

# The Twenty Mile Pound

*The Twenty Mile Pound*



An artists vision for the Grantham Canal  
by Simon Read

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## **Preface**

### **The Grantham Canal Partnership and the Arts**

The *Twenty Mile Pound* was commissioned from the artist Simon Read in 2002 by a partnership of the following Arts Officers:

Ken Ross, South Kesteven District Council

Sharon Scaniglia, Rushcliffe Borough Council

Sue Cullen, Nottinghamshire County Council

Katie Owen, Melton Borough Council

Mick Fattorini, Leicestershire County Council

David Lambert, Lincolnshire County Council

and Alan Powell, Business Development Manager British Waterways

with financial assistance from East Midlands Arts

The document's purpose is to set the context and be a vision for the strategic development of public art, in the widest sense, throughout the length of the Grantham Canal corridor.

The Partnership will use this document to inform and inspire its thinking and approach towards art and the environment as it relates to the canal and its various communities.

The views expressed in this document are those of the artist and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or beliefs of the commissioning bodies.

Further information about the Grantham Canal can be obtained by visiting [www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk) or telephoning British Waterways on 0115 973 4278

## **The Twenty Mile Pound**

*For the greater part of its length the Grantham Canal follows one level; from Grantham to a little beyond Woolsthorpe it falls 25 metres to the 45 metre contour line which it then hugs for the next 20 miles before dropping again to the River Trent. This massive meander of impounded water is known as the Twenty Mile Pound.*

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## *Contents*

page

### **Preface**

The Grantham Canal Partnership and the arts 1

### **Foreword**

3

### **Introduction**

4

1. Artists commissions for major capital projects 5
2. Collaborations and commissions arising from restoration activity 8
3. Commissioned seating and signage 10
4. An ongoing artist in residence programme 14
5. A clear community programme 16
6. The need for project management 19
7. The creation of a canal resource centre 19
8. Summary 25
9. Conclusions 26

### **Appendices**

#### Appendix 1 - Reflections

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Sunken Sofa     | 27 |
| Rain            | 28 |
| Birdlife        | 29 |
| Strategies      | 30 |
| Level           | 31 |
| Redmile         | 32 |
| The Whale       | 33 |
| Vimy Ridge Farm | 35 |
| Nitrate         | 35 |
| Urban Canal     | 36 |
| Signs           | 36 |
| Tourism         | 37 |

Appendix 2 - Bibliography 39

Appendix 3 - Simon Read the artist 40

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## **Foreword**

As a product of human ingenuity, canals are unique; they appear to have made a pact with nature; harnessing the tendency for water to find its own level and exploiting its mass to pen it in. They are drains when it is wet and, in times of scarcity, reservoirs and a source of irrigation. Once created, they are quickly colonised by nature, forming their own ecostructure complementary to the landscapes they pass through. They are havens of quiet and contemplation for humans irrespective of their origin in hard-nosed commercial reality and the need to make their survival, as a part of our cultural inheritance, economically viable. I welcome the opportunity to engage with real projects such as the restoration of the Grantham Canal, where an artist's skills, both practical and discursive, are called for. This particular project invites intervention on levels ranging from the totally pragmatic to the intensely philosophical, it is impossible to separate one from the other.

I have assumed the function of proposing a feasible format for artists to reflect upon and enhance the ongoing work, where, when needs be, solutions arise from a ground enriched by discourse. I have tremendous faith in that active contemplation we call art; here it offers potential to establish the bedrock upon which a fresh perception of the canal may be founded. To bring artists into this conversation is to open up other ways of considering not only the canal but also the landscape it runs through, and in turn, exploring the dynamic changes undergone in our culture in the relationship we have with our own land.

