Initially the Canal enjoyed a profitable return, but with the advent of the railway, as in many other places, the canal went in to slow decline in the nineteenth century. Interestingly, *The Stamford Mercury*⁵ reports an 'important' and influential meeting' was held in Grantham in 1843 urging stakeholders to considerably reduce tonnage charges which it was felt were damaging commerce and having a negative impact on the lives of people in the area of all classes. A Mr Garner is recorded as asserting the Canal had become a monopoly for the shareholders, rather than delivering the promised community benefit, whilst a Mr Wilkinson opines that a total cessation of coal trade between Stamford and Grantham was not attributable to a general economic depression, but because of local politics and rivalry from competitors.

In 1850 the Grantham to Nottingham Railway opened, operated by the Ambergate, Nottingham, Boston and Eastern Junction Railway, which was taken over by the Great Northern Railway in 1852.⁶ The railway company did little to promote or maintain the Grantham Canal, and the waterway went in to

¹ R. Philpotts (1978, p.4) *The Grantham Canal Early Days*, Grantham Canal Restoration Society

² Hugh Marrows(2003, p.12) *The Romantic Canal*, Grantham Canal Partnership

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Nicholas Cooper (ed. 2006, p.245) *The Archaeology of the East Midlands, An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda*, University of Leicester Archaeological Services

⁵ 17-07-1843, p.2

⁶ http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/bingham_railway.php (accessed 31-03-2013)

a slow decline.⁷ In 1879, Stanton Ironworks opened near Woolsthorpe offering a ray of hope to canal carriers; however Great Northern Railway opened a new line in 1883 from Bottesford to Woolsthorpe, which was successful, running up to the 1970s.

Despite the decline in profitability, Grantham Canal continued to operate through the late nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century its chief cargoes being road stone, manure and night soil. The Canal enjoyed a brief respite during the First World War when it was used to transport supplies when a military camp opened north of Grantham. Trade declined rapidly after the war and the Canal ceased in 1929, officially closing in 1936, with proviso it would maintain two feet of water to meet local agricultural needs.

After World War Two the canal came under the management of the British Transport Commission, which became British Waterways Board in 1968. At this time waterways were designated as Commercial, Cruiseway and Remainder and budget for maintenance allocated accordingly. British Waterways Board wished to infill the canal and it was as a result of local concern and the efforts of the Grantham Civic Society that the Grantham Canal Society was formed in 1969⁸. This became the Grantham Canal Restoration Society in the early 1970s and has worked in partnership with The Inland Waterways Association and British Waterways on a variety of restoration projects. Since this time the Grantham Canal Partnership have achieved a mix of maintenance and restoration projects⁹ and in collaboration with British Waterways set in motion a movement towards restoration. In addition to its historical interest today the canal is recognized as a natural resource and a leisure amenity by local authorities along its length.

Today, the sparsely populated landscape, topography and winding nature of the canal corridor offer clues to some of the obstacles that would have had to have been overcome at the design and construction stage of the canal. The canal largely follows the topography of the southern slopes of the Vale of Belvoir adding an extra 13 miles as the crow flies, and a typical journey time was two days.¹⁰ Typical cargo included coal, coke, bricks, road stone, lime and agricultural produce. Local landowners still find remnants of china in their fields as a by-product of the night soil industry. There is local knowledge of an Upper Trent Boat buried near Canal¹¹, which was possibly once used to transport night soil, offering potential archaeological interest.

In addition to its commercial use for transportation of goods the Canal afforded leisure opportunities for local people; pleasure trips are documented in the early years of opening¹², also swimming¹³, angling and skating in

⁷ Peter Hardcastle (n.d.) <http://www.canalroutes.net/Grantham-Canal.html> (accessed 31-03-2013)

⁸ <http://www.granthammuseum.org.uk/news> (12-03-2013) (accessed 24-03-2013)

⁹ Tony Pitman (2007) *The Grantham Canal Guide*

¹⁰ Hugh Marrows(2003, p.12)

¹¹ Chis Deuchars (2012) <http://www.deuchars.org.uk/hiwb/boatgallery/barges.htm> (accessed 15-03-2013) and Mike Stone (Chair, Grantham Canal Restoration Society)

¹² Peter Hardcastle (n.d.) <http://www.canalroutes.net/Grantham-Canal.html> (accessed 12-03-2013) also *Grantham Journal* (10-08-1878, p.6)

¹³ *Grantham Journal* (09-07-1887, p.6)

winter¹⁴, and newspapers record tales of crime (e.g. theft, poaching¹⁵), accidents and other tragedies played out along the length of the canal.

Specific cultural features along the length of the waterway include living canal communities, with potential to tap in to a wealth of local stories and knowledge through oral histories and other projects. Official resources such as the Census and public health records are an invaluable source in building up individual and community profiles from the nineteenth century. Local directories and gazetteers may also add to community knowledge and contribute to interesting stories.

The Grantham Canal contributes to local character and a Sense of Place through its natural and cultural heritage. Although a man-made waterway it has acquired natural history interest that may be focused on the canal itself or within nearby hedges and towpath grassland. The Grantham Canal has been designated as a SSSI on a four-mile stretch between Harby and Red Mile Bridge¹⁶ and the nearby Kinoulton Marshes and offers fantastic opportunity for discussion, observation and learning. In its context of the wider landscape the Grantham Canal offers aesthetic qualities described by Peter Bonthron as 'pretty and pleasing vistas' in the early twentieth century¹⁷ and opportunities for work with a diversity of audiences for artistic, scientific, educational and leisure pursuits.

Recent studies of natural history suggest a common strand amongst interviewees is a preference for 'complexity and variety in the landscape'¹⁸; whilst this particular study refers to peri-urban woodland it is reasonable to assume this is also true of visitors to canals. Fresh and engaging interpretation of the canal's history can add new layers of interest, involve visitors, spark enthusiasm and foster a sense of kinship for local communities.

1.1 THE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of providing interpretation to complement the restoration and redevelopment work on the Grantham Canal will be to provoke, reveal and relate the stories around the canal and the surrounding area and therefore:

- Broaden participation
- Encourage longer stays
- Promote learning about the canal, its context, uses and people who lived and worked in the area

*Our overall strategic aim is to set up practices that can be sustained beyond the life of the funded project.*¹⁹

¹⁴ Picture the Past (<http://www.picturethepast.org.uk/frontend.php>, n.d., TGM006668 and NCCS000317) (accessed 16-03-2013)

¹⁵ *Grantham Journal* (09-07-1887, p.4)

¹⁶ Annette Daykin (2011, <http://www.granthamcanal.org/sssisi/>) (accessed 24-03-2013)

¹⁷ Peter Bonthron (1916, p.136) *Holidays on Inland Waterways*

¹⁸ O'Brien, Morris and Stewart (2012, p.23) *Exploring relationships Between Peri-Urban Woodland and People's Health and Well-being*, Forestry.gov.uk

¹⁹ Grantham Canal Heritage Initiative Consultant's Brief 2013

Vision: Best practice interpretation will be provided at some local sites, and holistically, in a consistent manner that can be build on over a period of time, unifying the different canal places that pass through many different villages, Grantham town and the city of Nottingham.

By this, we mean that it is important to provide interpretation at centres of population, providing access to stories that local people can relate to, whilst recognizing that it is important to have a focal point on the waterway, where the society can offer regular activity. This can be a point of information, it can offer a starting point to develop confidence about visiting the canal, through face to face contact with society members and knowing that this is a place to find out more.

1.2 THE SITE

In 2011 the Grantham Canal Partnership, inclusive of the Canal & River Trust, secured £48,000 cash contribution from Heritage Lottery Fund for the development of a Stage 2 application for the restoration of 2 Locks on the Grantham Canal-Woolsthorpe Lock 15 and Stenwith Lock 14.

The main partners South Kesteven District Council (Accountable Body for Stage 1), Grantham Canal Society and the Canal & River Trust have now reached agreement on a way forwards and have secured a budget for all the requirements of the Stage 1 project. 1

For the purpose of the Interpretation Plan, we have considered the potential of the whole canal, rather than focusing solely on the restoration area of locks 14 and 15, which is the main focus of the current bid.

Heritage interpretation activity is described for the short term (ie within the current bid), leading to further activity in the medium and longer term.

1.3 AUDIENCES

Current and potential audiences were reviewed at the Woolsthorpe Workshop. This has resulted in a list of current audiences.

Current figures suggest that around 50,000 people visit the canal each year, but we have no breakdown or detail for this figure.

The review suggests that current audiences are:

- Local dog walkers
- Anglers
- Long distance walkers
- People using the Walk 4 life series of short walks (online)

- Enthusiasts

Research to date also shows that the main grouping of GCS volunteers is white, retired and male. Initial analysis suggests that this is because of the way that volunteering and the Society is perceived and illustrated locally.

In order to target other people there is a need to:

- Ensure that materials are more inclusive and use appropriate illustration and text
- Be clear about other volunteering opportunities
- Offer different types of activity

These issues are covered within the marketing plan in more detail.

There is potential to look at a wide range of other possible audiences and then target promotion at the people who are most likely to visit. However, the Partnership needs to be realistic about the range of people that can be targeted and where those people are living. It needs to make decisions about how many audiences it can realistically target. To be truly effective, different audiences need slightly different approaches. Publicity, activity and materials need to be targeted rather than general and this means making choices about how many audiences are actively engaged with.

We reviewed potential audiences for interpretation and suggest that the following audiences will be most effectively targeted in the short term:

Local people

- People from local villages and centres of population
- People from Grantham
- Dog walkers
- People taking a short-cut
- Sunday afternoon strollers (nice short walk with a stop at the pub)
- Visiting friends and relatives

Business groups e.g.

- Rotary
- Townswomen's Guild
- Womens' Institute
- University of the 3rd Age.

Participation may be widened by:

- Planning a talk that can be given by a wider group of people – above all need enthusiasm
- Talk with lunch included – make a day of it and charge a bit more to raise funds.
- Promotion of boat trips or guided walks
- 'Behind the Scenes' tours always popular – there is a great opportunity for this during the archaeology stage of the project

Family Groups

- Families look for FUN things to do together
- Make it easy for them to do something
- Tell them about a specific place they can go
- The place needs somewhere to park or transport to get there / somewhere to eat or shelter and eat their sandwiches (snacks are an important part of any visit) / somewhere safe to play / a FUN activity to do on site / somewhere decent to wash hands and go to the loo
- Short boat trips at weekends
- Mid week- young mums: but needs to feel safe and have all of the above

Keystage 2 school groups ie:7 – 11 year olds (other age groups can be targeted when running specific activities which could link into other areas of the curriculum eg: arts based activity during interpretation creation / archaeology ‘taster’ during early research stage

- Most likely to respond – good curriculum possibilities / school trips / water safety requirement is a good starter
- Complimentary CRT materials enable development of special Grantham materials
- Make your boat trip better than anyone else’s – short is good!
- Travel costs may be an issue
- Local authority safety approval may be an issue
- Topic based is good, but need to be able to demonstrate learning outcomes
- Need basic facilities – shelter for bad weather and lunch / clean, warm toilets
- Need to promote in the autumn spring and aim for bookings in the summer term
- Activity will be focused around ‘schools weeks’ to target resources and activity into a single week that everyone can focus efforts on and allows time for teachers to plan for and arrange risk assessments etc

Students

Nottingham and the surrounding area has a very large student population which has already been tested as a possible source of volunteers. The opportunity to develop activity will be focused on individual projects.

College and university students will be involved in short term and focused work, linked to civil engineering and archaeology, rather than looking for a long-term commitment.

- Civil engineering mentoring
- Archaeology hands on experience alongside other volunteers

- Professional interpretive designer to work with students to provide ideas for a gateway interpretation board (leaflet / panel / illustration) and story plaques
- You Tube video: students work with a professional video maker to create video or animation to encourage new people to find out about the canal and volunteering opportunities

In the long term, it will be important to promote to other groups as facilities become available. More detail about audiences is included in the Marketing Plan.

As work is carried out to improve facilities at Woolsthorpe, in the medium term, plan for interpretation that targets other groups who will benefit from additional facilities.

Succession planning

It is also vitally important for the society to plan for succession. This will mean planning different sorts of activities within the society that draw in and aim to retain younger members as well as the reliable, experienced members.

In order to do this successfully, the society needs to tailor its promotional materials and activities to different groups in order to interest, recruit, train and retain people who are able to contribute in different ways.^{20*}

The events and learning team need to devise a larger volunteering structure, recruiting new volunteers who will take on a leading role so that a wider group of people take responsibility for the increased activity.

1.4 INTERPRETIVE THEMES

- See the Interpretive Themes Diagram at [Appendix 1](#).

Initial research has revealed a wide range of possible themes. The following over-arching themes will form the basis of future interpretation:

- **Greats of the Grantham** – about the people who built and were involved in the canal
- **The Romantic or Wild Canal** – focusing on the ecology and landscape²¹
- **Hard Graft and Hernias** – All about canal carrying
- **Operating the canal** – how the canal used to operate; volunteer restoration work to present day work by volunteers
- **Visiting, staying and day tripping** – All sorts of visitors to the canal

²⁰ This is picked up in the marketing plan.

²¹ Consultation indicated that people were concerned that the natural history and ecological aspects of the restoration needed to have a focus and be strongly articulated in the interpretation as well as execution of the work.

Sub themes will be researched in more detail for specific projects. Not all will be followed up, but carefully selected for their interest and relevance for specific audiences.

The bid document suggests focusing on a 'then and now' theme for interpretation. However, the availability of photographs is mixed and there may not be good quality photographs available for key locations. Therefore, we suggest focusing on relevant local stories related to the themes above. For example: The Romantic or Wild Canal theme would be strong for an area where dragonflies and damselflies can be seen in the summer. Operating the Canal would be a good theme for Woolsthorpe by Belvoir.

1.5 IMPACT OF CONSERVATION AREAS / SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC IMPORTANCE

The SSSI between Harby and Redmile is a conservaton site of national importance because of aquatic macrophites (rare submerged plants). The presence of dragonflies and damselflies, mainly in the SSSI area, are some of the best in the country, largely due to the channel of water.

In 2006 a study was carried out which confirmed that the SSSI status was valid for the damselflies alone. These are fantastic creatures to focus on for interpretation and learning – not only are they exciting and have a magical appearance, but their life cycle fits well with the Keystage 2 'life cycles' theme.

Grasswrack pondweed is a nationally scarce native species which tends to be found mainly on canals today, as a result of habitat loss in rivers. The SSSI at Kinoulton is special because of the combination of canal waters and marshland. Although it is more challenging to make plants exciting for visitors, there is a great opportunity to involve volunteers in practical work parties which will help to improve biodiversity.

A more recent study has been done to assess the likely effect of boating on the SSSIs and it is possible to restore the canal and at the same time improve the SSSI. This principle has been agreed on and condition of the SSSI is being monitored during restoration works.

The canal corridor is important for different bird species, some of which are on the RSPB red and amber lists. It may be difficult to interpret these as people are less likely to see them, however, swan families are very much in evidence along the canal. The annual Canal & River Trust wildlife survey has been developed as an app version for smartphones and is something that can be publicized and used to generate interest in the conservation value of the canal.

Natural England are keen on signage to explain the importance of the SSSI to visitors and local people. This is one of the key topics to be explored on the Story Plaques and Gateway Panel as well as through oral history.