*The  
Twenty  
Mile  
Pound*

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## **Introduction**

Through conversations with the Grantham Canal Arts Officers Group and British Waterways and through a growing familiarity with the canal, its landscape, community and the plans for its restoration to full navigability, I have come to appreciate that an arts strategy has to be effective on a great many levels. Unlike other projects, the potential here is very open; there is no single site, nor specific brief, it is set to change over a great many years, it is ambitious and the response it deserves is one that both respects and engages this. The purposes art may serve are varied as would be the funding strategies through which they would be accomplished, in my analysis, I endeavour to reflect upon this.

I have given some thought to ways in which a strategy may interlock with the restoration process to take full advantage of opportunities as they arise. From the outset there should be a genuine symbiosis between the ongoing work and a consolidated arts strategy; my aim is not to devise something which would be the servant of the restoration programme but rather to complement and expedite it.

Through this document I have identified some specific aspects of the restoration which could become major capital projects. Whilst these would impact upon the rest of the strategy, they would be distinct and develop their own rationale, I feel it to be wise to consider these separately and on their own merits. In all other respects I have aimed to come up with an approach deriving from the situations it addresses and my emphasis is that it should be organic to the project as a whole. I have stressed the need for art to feed into an ongoing conversation so that when solutions are sought they are both informed and appropriate. I have avoided an analysis of the canal in terms of opportunities for art, which is simplistic and makes assumptions as to a role that art may have to improve or articulate in a prescribed way. Indeed, in a rural environment it is very likely that there may be no perceived function for art in an orthodox sense and there is a danger of it appearing to be an inappropriate intervention in another's territory or at least, gratuitous.

My inclination is to try to tread lightly; art should be enmeshed in its location and, especially in a rural landscape, be perceived as indissolubly a part of it. In particular, along the Grantham Canal art should explore and also celebrate what makes it distinct.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

## 1. Artists commissions for major capital projects.

In order for the canal to be returned to full navigability there are some major obstacles to be overcome, the two most obvious being how it is to be linked to the Trent, and how a sense of destination may be created.



*The River Trent at Holme Pierrepont*

### **The Trent Link:**

At the last count there were four potential solutions to the problem of how to link the canal to the River Trent and consequently the national canal network. The original route is obstructed by two major road complexes as well as many other smaller ones where the potential disruption to traffic in Nottingham and the associated costs are for the present too great for it to be deemed viable.

Two possible routes would take in the National Watersports Centre at Holme Pierrepont, their viability relies upon possible major waterfront development in the area, where a canal diversion would be included as a component; one route would pass to the east of the centre, the other to the west. A development here has the potential to raise the status of the Watersports Centre and attract further investment into the area. The cost of redirecting the canal from a point east of the major road obstacles is estimated to be in the region of £15 million which in fact would be a relatively low expense in the context of a projected £250 million development. The A52 road into Nottingham remains an obstacle where in all probability the only way in which it could be negotiated is via a 'drop lock' where the level of the water beneath the road would be lowered to provide sufficient headroom.

For either route there would be considerable engineering and landscaping work, affording a basis for collaboration with artists as well as giving potential to respond to a project of such importance by making it the theme for a major celebratory sculptural commission.

I suggest that from the outset there should be an artist as a part of the project team whose function would be to identify potential for creative collaboration, which at present I envisage to be sculptors and masons to be involved in facings for bridges, cuttings and embankments, engineer and designer partnerships to look at bridge construction in particular where they are considered a part of a new development and are not vehicular access, landscape architects and artists to have an involvement with any schemes to remodel the landscape and replant it.

The final possible route to the Trent is to redirect the canal after it has passed under Gamston Bridge and take it directly north, across farmland, to the river. This is a very short distance and would cost about £5 million to carry out given that the obstacles of the Lings Bar Road and the culverted section of the dual carriageway at Gamston Bridge can be overcome.

The solution under consideration incorporates redirecting the Lings Bar Road to join the A52 further east and building into it a canal tunnel with sufficient headroom. The effect of this would be to create a new area of land contiguous to the present housing estate at Gamston which could arguably be developed, the planning gain from this manoeuvre would pay for the canal.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

My response to this option is similar to the one I have outlined for the Holme Pierrpont plan; the project team should include an artist, and similar landscape and engineering potential could arise.