1.6 THE GRANTHAM CANAL IN ITS CONTEXT

The canal itself is 33 miles long, of which about 5 miles are currently navigable, but the majority of the waterway is in water. With the present works to lock 13 and 14, plus works to locks 11 and 12, a longer section would be navigable.

A 15 mile section from the A46 is not in water, due to leakage through gypsum in the canal bed. However, much of the canal is walkable along an attractive and very rural towing path / cycleable on some sections and its use for canoeing is under-exploited.

The Grantham Canal is set in a largely rural area, with the Nottingham conurbation at the western end of the waterway where it originally joined the River Trent. (The link is currently broken and the society is interested in alternative links which could be achieved through development 106 agreements).

We have looked at the city and towns from West to East and it is our belief that whilst they offer an interesting potential mix of visitors, the most practical approach will be to focus on a limited number of audiences, so that available finance can be most effectively targeted.²²

For the current restoration project (locks 13 and 14), but also with a view to future restoration projects, it is suggested that Woolsthorpe by Belvoir is a good focal point where visitors could expect to pick up information and be aware of events throughout the year.

The idea of providing interpretation along the length of the canal would link into local communities and offer the opportunity for a cohesive approach which is not currently in evidence.

Currently, the following parish councils have pledged a sum of £350 to contribute to interpretation:
Hickling, Cropwell Bishop, Harlaxton and Holme Pierrepont and Gamston.

It is anticipated that further funding will be secured as the project gains momentum.

Leicestershire County Council have suggested applying to SHIRE grants scheme from interpretation in Leicestershire.

1.7 SUMMARY OF SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

²² See Marketing Plan - A review of the centres of population along the Grantham Canal

The Grantham Canal Society has already established an annual Discovery Day and a core group is already active in promoting the canal, school visits and talks.

Boat trips have already been running on the Grantham Canal, linked to Discovery Day and other special events as well as for short private trips.

Weaknesses

Current activity is reliant on a very small group of individuals who are already stretched.

A lot of current thinking is focused on the full restoration, but there is a lot that can be achieved in a staged programme and this would bring many more people on board.

There is no clear identity for the Partnership, which makes it difficult for people to visually recognize the work of the Partnership.

Opportunities

Any new interpretation will follow the principles of best practice outlined in the new Canal & River Trust interpretation guidelines²³ and 'Thinking about Interpretation' HLF guidelines.

All consultant project managers engaged on the interpretation element of the project should be members of the Association for Heritage Interpretation.

Promote and expand the education group with a volunteer co-ordinator (recruiting against a task description; training; managing a planned timetable of events).

Create interpretation to engage visitors across the range of themes aimed at deepening awareness and building relationships with visitors

Threats

Creation of interpretation without structure or a common style could lead to a disjointed appearance and poor perception of the Partnership by visitors

The education group could be limited by size if it is unable to expand, but this needs careful planning and leadership

The full SWOT analysis can be seen at: [Appendix 2](#).

²³ A draft of the guidelines is currently available and is expected to be completed during 2013.

1.8 DOCUMENT AND POLICY REVIEW

A detailed document and policy review has been carried out as part of the interpretation plan. The full review of historical sources is included in **Appendix 5**. A short summary of what is available and listing the sources of information for future reference is given next:

Interpretative Themes Overview

There is a wide range of material of primary and secondary sources related to the Grantham Canal available through official sources and private collections. The following a broad overview gives examples of the type of material sourced; it is not intended to be exhaustive.

Greats of the Grantham: There are a range of primary documentary resources tracing legislation, ownership and building of the Canal. Sources include the National Archives, British Waterways Archive, Wakefield HQ Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire Archives. There are several publications of primary and secondary sources including those published by the Grantham Canal Restoration Society and Grantham Canal Partnership.

Charles Hadfield's study *Thomas Telford's Temptation* (1993) examines the relationship between William Jessop and Thomas Telford and a 'chain of misinformation that still has influence today', suggesting the former may have undermined if not systematically written out of his place in history.

Belvoir Castle the ancestral home to the Duke and Duchess of Rutland for a thousand years is visible from many miles around, and open as a visitor attraction. In the early nineteenth century a tramway was built from the Grantham Canal to the Belvoir Estate, a short line, yet being the first to use a 'T' section cast-iron rail in the world. There is considerable scope to develop themes and understanding of the link between the Canal and social history.

The Romantic or Wild Canal: The Grantham Canal Partnership have produced a guidebook *The Romantic Canal* (2003) which includes towpath and guided walks with reference to natural and cultural history. However, for the purposes of interpretation, our focus for 'Romantic' is the natural environment.

A Heritage Impact Study (2006) details special designations as well as restoration phases and specific design features. It highlights the likely impacts of different options for restoration and there is a useful summary at the end. Interpretation of the challenging issues around restoration and habitat conservation will be an important feature of the interpretation so that people are able to gain a better understanding of the ways in which work is completed and therefore support on-going works.

There are great opportunities to focus on habitats as a key part of educational provision for keystage 2 children. An existing topic pack created by the Canal & River Trust provides a great starting point and the Canal & River Trust 'Nature Watch' app for smartphones is also a good way of involving local

schools and raising the profile of biodiversity amongst maintenance volunteers and local people.

Hard Graft and Hernias - canal operation: Historical primary sources include the canal itself and related structures in the physical environment (bridges, locks etc). There are a range of documentary resources tracing legislation, ownership and building of the Canal; delivery notes, vouchers, receipts, local directories and advertisements that evidence carrying on the Canal, including National Archives, British Waterways Archive, Wakefield HQ and Lincolnshire Archives. Photographic prints and oil and ink images are available to view at Grantham Museum, chiefly landscapes although a few have social and industrial history interest. *Picture the Past* has a selection of images, mostly landscapes.

Oral histories describing life on East Midlands canals in the early twentieth century have been located at Leicester University, and there is scope to collect specific memoirs related to the Grantham Canal, particularly related to restoration work. The *Stamford Mercury* (17-07-1847) features a detailed report on a meeting at Grantham Sessions Hall proposing a series of resolutions to reduce tonnage on the Canal to improve trade and living conditions for local people; full article available at the British Newspaper Archive. Michael Ware (1979) *Britain's Lost Waterways* depicts Misses Camerons' boatbuilding business in the 1920s. The Census and Public Health Records are sources of information for occupations, migration, living conditions etc. from the nineteenth century, as do local directories and gazetteers (e.g. Kelly's, White's, Cook's).

Visiting, staying and day tripping – There is evidence of early leisure excursions on the Grantham Canal, including trips to Nottingham from Cotgrave for shopping. Later newspaper advertisements and stories offer insights in to community festivals and events at villages along the canal through transport advertisements.

Peter Bonthon's account of his pleasure trip on the Canal in the early twentieth century is an interesting memoir of the landscape and activity along the waterway over a Bank Holiday weekend. Local newspaper articles give a flavour of daily life and are a rich source of human stories and advertisements. Harby Village website have published several photographs, some depicting skaters on the Canal in the late nineteenth century (digital copies stored Leicestershire Record Office). Michael Ware (1979) *Britain's Lost Waterways* depicts Bradshaw de Salis reading on a horse-drawn boat on the GC in the late nineteenth century.

Angling has been well established on the canal for many years and could be a great source of stories and knowledge for the oral history project. The proposed 'story plaques' will be one way of increasing interest in wildlife and highlighting special things about a place – eg: dragonflies, attractive villages, local produce.

There remains considerable scope for community research and participation

to unlock further stories and images to add to the exciting story of the Grantham Canal; through the highs and lows of two centuries and its interest and significance to three counties for the benefit of local people and visitors.

A timeline can be found in [Appendix 3](#) and full details of Historical Resources can be found in [Appendix 4](#)

1.9 LEARNING, BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Museums and libraries have been using Generic Learning Outcomes as a way of measuring their achievements. Whilst these can be complex, the principles can be helpful. The principles of Generic Learning Outcomes can help to develop better learning outcomes from its work.²⁴

The Canal & River Trust recommends that Heritage Interpreters use Learning, Behavioural and Emotional Objectives:

Learning objective: What do we want our visitors to learn?

Emotional objective: What do we want our visitors to feel?

Behavioural objective: What do we want them to do (or not to do)?

It may also be helpful to add:

Economic objective: How do we wish to benefit financially?

For this project, there may be different learning, emotional and behavioural objectives for different aspects of the interpretation, but to begin, we suggest the following:

1. Learning objective: Visitors will learn where the Grantham Canal is, and that it is the subject of a restoration project which seeks to restore

²⁴ The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council have developed “The Inspiring Learning Framework” which is built on a broad and inclusive definition of learning, adapted from the Campaign for Learning.

The Inspiring Learning Framework identifies that:

- Learning is a process of active engagement with experience
- It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world
- It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, ideas and feelings
- Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more

To be a learning organisation, the Partnership should develop and encourage

- Shared vision of its role and purpose
- Initiative, team work and flexible approaches
- Personal and professional development
- Openness to new ideas and approaches

parts of the canal for navigation and protect the wildlife of the waterway.

2. Emotional objective: As a result of discovering the canal, visitors will begin to care about the canal for reasons they think are important (wildlife, heritage, history, community) and will see local benefits, its value as a tourist attraction and its value for wildlife.
3. Behavioural objective: As a result of caring about the canal, they will want to take part in activity related to it – a walk, a clean up, telling others about it.
4. Economic objective: Finally, we want visitors to take part in activity and volunteering, to donate to the project and to become a member of the Society. All these things will help to generate income for the canal and surrounding area.

2 EXISTING INTERPRETATION

There is currently very little interpretation on the canal itself. A few interpretation boards exist in some places, either on or next to the canal, but there is no cohesive design style or approach and they do not convey an identity for the canal itself.

Directional signage

A series of maps are in place along the whole canal. Judging by the British Waterways Board logo, these have probably been in place for more than 20 years.

Whilst some are showing signs of wear, others are in remarkably good condition, although by today's standards, they could not be regarded as interpretation, but are maps which allow visitors to orientate themselves.

Historic mileposts and bridge numbers

"One very good plan is adopted on this canal, and that is the distances are distinctly marked by iron pegs every quarter of a mile on the towpath. One's progress then is noted with interest, and the traveller is also assured as to the correctness of the measurements".

Peter Bonthon , 1916

A series of ground level mileposts and bridge numbers can be seen along the length of the canal. These are indicative of a waterway style which could be used as a motif or inspiration for further interpretive signage.

They are cast iron and are hardwearing and can be repainted over time.

Publications

The Grantham Canal Guide – (Grantham Canal Society 2007)

The Society handbook offers a detailed guide to the canal written by Tony Pitman. It includes some historical and conservation background, a walking guide and a series of schematic maps.

The Romantic Canal – Alongside the Grantham (British Waterways 2003)
This is a attractively produced guidebook which includes 18 laminated walking sheets. The sheets are really a tourist guide, suggesting walking routes with a small map on each sheet and useful information related to walking (car parking, access, distance etc).

Turning back the pages on... Nottinghamshire Canals
This book, now out of print, can still be obtained and looks as several canals in the area through old photographs.

Videos

The Grantham Canal Society have produced several videos covering the use of the canal with Canadian canoes by a local school for children with learning difficulties; a Waterway Recovery Group work party; a canal society work party and Discovery Day at Woolsthorpe.

The videos, easily accessible on the Society website, are well produced and interesting, featuring canal society members and others talking about their experiences.

Face to Face Interpretation - Guided walks, talks and events

'All my experience leads me to the conclusion that well-planned face to face interpretation is not only a cornerstone of great visitor experience and a building block of public advocacy of conservation values, it is also vital to the health of professional standards.

Susan Cross, Heritage Interpreter 2013 ²⁵

This activity is something that can be successfully developed by a team of people, but has great potential to increase knowledge and understanding about the canal and involve people deeply. However, there is currently a lot of pressure on a small group of people, trying to manage a wide range of promotional tasks. It would be helpful to recruit people in co-ordinating and administration roles to help manage these activities and take pressure off the people delivering the Face to Face interpretation.

Guided walks

The Grantham Canal Society already run guided walks on request, but are beginning to recognise the need for a co-ordinator to be able to build a programme. Some walks have been run in conjunction with the IWA Nottingham Derbyshire Branch.

²⁵ From an article posted by Susan Cross in via the Interpretation Network of New Zealand. Susan is one of the UK's most experienced heritage interpreters.

To develop a good walks programme takes some organisation, from planning the walks, gathering the information and training the leader. Routes need to be checked beforehand and consideration needs to be given to the size of the group and what is appropriate in a given location. Walks may need to be tailored to individual groups and can be time consuming to put together. In addition, a broadly publicised, free access walks programme can result in large numbers of people turning up or alternatively, one or two people.

It is therefore our recommendation that a circular walk is planned, starting from Woolesthorpe as the central location. This can be developed by a group of people with a core story, building on the themes already identified. The core walk can be used for events, open days and tailored to different groups. Individuals can add to the core story by researching further of their own accord, but the framework will be there for everyone to use.

The Grantham Canal Society events team commented that current walks are mainly promotional, with an opportunity to sell guidebooks. This is very important and should continue, perhaps focused around key events and festivals. With careful thought, an enticing title may begin to draw in paying customers. (English Heritage make a charge of £8.00 - £11.00 per person for guided walks and run on a booking in advance system, administered by a central team.²⁶ Based on a maximum of 15 people, a single guided walk could raise £165).

Face to Face Interpretation - Talks

Talks are also a great way of enabling people to gain an understanding that could lead to short term visits and boat trips, moving on to long term support for the canal restoration by a group and the potential to become a charity of preference with local groups.

As with guided walks, currently a small group of society experts offer themed talks, depending on their expertise and knowledge. These can be very successful in bringing in donations of between £25 and £40.

A standard charge should cover the cost of travel to the venue (a volunteer could choose to waive the cost if they wished), plus an hourly cost. A projector and laptop would enable speakers to show photographs of the canal and a standard framework powerpoint presentation could be put together relatively quickly for the use of different speakers.

It would be helpful to formulate some agreed guidelines about charging for talks and when not to charge. It may be appropriate to waive a charge for harder to reach groups who the Partnership is hoping to attract to visit the canal. These groups could include young people, people with a disability or a specific local group – talks will need to be tailored to appeal to those particular audiences.

²⁶ There are obvious issues around collecting cash and administering booking systems, but these can be overcome with planning.

Boat trips

GCS owns a small trip boat, Three Shires, which is ideal for use on the canal as it can be turned in a relatively small space. It is a great way of introducing people to the canal and boating, giving the crew a captive audience to explain what's special.

The boat is licensed for up to 10 passengers, plus 2 crew and can be booked for a 2 hour, 4 our 5 hour cruise. Timetabled individual tickets are offered only on selected Bank Holidays and special event days and are promoted through the society website. Trips starting from Woolsthorpe are £75 for 2 hours, £105 for 3 hours and £125 for a 4 hour trip.

Trips are booked by individual charterers, but some special shorter public trips are also run by the society at special events such as Discovery Days, on Bank Holidays and Heritage Open Days. The latest of these picked up 71 passengers, giving them a unique experience of the canal.

The skipper confirms that it would be possible to run short trips for schools of about 20 minute duration and then swap with a group walking. One of the additional benefits of this type of trip is that a voucher can be offered to all children taking part, inviting their parents to book an incentivised family trip.