Whichever becomes the preferred solution, the implications are that we would not only be celebrating a new section of canal but the viability of the whole canal as a continuation of the national network. As such it justifies a major celebration which apart from a sculptural commission could well be an opportunity for an ambitious water-borne performance work, something which transcends the predictable firework display. In this respect, work by the (now defunct) Bow Gamelan Ensemble comes to mind. Certainly, organisations such as Hull Time Based Arts have the expertise to be a partner in sourcing and organising a celebratory event.

In the matter of funding: the placing of an artist as a part of a project team would be eligible for a Royal Society for the Arts, Art and Architecture Award. The projects themselves should be seen as a part of the budget for the development as a whole as well as the subject of a major lottery bid. There is also potential for exploring new corporate partnerships through the Art and Business, New Partners scheme.

Given the scope of the whole project and in particular with the creation of a new visitors centre, I anticipate there being interest from the East Midlands Development Agency.

## Canal Terminus at Grantham:

Although the canal continues after a fashion into Grantham, it is not navigable beyond the A1 where there is a culvert only sufficient to ensure the transfer of water from one side to the other. Within Grantham the original basin has been filled in and the warehouses long gone, now the space is occupied by a scrap yard within a mixed industrial site.

There are at present two options for how to give the canal a sense of destination; the first and most feasible is to construct a terminus basin with all of the associated services to the west of the A1. Apparently there has already been an area immediately to the north of the canal at this point, identified as a potential site for a business park with easy access to the A1. This plan is at present in abeyance due to the discovery by English Heritage that it is the site of a neolithic settlement. Were the business park to go ahead it would do so on the understanding that it incorporates a canal basin, services and a visitors centre, all considered a part of the development. I also understand that there would be the intention to locate motorway services and more hotel facilities at this point, confirming the potential for the canal area to be a welcome rest and change of pace from the rigours of the A1, coincidentally raising awareness of the canal nationally as well as locally.



It occurs to me that a business park easily accessible from the A1 may not be so easy to get to from Grantham itself unless this would be via a spur from the A607 after it has passed under the A1. Otherwise this would necessitate another tunnel under the A1 which, if this were so, would raise the feasibility of the canal being included and therefore becoming navigable into Grantham.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

In Grantham itself, the area around the site of the original canal basin is about 25 acres; considering its present use there is tremendous potential for improvement. Were this to be developed, the theme of canal, warehouse buildings, visitors centre could supply a coherence which it otherwise may not have.

There are obvious merits to both a rebuilt basin in Grantham and a terminus facility by the A1, they are by no means mutually exclusive; a basin in Grantham would be a fitting end to a journey with easy access to the town and shops for boat owners, incorporate a visitors centre and if developed in a sympathetic fashion could not fail to be a welcome addition to the town's attractions. A terminus basin by the A1 would be a much more workmanlike affair incorporating marina, residential and visitors moorings, boat maintenance facilities and services. I imagine it to be a softer landscaped environment than a facility inside Grantham.

As with what I have outlined for the Trent, I consider it fundamental that an artist is identified who would be able to operate effectively as a part of the project team and be sensitive to opportunities for commissions and collaborations.

Considering a terminus basin to the west of the A1, there is considerable scope for collaborations between artists, landscape architects and engineers on the design for a marina as part of a landscaped park, and would include walkways, jetties, bridges and planting.

Were the canal to be navigable into Grantham there is potential for the cladding, facings and of course the lighting of a tunnel. A terminus basin in Grantham merits a sculptural commission to mark the journey's end as well as presenting opportunities again for artist/engineer collaborations over bridge designs. It should be borne in mind that it is by no means necessary to create a kind of ersatz Victorian canal environment and that there is a new use which prompts new landscapes and a fresh way of incorporating the contributions that artists are capable of making.

Funding for any collaborative work should primarily be considered part of a development with potential for matching funding from the Lottery. In Grantham further work could seek funding from town based business interests, the advice of Art and Business would be useful here. I suspect that East Midlands Development Agency would also show an interest in an initiative such as this.