Special Events

Members of the society currently take a small stand to several local events and run a bigger fundraising event at Woolsthorpe by Belvoir called Discovery Day, in October. This event generates around £1,000 for very little outlay and is a good opportunity for volunteers to get together and invite their friends, family and local people to see the work they are involved in.

It would be helpful for the society to have a good quality, lightweight, professionally designed stand that picked up on the important themes of the canal. This could also begin to help to establish a brand for the Partnership, which would be something that people would recognise across a range of media and publications.

The Partnership is also planning 'Restoration Open Days' (open days with guided tours into the locks themselves via a scaffolding staircase, during the restoration works). Similar open days have been popular local attractions across the canal network, sometimes drawing thousands of visitors to see inside a lock and find out what is happening.

The restoration of Lock 14 and 15 is an ideal opportunity for the Partnership to demonstrate works being carried out and for the Society to raise awareness and grow membership through a planned approach.

3 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

The project team have had discussions with a wide range of stakeholders including Canal Society members, volunteer bureau, parish council representatives, anglers, landowners and other special interest groups as well as local teachers. We have conducted three online surveys:

- Stakeholders survey
- Teachers and group leaders survey
- Canal Society survey

Workshops and smaller focus groups have been held to draw out opportunities and think about new ways of working.

Summary of the Teachers and group leaders survey

The teachers and group leaders survey was sent to 43 schools, followed up by phone calls to each school. Links were also included on Twitter, the website and facebook and a £100 prize incentive was offered. 13 schools responded, but the results are biased as 3 people responded from one school. The analysis below makes an allowance for the bias.

Over 69% of the respondents were teachers. It is encouraging that over half work with Keystage 2 children (7 – 11 year olds) and 95% would be willing to participate in canal projects in the future.

Quite a high proportion of responding groups were able to walk to the canal (over 60%).

One challenge with school visits is that it can take weeks for a local authority to approve a school visit to somewhere near water. This means that lead in times are very long and visits need to be planned at least a term in advance. The majority of respondents said that it would take weeks to approve, with 20% saying 6 weeks or more. The implication of this is that it may be most successful to make visits into school during the winter and book a summer canal visit the term before, so that all the paperwork can be completed in time.

The main subjects studied by respondents were wildlife and habitats, with sciences and water safety being studied by 80% of students and water safety mentioned by over 70%. History and local history and citizenship were mentioned by 40% of respondents but theatre studies, arts and music were not studied at all.

About half the respondents had visited the Grantham Canal in 2012, with under 40% visiting in 2008 and 2009. For some reason, no schools or groups reported visits for 2010.

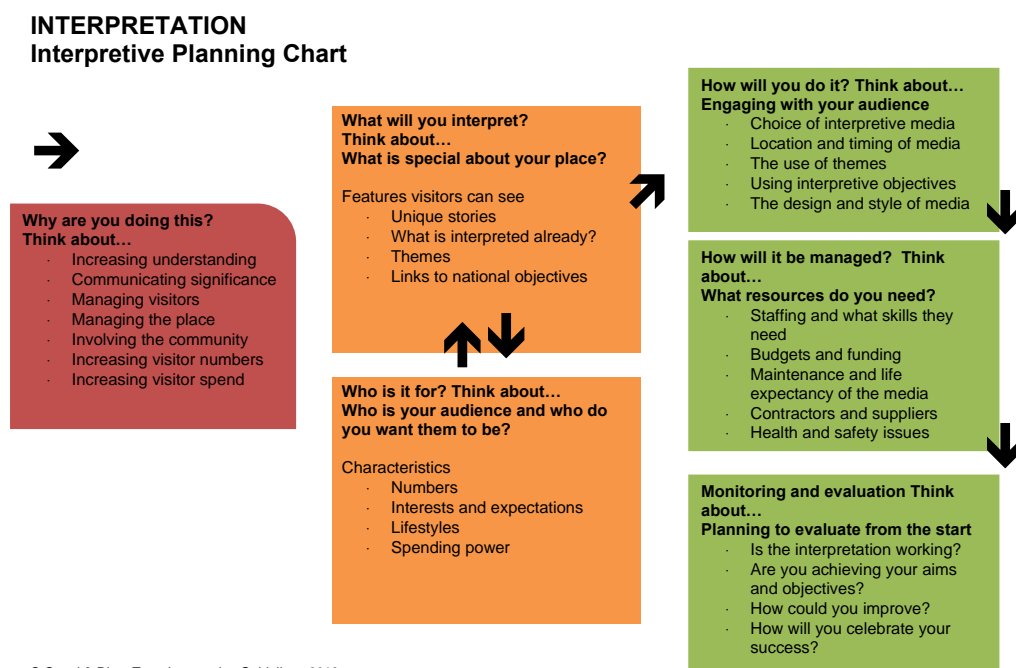
The majority of visits were in June, with other visits in January, May, July and August. It is likely that the large proportion of June visits are the schools. The majority of visits were around 2 hours duration, with about 30% spending half a day at the canal.

When asked what activities they did at the canal, looking at wildlife and habitats again came out top of the list, but this time arts and music did feature for two people. The results are probably distorted by the fact that a lot of people reported being science or geography specialists!

When asked what facilities they would like to see developed for schools or groups on the Grantham Canal, there was a wide range of answers, which included: indoor toilet facilities; conservation, sampling wildlife; teacher education packs developed for schools to pick up and run with; more information boards; tours and themed weeks.

4 INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

The Interpretive Process Planning Chart



Canal & River Trust 2013

In order to plan the interpretation for this project, we are working with the Interpretive Process Planning Chart, updated by the Canal & River Trust in its Interpretive Guidelines 2013.

Why are we interpreting the Grantham Canal?

- To increase understanding about the canal
- To communicate the significance of the locks and the wider canal
- To involve the community and lead to increased funding for restoration

What will be interpreted?

We have looked at the whole canal story and identified five themes. By using a range of media we would aim to cover the whole story.

The initial focus at the newly restored locks and the Woolsthorpe area and will highlight the significance of the canal, the locks and Woolsthorpe wharf.

Initial thoughts are that any installations on the canal will need to be robust and easily maintained by repainting or cleaning. It may be more appropriate to contain most of the interpretation within the Woolsthorpe building, or make it accessible on the web or through guided visits and volunteer led school visits.

Who will the interpretive media be for?

1. Local people

We suggest that the first interpretive media are designed for local people and family groups using the canal for short walks close to home or visiting Discovery Day and other events.

Local people are most likely to come across the interpretive media when out walking the dog, taking a short cut or, depending on the location, walking a short Walk 4 Life route or an alternative longer route. It will be most effective when placed near an access onto the canal, where even in winter, there are several people a day walking.

Any plaques or signs will be a taster, leading visitors to a specially designed visitor-focused part of the website.

The Canal Society has already had contact from a local theatre group regarding the development of a community project along the length of the canal. This sort of project can help to build capacity for the canal and engage people in the stories of their local area as well as the wider canal story.

Whilst it is not cheap to put on a theatre production, the legacy opportunities that come out of this kind of work are valuable, leading to greater involvement and resources that can be used by schools and others developing interpretation in the long term.

2. Business groups eg: Rotary / Townswomen's Guild / Womens' Institute / University of the 3rd Age

A small group from the Canal Society have experience of talking to these groups. By developing a presentation and training a wider group of people, these talks can be given as fundraisers with the objective of encouraging these local groups to visit the canal.

A programme of winter talks, based on the themes would lead to summer visits, with each talk leading to a (fundraising) guided walk and boat trip. Guided walks are at their best when new walk leaders are

given a framework which they can add to and show their own enthusiasm and knowledge to visitors.

These talks should be planned so that a programme is developed and targeted at groups who are most likely to be able to take part in follow up visits or make a donation to restoration. *Finding volunteers who are happy to help with administration and bookings will be as important as finding people who are willing to help with more practical tasks.* Example task descriptions have been made available by the Canal & River Trust to help the Partnership in expanding volunteering.