# The Twenty Mile Pound

## *2. Collaborations and commissions arising from restoration activity*

Where there are road bridges to be replaced, it is perhaps wise in all cases except maybe the ex-roving bridge at Cropwell Bishop, to let the conversation as to the form they should take be between British Waterways and the local authority highways department, however there may well be landscaping and planting works where earth moving has had to be undertaken to ensure correct gradients, and where these have visual impact upon the canal, that would benefit from the involvement of an artist or landscape designer, and could be the result of a local community initiative.<sup>1</sup> Obviously there has to be a conversation over wildlife habitat and a judicious use of native plant species.

Where access roads for farms need to be replaced by new swing bridges, a solution has already been arrived at which is effective, robust and elegant, and it is counterproductive to propose alternative designs.

There are locations where static high level footbridges afford the best means to cross the canal, these could be the result of specific commissions, or a good repeatable design. They could be the subject of a local community initiative and in particular where footpaths are designated as such receive support from the County Council and from the Countryside Agency.

The dry stretch between Cotgrave and Colston Bassett is a potential focus for an artist in residency,<sup>2</sup> as a part of the process of returning this stretch to water there is potential to deviate from a strictly linear form with the creation of new water habitats and small spurs from the main channel to create moorings for boats. As an area of reclaimed gypsum diggings it could be



treated with some latitude, and be borne in mind that as a result of returning the canal to navigation it may be in order to create fresh wetland habitats along the way. The presence of a suitable artist through this period of change would generate some exciting collaborative work, in particular in respect of the reconfiguration of the landscape in the environs of the canal.

1. See Section 5. 'A clear community programme'. P16

2. See Section 4. 'An ongoing artist in residence'. P14

# The Twenty Mile Pound

South of Cropwell Bishop and beside a group of renovated canalside industrial buildings there is bridge 22 which was originally a 'roving bridge', in fact the only one along this canal; here the towpath crosses from one side of the canal to the other. The bridge would have been a structure of singularly beautiful sinuous curves that allowed a horse to cross without having to be unhitched from its tow. If there was the will this would be a worthwhile challenge to reinstate, not in the least to enable uninterrupted human traffic, and not to mention perhaps a horse or two.



*Roving & Traffic Bridge, Beeston Canal, Nottingham*

This could be a collaborative project between Nottinghamshire County Council and a design/engineering partnership and become the subject for a competitive tender. There could be direct interest from British Waterways and a potential for lottery funding. In the immediate area it may be possible to engage the interest of British Gypsum in either specific initiatives or across the whole project. This could be advised upon by Art and Business through their New Partners scheme.

As it is returned to water and given its own landscape, the Cropwell Bishop area will undergo considerable change and it is important that this is well documented. I can see two ways in which this may be carried out; firstly as a community and work party run project led initially by an artist with an interest in archive, which could be a targeted role for an artist in residence.<sup>3</sup>

The other possibility is to engage an artist/photographer/film or videomaker to have a long term involvement with the work for which there would be a negotiable fee, perhaps on the basis of an artist in residency spread out over a number of years.<sup>4</sup>

Obviously more projects will arise as the restoration gathers momentum and the suggestions I shall make of establishing an artist in residency to be carried on over a number of years will satisfy the need to sustain a discourse and maintain sensitivity to potential within the ongoing work. It will be crucial that there is clear project management to keep an arts strategy on course, and this could result in the creation of a distinct post. I recommend that this receives serious consideration.<sup>5</sup>

3. See Section 5. 'A clear community programme'. P16

4. There is an intention to set up a centre for the study of the photographic archive at London College of Printing in the London Institute, this could be a pilot project and would have the potential of AHRB funding. Support for a film or video work could be sought from Carlton Television or from Broadway Independent Cinema based in Nottingham.