In the interests of developing a wider understanding of the canal, it will also be appropriate to target groups which are not likely to be able to provide funds, but could become important supporters of the restoration.

This work could be supported by a high quality, lightweight display that reflects the Grantham Canal Partnership style.

3. Family Groups

Families are looking for things to do with the children at weekends and during holidays. A series of mini-events can be planned for times of the year when families have time to spend together: Easter, May Bank Holidays, summer holidays.

Recent data is showing that young mums and mums who are internet savvy in their thirties are using smart phones to access information about all kinds of things, including visiting heritage sites. Anecdotal evidence confirms that mums are checking the English Heritage App for up to date information about visiting times, events and fun things to do with their children²⁷.

The emphasis should be on 'Fun' with things that appeal to children of different ages so that the family can do them together.

Most of the events will take place at Woolsthorpe by Belvoir, where it will be possible to use existing facilities at the wharf, but they can also tie in with other areas along the canal where there is already parish council

²⁷ At October half-term 2012, a mum commented on the English Heritage Facebook site for Witley Court that she had checked the EH app and only later discovered, to her disappointment that a family trail had run for an extra few days, when the app said it was closed. <http://heritageofwalesnews.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/smartphones-future-of-heritage.html>

The number of smartphone users in the UK will more than double between 2012 and 2016, from 19.2 million to 41.9 million, according to e Marketer's forecasts. As increasing numbers of consumers in the UK adjust and adapt to these new tools, their behaviour will change accordingly. <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/markets-by-country/18-uk/154-mobile-devices>

support for the project eg: Harlaxton and Cotgrave Country Park, In order to meet the needs of new and current visitors, the events need to be carefully planned around their needs, but they could include:

- A mini- family '**Secrets**' trail based around a quiz with simple questions, spotting cutout bird and animal shapes or looking for and exploring things on the trail
- **Guided trails** designed around key themes such as pond dipping or bird watching
- One way pre-booked **boat trips** (probably only realistic to run from Woolsthorpe). These could include a walk or ride back on an exciting form of transport or even simply be an opportunity to step on board and do a craft or other activity on the boat. (Many children will never have been on a boat before, so this is an experience in itself).

4. Keystage 2 Teachers and Children

There some very high quality educational offers for educational visits, local to the Grantham Canal. Amongst them, the Courts of Justice and Nottingham Museums offer well planned, focused visits and have purpose designed facilities. Whilst GCS does not see itself as a competitor for these offers, it is something that will affect schools when planning their trips.

Most classes will only book one or two visits per year and are likely to be looking for a visit that will meet learning objectives related to an aspect of the curriculum. Trips need to be well organised and offer curriculum linked educational materials. Schools may have difficulty in booking a visit to the canal at short notice because local authorities require schools to submit their detailed requests well in advance of a visit (often 6 weeks in advance).

The Partnership has a great advantage in being able to support visits to the canal on foot by local schools. The Grantham Canal Society learning team can also offer a flexible approach and create a range of offers, tailored to Vale of Belvoir schools to support learning locally.

A survey of schools near to the canal was conducted as part of the research for this project. (See results in Appendix X). 40 schools were invited to take part and 11 individual schools completed the survey online.

As a result of this research, we confirm that the most likely group to visit the canal were Keystage 2 children (aged 7 – 11). (This result was distorted by three teachers from the same high school completing the survey. Had only one entered, the proportion of keystage 2 teachers would have represented over 60% of the respondents).

The range of topics was biased towards the sciences, wildlife and habitats, which could be due to the rural nature of the Grantham Canal, but also the slight bias of keystage 3 and 4 schools.

The schools market is very competitive and it is important that any materials produced are child friendly and appealing. This requires a professional

approach to design and we suggest that learning materials are designed in conjunction with the Canal & River Trust Explorers materials, with reference to the design style. This will help to guide a strong design style without the need to invest in new design guidelines specifically for the Partnership; it will also mean that the Partnership can benefit from the marketing and promotional work being carried out to push the Explorers brand – getting materials into schools and raising awareness of the Grantham Canal project.

Experience of Canal & River Trust education work shows that many schools take a topic based approach to the waterways, covering a range of subject areas using a canal or river theme.

There are exciting possibilities for exploring the interpretation of wildlife on the canal for Keystage 2 children, looking at swan families, damselflies and emergent plants.

- A tactile approach to interpreting wildlife could include constructing a simple bird hide; making a giant swan's nest sculpture, complete with eggs; exploring the reeds at low level in canoes or bell boats
- The Canal & River Trust have recently produced a Wildlife Habitats Topic Pack with a series of activities which could form the basis of exploring wildlife on the canal
- The Partnership could produce a downloadable trail on the Grantham Canal and focus guided visits aimed at Keystage 2 children on this topic
- In addition to the suggested trails, school groups could be involved in the community theatre project and legacy materials (a written version of the play and lesson plans) could be derived from it.

5. Disadvantaged groups

The Canal Society would particularly like to work with local hard to reach groups like St John's Day Centre in Grantham. This group works with people who have a learning disability and would very much like to be involved in regular work parties at the canal.

Members of the events team have been able to adapt their existing presentation about the canal for this group and were able to engage with people from the group.

A regular activity session will be designed for the group, involving practical activities with an occasional 'reward' activity such as a guided trail, guided boat trip or arts and crafts event focusing on aspects of canal heritage.

Through projects like the Gateway Interpretation Panel and Story Plaques and the Community Project, the Partnership will create opportunities for disadvantaged groups to become involved at villages and centres of population along the canal.

5 APPROACH TO SITE MEDIA

In order to develop best practice interpretive materials, CRT already work with registered members of the Association for Heritage Interpretation. This helps to ensure that best practice is followed. CRT are currently producing a new set of interpretive guidelines which will be a valuable tool for working with contractors.

5.1 EXISTING MEDIA

There is currently very little media on site. What does exist seems to have no common approach or design style and the newer signage does not reflect any of the character of the waterway.

Any new media installed on site should seek to enhance visitor experience by provoking the visitor to think about the site, relating and revealing hidden stories. New audiences can be drawn in through cross-generational involvement in their creation. The oral history project will be particularly valuable for creating these opportunities.

5.2 CHARACTER AREAS

Woolsthorpe by Belvoir workshop

Woolsthorpe by Belvoir will be the focal point where meetings and events take place and guided walks, school visits and boat trips begin. This will enable special facilities to be developed in a single place. Materials can be safely stored and a permanent piece of interpretation could show an illustration of the wharf in its heyday and during or just before early restoration.

This will become a key area with the first on site interpretation going in at this location and setting the design style for further media.

Each site will have a small milepost inspired sign, which will carry an illustration, a small amount of text and a QR code or web-link to an audio story. This could also be accessed through the website. (*Reference Bingley as a good practice project*)

A series of 'milepost memories' or 'story plaques' with simple illustrated local story linked to audio memories online will be created. However, experience to date suggests that there is poor mobile phone reception in parts of the Vale of Belvoir, which would make the use of a QR code difficult.

Cropwell Bishop

Sadly, the wharf buildings were demolished here, shortly after the second world war. However, the impressive white Old Cropwell Mill is an imposing building next to the canal. The village has one of the select Stilton creameries and the canal runs alongside the village for some distance.

The dry section of canal runs for about 4 miles from Cropwell Bishop. Although it is no longer in water, largely due to leakage problems as a result

of gypsum in the canal bed, the length offers interesting possibilities for exploring the remains of old buildings and wharves as well as a fantastic spot to find dragonflies at Owlthorpe.

Hickling Basin

The main road through the village sits beside the canal basin, with its own wharf. The village was named in the Domesday book and a listed 18th Century warehouse sits to one side. (Not far from the basin, there is an rare original lengthman's hut which would benefit from restoration and could be a mini-hub for local interpretation).

Harlaxton Wharf

The village of Harlaxton has a very careful approach to development, with sensitive improvements encouraging a traditional atmosphere.

Harlaxton Wharf had a facelift thanks to the efforts of young volunteers from the Prince's Trust as part of a 12-week community project. The team raised more than £1000 towards the work from bag packing in Morrisons.

5.3 ZONING

In the medium term it may be most realistic to consider zoning the canal into activities that are most appropriate to that section of waterway.

Woolsthorpe by Belvoir is a focal point for activity and events. The site has already proved to be popular with nearly 1,000 people attending Discovery Days in October each year. With more publicity and some special activities, the plan is to increase awareness of the restoration and chart its progress through invitations to 'come down and see'. 'Have a go at canoeing' is currently being investigated as one of a range of activities planned.

Harby - Belvoir Challenge

The annual Belvoir Challenge (run) was set up in 1990 to raise money for Harby Primary School. The event is organised by the 'Friends of Harby School'.

The routes (26 and 15 miles) follow footpaths, byways, tracks, and minor roads, and with the kind permission of the Duke of Rutland, goes through the Belvoir Estate. Both routes start and finish at Harby School (grid ref SK746312) and are clearly way-marked with coloured tape. There are checkpoints roughly every 5 miles providing free drinks and snacks.

The number of entries are restricted and participants are requested to register in advance. In 2012 the event was full 8 weeks beforehand.

Harby is one of several villages where circular walks taking in the canal have been devised. These also include: Redmile, Kinoulton, Scaford, Cropwell Bishop, Woolsthorpe, Cotgrave and Bingham circular Walks 4 life.

Harlaxton

With a slipway at Harlaxton Wharf and a long lock-free pound, this is an ideal place for exploring by canoe.

In the longer term, a canoe trail is a possibility, with markers put out as part of a canoe trail for groups like scouts and guides or school groups. This could be a fundraising activity, bringing in a specialist provider and offering trips, including a fee for the Partnership.

Family days can be run from car park sites at Trent Lock; Cotgrave Country Park; Cropwell Town; Mackley's Bridge, Kinoulton; Slathern Bridge; Woolsthorpe Bridge and Denton Wharfside.

6 THE NEED FOR THIS PROJECT

Without interpretation, there is a danger that the site will be misunderstood and local people will fail to appreciate the heritage value of the canal itself, its structures, associated buildings and wildlife. It is well known that by understanding more about a place, people will care more about it and by caring more about it they will want to be more involved. ³

Yet, involving people in activity on the water is a challenge. Much of it has been cut off where bridges have been dropped, so much so that people are amazed when they see a boat on the water.

By restoring the locks and making them operable once more, it will be possible for boats to travel along the canal for a greater distance. This builds hope and expectation.

Consultation has revealed that here is also a need for succession planning. For decades, the Grantham Canal Society have achieved incremental improvements, but the project has the opportunity to move up a gear by opening up to new possibilities. Bringing new volunteers into the project, training, developing and mentoring volunteers could begin to involve more young people, raising their personal aspirations and helping them to become the custodians of the future²⁸.

Projects to involve young people will not necessarily achieve the same level of work as older, committed and experienced volunteers. However, what it will do is raise awareness, provoke interest and help young people to develop life skills. Planning to involve young people in special project days will make a difference locally.

6.1 COMMUNITY ARTS

²⁸ *Lincolnshire Heritage at Risk is a fantastic local example of how young people can be involved in helping to record and look after local heritage.*

Community arts are often a fresh way of bringing new people in who might not otherwise visit the canal. They are also a great way of involving the local communities in projects that increase awareness and build links between communities.

Work can be temporary or permanent and could include workshops, exhibitions and competitions to involve people from the surrounding area and draw visitors in.

Laury Dizengremel, a sculptor, became Artist in Residence at Belvoir Castle , in 2010 -12. Whilst being engaged to sculpt busts of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland's children, she set up Sculpture Trail 'Recycled, Reclaimed, Raw – working with with schools in the area as well as encouraging a competition to create artworks. Wood Henge, at Woodthorpe, was created with the help of Belvoir High School and primary schools in Leicestershire and other sculptures are nearby. ²⁹

Arts projects can also be a different way of interpreting a place, allowing people to think about the canal environment in a different way, provoking debate, even controversy, and therefore raising awareness and drawing visitors from further afield.

In this case we are proposing the use of a canal-wide theatre production, which would involve villages along the canal in a project to tell the story of the canal and re-enact it, culminating in a gathering of people from all the different venues. Previous experience of similar projects like those at Stourport on Severn ³⁰ This could lay the foundation for long lasting relationships between local people, but also be a very visual, exciting opportunity to promote the canal and the restoration works in a new and dynamic way.

7 OUTLINE SPECIFICATON

7.1 ACTIVITY PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

The Grantham Canal Society have been very proactive in working with many different groups of people and promoting canal heritage, through the work of Rosemary Gibson and Tony Jackson, who regularly tour local events, put up displays, visit schools and groups to promote the canal. Whilst there are a small number of volunteers who are able to support Rosemary and Tony, the sheer breadth of opportunity means that their time is constantly over-subscribed. It is difficult to see how their work could be expanded unless Rosemary is given more resources and a bigger interpretation and education team is recruited.

²⁹ <http://www.laurydizengremel.com>

³⁰ Stourport on Severn Basins Heritage Restoration Project 2008

In discussions with Rosemary's team, the idea of an activity project co-ordinator and some new volunteer co-ordinator roles has been proposed, in order to help share the burden of work and help to develop more helpers and active volunteers.

7.2 VOLUNTEERS

The team have reviewed the range of activity and groups they are currently targeting and the Activity Plan highlights a few target groups to focus on. This does not mean that all other groups are to be excluded, but that the primary effort goes into engaging and supporting the groups that are most likely to take part and become long term friends of the waterway.

The currently small volunteer events group will be critical to the long term success of the project. Volunteers will support the guided walks programme and help to run school sessions and memories recording. There will be opportunities for volunteers to receive training and develop their skills. The Trust will ensure that volunteers are properly supported to carry out these tasks.

Volunteers will need to be invited to join the team, based on a task description against which they are interviewed. Whilst this may seem un-necessarily time consuming, it is a good way of vetting people in advance and making sure that people understand the level of commitment they will be making. The Canal & River Trust Explorers team have learned that it is worth spending time making initial selections, which results in a greater number of volunteers who are more committed and stay longer.

A volunteer co-ordinator will need to be in place to manage the administration and booking of volunteer visits, along with the increase in volunteering for learning and interpretation projects. The Canal & River Trust Education Manager estimates that a full time, paid volunteer co-ordinator can oversee the work of between 35 and 50 volunteers. The volunteers would work in pairs or small groups. In order to maintain quality, the volunteer co-ordinator would need to carefully select people who have the right skills and abilities; train the team; mentor the team, evaluate regularly and seek to improve the programme.

The Canal & River Trust Explorers team have been working with specialist education volunteer groups across the country for 2 years. Volunteer teams now work from key sites, delivering the following:

- Leading school visits
- Leading classroom based sessions on water safety and an introduction to canals and rivers
- Helping to present Canal & River Explorers at events
- Taking bookings and send out materials
- Leading family activities
- Researching waterway history

- Updating the website

Canal & River Explorers volunteers are people who like working with children and young people, have an interest in waterways and enjoy sharing their enthusiasm with others. Experience has shown that the majority of volunteers who stay for a long time are retired teachers who enjoy teaching but have left the profession because of the excessive administration and relentless pressure for change in teaching today.

Volunteers organise their own transport and work flexibly. They are required to attend an interview with the volunteer co-ordinator, supply references and give permission for CRT to run a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before they start volunteering. Most teams work from a single site and are very loyal to the team in their area.