5. See 'The need for project management'. Section 6. P19

# The Twenty Mile Pound

## 3. Commissioned seating and signage

I understand that funds have already been identified within the development budget for seating and signage, I shall therefore devote my attention to what the aims are and how they may be accomplished. Having walked the towpath, I found two access points particularly awful as well as poorly signed. Starting at Grantham I stood by the last culvert before the water passes under the complex of roads feeding into the A1, in the teeming rain, and wondered how I was to reach



the canal on the other side. The only option I could see at the time was to seize my moment and dash across. Only at my leisure did I discover that was I to follow the A607 where it passes under the A1, I would have arrived in a calmer state of mind. Maybe I didn't look hard enough, and it was raining too hard to consult my guide, however the absence of clear signage on the Grantham side is a disincentive for visitors to even embark on the towpath walk.

I had a similar experience at the other end at Gamston where the canal dives under the Lings Bar Road and where there is a set of steps which take you to the edge of the road, at the bottom of which is a highly informative sign telling you all about the canal but not about how to follow it into Nottingham without risking your neck. Again, I stood beside the crash barrier and watched quite heavy traffic with dismay, took a deep breath, chose my moment and played chicken. This is truly awful and being a pedestrian, I feel discouraged from tackling the towpath in any way other than by starting from a convenient point arrived at by car. Not only is there a need to give adequate signage but also a safe way of crossing the road either by tunnel or footbridge. Alternatively a wise precaution might be to post a disclaimer.<sup>1</sup>

At present there are signs along the canal put in place by the Canal Trust; they do a good job and the indication of a position on a map is important, but they are now looking battered and the plastic is beginning to break down. Once past Gamston other problems arise which need cunning to overcome; there are a number of what must have been informative signs, now vandalised to a state of illegibility.

My general feeling is that signs and information boards should serve a clear purpose and not seek to be a substitute for natural curiosity. Whilst it is indisputable that precise directions and indicators of access points are necessary the process of informing the public about the particularity of place has to be carefully considered; many information boards rather than nourishing curiosity pre-empt it. It can be disappointing to discover that from where you are standing you could see Yellow Flag Iris, Purple Vetch, watch Watervole and hear Reed Warblers, but it just happens to be the wrong time and all you see is absence, and all you feel is your own inadequacy at not being sufficiently perceptive. Consideration could be given to what is out of

1. This problem could be overcome if the canal were to eventually be diverted to meet the Trent.  
See Section 1. 'Artists commissions', Trent Link. P5

# The Twenty Mile Pound

sight, around the corner, in a different time, in the fog, the sun and the driving rain. The canal is a continuous meandering line, it joins places together, it keeps levels, this is all information which does not necessarily have to be spelled out for it is part of the poetry of place. A good example is Vimy Ridge Farm; the poignancy of the noticeboard is undeniable, however to me,



*Approaching Vimy Ridge Farm*

what is most compelling is the translation of 184 men of the 9th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters killed on the Somme, into an avenue of poplar trees. Each tree from that time has grown and matured in its own fashion, just as those boys would have done if they only had the chance.<sup>2</sup>

The germ of an idea is often enough; sufficient to engage the viewer in an independent act of contemplation, it is important not to prescribe a very particular reaction to place and consequently disempower the

viewer through our own overbearing enthusiasm. This issue could develop an interesting if not radical strategy for information boards and be a subject of study for an artist or designer in residence along the canal. As a part of this I can envisage some lively input from local communities. It could be taken as fundamental that information is not the voice of authority, but allows experience somehow to remain in the first person.

Five particular sites have been identified in the strategy as suitable for signage above a general need to improve low-key indicators to access points along the canal. As I have mentioned, I would add two more to these; at the Grantham side of the A1 and at the Lings Bar Road. All of these relate to the use of the towpath as opposed to the use of the water. Three gateway features have been identified in Nottingham: Trent Lock is where the canal meets the river and is the first access point for pedestrians to the original canal and will remain so whatever the likelihood of the working waterway eventually reaching the river further north. In fact it is important that there continues to be a well managed access to the canal within easy walking distance of the city centre. A gateway here needs to perform a dual function of drawing people from the riverbank on to the canal path, and of celebrating the start of the canal walk. This is only a short taste of the towpath, consequently a subsidiary gateway has been identified where it ends and before the canal dips below a busy road junction. These two gateways are complementary, the first a major one and the second to lead the public to the Trent via the towpath and to indicate that the canal path does in fact continue once the road junction has been negotiated. Both should be considered as one commission and as indicated in the action plan, partnerships sought from the Environment Agency and from Nottingham Forest Football club, both of which flank the canal at this point.

2. In 1981 the artist Susan Hiller made a work called 'Monument' which used as its starting point commemorative plaques in Postmans Park, St Paul's, London to anonymous individuals who lost their lives performing heroic acts. This work aroused for me a similar sense of poignancy. See also appendix 1. Reflections P35. Vimy Ridge Farm.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

Beside Safeways superstore at Gamston, there is a footbridge access from a local housing estate. This has been indicated as a suitable location for a gateway which if it happens should be called 'The Safeways Gateway' and a partnership correspondingly sought. In the event of the canal being restored to navigation via this route the bridge would have to be changed to accommodate boat traffic, making this a much more impressive site. Safeways does very little to acknowledge the presence of a very attractive waterway and my inclination is to forget the gateway and to consider an open landscaped relationship with the canal and therefore the creation of a more pleasant public space, which of course should only be good for business. This could be the subject of a partnership with the store and the commissioning of an artist or landscape architect.

Safeways has gone to lengths to give a good social feel to its interior and I suggest that a permanent canal information board be maintained in the coffee shop area.

The canal stops rather abruptly at the Lings Bar Road creating the question of 'where do we go from here?' Just as at the other side, this can only be answered by creating a suitable pedestrian link, once this has been carried out suitable signage can be devised.

At Gamston Bridge there is at present a need to improve access down to the canal by crossing one half of a dual carriageway. Rather than a gateway what seems to be suitable here is a distinctive 'beacon' form which can be spotted easily at crossing and access points. I suggest for the sake of homogeneity that a single partnership between an artist/craftsman and designer is made responsible for all signage and basic information points along the canal and that Gamston Bridge be a part of the brief.

There are discussions afoot to raise one half of the dual carriageway to be level with the old canal bridge, were this to happen, the towpath would become continuous, obviating the need for extra signage. This is more likely acted upon were the preferred solution for a link to the Trent to be under Gamston Bridge and a remodelled Lings Bar Road.

It has appeared in British Waterways Grantham Canal Strategy action plan that a gateway on the theme of transition between rural and urban landscape would be desirable at Grantham where the canal meets the A1. I am not sure where this could be under the present configuration of the path departing from the canal to pass under the A1 via the A607. This seems rather anti climactic and inappropriate until there is a clear access and a clear starting point or terminus to celebrate. My inclination is to hold fire on this one until it is resolved and in the meantime use the agreed style of signage arrived at through the commissioning process.

Aside from specific gateway purposes, signage will have a range of functions; one of which is basic waymarking for which there is an obvious need to arrive at a single easily identifiable logo to be used as a 'blaze', just as the acorn symbol is used by the National Trust along its trails. Once familiar this is sufficient, but it does need careful thought in order not to be banal. I wonder if there is an heraldic device or symbol associated with the original canal company?

There will be a need for specific information giving locations and distances, and another will be to locate the traveller upon the map; this is already the form of the Canal Trust's signs which could be reinterpreted. I am interested in ways in which we conceptualise our place in the landscape; we know that the journey is a meander dictated by topography where in fact our experience of it is as a line. Perhaps some thought may be given to these two ways of imagining one's place in the landscape, whilst the map is important a simple position on a line could become as ubiquitous as it is economic.<sup>3</sup>

3. It could be argued that the 'lollipop' distance markers already serve this purpose.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

---

For the sake of clarity the matter of signage with the possible exception of some specific gateway features should be a single design project which absorbs all of the variations. It should be the product of a commissioned team working closely with the tourism group and the canal partnership.<sup>4</sup>

## Seating:

There are two kinds of seating along the way, one is a perch, a simple bench to take the weight off your feet and another is a clear invitation to linger. The current use of a simple bolt together timber bench seems quite adequate for its function and difficult to improve upon. However, where there are rest and linger points with picnic tables; apart from one example where reconstituted plastic has been used instead of timber, they have rapidly deteriorated, aided along the way unfortunately by human interference.