Teachers booking school visits value the fact that visits are run by people who are able to manage groups of children and offer specialist activities and knowledge.

Training for Education Volunteers should cover:

- Leading guided walks for children and families
- How to use new learning materials
- Water safety
- The Canal & River Trust Visit planner
- Introduction to the Canal & River Trust topic packs and fact files
- health and safety of groups on site
- safeguarding children

Additional training could include:

- Oral history recording

Canal & River Explorers wear a uniform and name badge, so that they are clearly identifiable, especially by teachers and children at school events. The Partnership should give consideration to whether they would like volunteers to wear uniform / and or traditional dress, which may or may not be appropriate for the Grantham Canal. Not everyone will want to dress traditionally, whilst others will enjoy the experience. It will be appropriate for some activities (ie History related projects) but not others (habitats and wildlife).

7. INTERPRETIVE MEDIA

We propose the development of a range of heritage interpretation projects that will help to provide a backdrop of high quality materials for volunteers to continue to use at events and with local schools.

For a full description of interpretive media options, go to [Appendix 5 Pros and Cons of Interpretive Media](#).

Multi generational oral history project

By inviting Oral History Society trainers to work with a small group of specialist volunteers, we are proposing oral history recording starts with best practice. This means training in the use and set up of good quality recording equipment, administration, ethics and ensuring that the full recordings are deposited with local archives.

Oral history is a great way of developing a multi-generational project that will have a lasting legacy of positive outcomes for local people. Not only can the material be used in future project work, but the goodwill generated by a project of this nature can build lifetime supporters of the restoration.

Lightweight professional display

The volunteer events group is already doing fantastic work, visiting all sorts of events and giving talks, spreading the word about the canal. Whilst face to face interpretation is undoubtedly the most valuable part of this activity, the team should be backed up by high quality presentation materials that will raise the professional standing of the team, provoke interest in the stories of the canal and reveal a few of them to whet the appetite of potential visitors.

A carefully designed display would enable clearer messages to be conveyed, using a common style that will become recognizable as Grantham Canal branding. Few people stop to read display boards in detail and will often pick up on one or two strong photographs or messages – ‘less is more’ should be the motto. For those people who are really interested, a flip book of old photographs can be captivating and encourage people to purchase a guidebook or postcards.

Story plaques

Any canalside interpretation needs to reflect the brand values of the Partnership, compliment the built heritage with high quality work and tell stories that relate to visitors and inspire them to want to find out more.

Small story plaques along the canal, will link into the audio tour as well as telling their own tiny story in words and a picture to passing visitors. Materials could reflect those already used on the canal and yet, link into up to date technology through QR coded trail items.³¹

Guided tours and downloadable interpretive trail leaflet

Guided tours are another form of Face to Face interpretation, which can be tailored to specific audiences. We suggest developing trails which relate to particular places – Woolsthorpe would be a prime location.

By developing core trail notes, new volunteers can be trained in leading guided walks and given a framework upon which to develop their own walk – therefore keeping the walk fresh and enthusiastic! Talks can be themed and aimed at enthusiasts, local people, tourist visitors or school groups.

³¹ A QR (quick response) code is a kind of bar code that can be read by a smartphone and takes the viewer straight to a web page or audio recording.

The possibility of making some of these tours by canoe is an exciting one! Such a trip could be offered to cub scouts and brownies, or as special birthday events or weekend 'come and try it' events. The best way of making this happen is to build a relationship with a local provider who can provide all the appropriate safety credentials to run such an event.

Boat livery project

The work boats are currently a missed opportunity to relate to the heritage of the canal, whilst at the same time promoting boat trips and society membership. The boats are currently a little drab and could present a much more appealing vision throughout the year.

The trip boat Three Shires, is very well presented and looks tidy and professional although it may be helpful to consider how she looks when moored up and whether brighter colours and bolder advertising might be

Everyone likes to photograph a canal scene with a boat in it. Those photographs are uploaded by individual visitors to facebook, websites and twitter. By providing a boat that picks up on a historical boat livery, employing a local boat painter and making publicity from the event, awareness continues to be raised.

Keystage 2 primary school project

There is a fantastic opportunity to build on existing materials already created by the Canal & River Trust and develop locally relevant canal project work. This valuable resource is already available to teachers and the Explorers brand is gaining credibility around the country at key sites for best practice volunteer led school visits.

Existing materials at www.canalriverexplorers.org.uk include:

- Habitats topic pack
- Waterways at War topic pack
- Waterways today topic pack
- Water safety children's booklet

There are also fact files and trails related to waterways across the country. By developing a Grantham trail and fact file, that could be included on the Canal & River Explorers website, the Partnership would be tapping into expertise, knowledge and marketing through the website, drawing more teachers to the Grantham Canal.

Holiday activities

Holidays are the time when families are looking for activities to do with their children. By offering low cost boat trips and regular trails and events in holidays, the Partnership will become known as a provider and will develop regular family customers.

Trails need not be expensive and can be changed from year to year – something as simple as MDF cutouts with a quiz question and a small prize at

the end are a low cost, but popular activity lasting up to an hour for family groups.

Pond dipping (at a safe, suitable location), a family guided walk or 'I spy' activity trail can be developed economically and complimented by the attraction of short boat trips at a reasonable cost.

Canal club

Hard to reach groups, like disabled visitors, may need a specialist activity developed for them. We suggest creating a pilot project for a group identified at Grantham. This would provide the opportunity for low risk work experience activity such as gardening and litter picking, as well as developing some 'reward' activities for the group and a regular starting place for their weekly Canal club work.

Community theatre project

A community theatre project is a great way of joining together different communities in a big project focused on the canal. An exciting proposal has already been put forward by a well respected Nottingham based theatre company. This will require additional fundraising, but the opportunities for community involvement and for this to provide a legacy of materials for future work make it a really exciting possibility.

8. COST PLAN

At this stage, only indicative costs have been obtained. These are based on high quality materials and are estimated with reference to previous projects. It is recommended that more detailed costs are obtained at Stage 2.

Activity	Item	Cost
Advertise and appoint volunteer heritage interpretation & learning co-ordinator	Training (see training plan for details) Education training – 2 days p/a consultant Volunteer expenses	£15000
Specialists recruited, trained and supported	Training and materials	£1400
<i>Multi generational oral history project</i>	<i>Training course from Oral History Society / equipment / co-ordination</i>	<i>£9,600</i>
<i>Community Theatre Project</i>	<i>Major event involving villages along canal, Nottingham & Grantham</i>	<i>£35,000</i>
Lightweight display		£6,530
<i>Schools week in summer term</i>	<i>dipping nets, hanging trail and coaches x 2</i>	<i>£1,900</i>
<i>Boat trips</i>	<i>Small charge to cover costs</i>	<i>£600</i>

Story Plaques	Discreet plaques with limited text and illustration	£10,000
Guided tours & downloadable interpretive trail leaflet	Written outline tour Interpretation Leaflet with trail and illustrated map	£5,700
Interpretive map	printed maps using oral history	£10,000
Special events – Discovery Day & Cotgrave Country Park	Advertising and special events materials	£20,000 + £10,000 contingency
<i>Boat livery project</i>	<i>Painting by heritage boat signwriter</i>	<i>£700</i>
Guided tours and talks	Launch event, downloadable trail and maps	£5,700
KS 2 primary school visits	Grantham school resource Ongoing resources	£2,100 £600
<i>Holiday activities</i>	<i>Family group trail and short boat trips</i>	<i>£2,500</i>
<i>Canal Club</i>	<i>Low cost materials for art based activity & free boat trip</i>	<i>£900</i>
<i>Volunteer uniform</i>	<i>Badges and fleeces or t shirts</i>	<i>£700</i>

- Items in Italics have been removed from the Round 2 Budget.

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