My inclinations are that seating be located solely where it is expected people will wish to linger and that design solutions should be as much as possible vandal resistant. For the sake of homogeneity and unless there are reasons to the contrary, I recommend that a design competition is held for a standard bench with or without table where different configurations of one to the other are considered. The familiar relationship between seat and table is sensible, however, having been well and truly drenched along the way and only being able to find shelter under bridges, I can say with feeling that thought be given to seating which incorporates shelter. I don't know whether a shelter which neither encourages vandalism, nor becomes an urinal is an insoluble problem, it implies something which is open but not too exposed, fits into the environment and is robust. Of course there need not be a limitation upon materials and there are all kinds of vernacular which could be referred to including screens and hides for birdwatching, or as in Brancusi's work, sculpture which may be sat down to. For a multiple design however I think that a hot dipped steel structure that can be transported and assembled on site would be most practical.

The decision making and siting I see as a collaboration with the community through which the canal passes.<sup>5</sup> I am seeking ways in which local communities along the canal may be encouraged to take more initiatives in their section, bidding for seating and deciding what form this could take could be one of them.

Whilst I am aware that there is a basic budget available, additional funding could be sought via the Countryside Agency's Local Heritage Initiative, from local businesses and other sources such as fund raising events, subscriptions, memorials and bequests.

4. See also appendix 1. Reflections. P36. 'Signs'

5. See Section 5 'A clear community programme'. P16

# The Twenty Mile Pound

## 4. *An ongoing artist in residence programme*

This whole project promises to carry on for several years and fresh challenges will always arise. As the rejuvenated canal takes shape it is sure to take on an identity which to an extent has been unforeseen and with this in mind I have considered my own function to transcend that of identifying specific opportunities, to devising strategies that keep pace with the progress of the restoration and are able to respond to opportunities as they come up. It excites me that this is a conversation into which art is being invited, and towards that end I am suggesting an ongoing series of artist in residence projects to be carried out along the canal.

A first consideration has to be accommodation, and although long term I shall suggest setting up a resource centre, an immediate and appropriate solution has arisen of putting a narrowboat anywhere upon the navigable sections of the canal and inviting the artist to live and work on it. This is a surprisingly practical idea and could be realised in the very near future; British Waterways are keen, they would probably be able to identify a hull to be fitted out and they have the capability to transport it and crane it into the water. On the matter of services, there are two British Waterways depots along the canal, one of which is in a navigable section, the other not and there are other points where services such as water and pump out could be made available. This could be a unique experiment in putting artists directly into the situation they are being invited to explore, they would be close to the ecology, the seasonal change and the life of the place and in the eyes of the visiting public and local community it would reinforce the impression that things are happening. It is sure to attract publicity and be an extra incentive to join those sections which are in water but not navigable as yet; indeed it may prompt a particular strategy for action in this respect.<sup>1</sup>

My thoughts upon the nature of a series of residencies reflect the variety of possibilities likely to come out of the restoration. My priority is that it may be used as a means of establishing and sustaining a discourse; one that responds to the conditions of the project, be they prompted by the ecology for example or the ongoing work. In the matter of commissions along the canal I prefer to let these arise as they are seen to be necessary and appropriate.

Fellowships could be used to target particular issues and projects such as what will be quite extensive engineering and landscape work around the dry section of Cropwell Bishop to Cotgrave.<sup>2</sup> I see this happening on two levels, one to become involved in the landscaping and engineering works, and another to kick start the creation of an archive.

It is going to be of the utmost importance to engage the enthusiasm of the community through which the canal threads; apart from where it leaves Nottingham and enters Grantham this is predominantly rural, quite likely to be well off and possibly a challenge to pull into the project in a whole hearted way. I have had some thoughts which I will explore later in more detail,<sup>3</sup> however I see the artist in residence as a potential device for getting a project going and subsequently keeping it on target. How this could be carried out is through a fee for an artist to be present over a specified time and then a retainer to keep contact over a further period. The project I have in mind is the production of a guide book to the canal and its environs that comes from the community living along it.

1. I am aware that the Grantham Canal Restoration Society has been pro-active in the strategy for returning the canal to navigability and trust that they would continue to be considered partners in a developing plan.

2. See Section 2. 'Collaborations and commissions directly the result of restoration activity'. P8

3. See Section 5. 'A clear community programme'. P16

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

By 'artist in residence' I should clarify that I am not thinking exclusively of visual artists and regard there to be equal scope for musicians, writers and performers, for the intention is to ensure that there is a continuity of discussion over the role that art in its widest sense may have in the regeneration of the canal and by extension into the wider issue of how we experience our landscape. This I see as fundamental to a need for culture to constructively become involved in the contemporary environmental debate. It is demeaning as an artist to be seen as somebody who decorates or improves what is already 'fait-accompli', this project gives a tremendous opportunity to explore ways in which the perception and experience of a real situation may be affected through art.

Concerning more practical matters: I have been considering how it would be possible to provide a context for a residency programme and a continuity for what it may generate and it occurred to me that this is an opportunity to draw the School of Art and Design at Nottingham Trent University in as a partner or other regional universities. In the first instance I imagine that as an institution it represents a body of knowledge and expertise and might be willing to be involved in the process of identifying and interviewing suitable candidates for the residency programme. I am certain that the chance for the staff to be involved in a project of this scale within the region would be mutually beneficial. A school of art in any regional city tends to act as a focus for the professional visual arts community and a source for much of its cultural life, obviously this is a valuable resource for the canal partnership as well as the artist in residence to tap into. Reciprocally my suggestion is that the university be drawn into a programme where its function would not involve commitment of funds and where there are positive implications for the school of arts research profile as well as a potential to enrich the academic programme.

Considering the experience, enthusiasm and dedication of the staff at Nottingham Trent as practising artists as well as academics, a relationship such as I am suggesting is extremely likely to grow organically as potential is recognised. This could form the basis of cross-disciplinary research projects leading to MA, MPhil or PhD attracting funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Board. I imagine some very specific topics which would entail collaborations between disciplines such as Fine Art and Environmental Science to explore such issues as: landscape and regeneration, art and ecologically sensitive environments or the reconfiguration of landscape in relation to contemporary usage. This could have the effect of enhancing research and discussion over art and the environment and inform commissioning strategies for the future.

The artist in residence programme should in the first instance seek funding from the Regional Arts Lottery Programme with a view to supplementing this through private sponsorship with the help and advice of 'Art and Business', 'New Partners' scheme. It would be facilitated wherever possible by British Waterways, although both finding and fitting out a boat might need further support from a sponsor possibly with interests in a marine environment, such as a boat hire company, which could well benefit in future from the opening up of the canal. It is advantageous to bring the canal community into this discussion in the form of the Grantham Canal Restoration Society and the Grantham Canal Navigation Association which have grass-roots connections with the boat world in the region.



# The Twenty Mile Pound

## 5. A clear community programme

As I have indicated, at the outset there will be a close correspondence between the community programme and the artist in residency initiative, however it will in its sustained form be independent; ultimately it has to come from and serve those who actually live there, whose perceptions will be significantly different from those of a professional who inevitably will import a point of view or assumption, if only to use it as a point of departure.

I am reluctant to graft projects into the social web around the canal; they wouldn't work and may be resented as a waste of time and money. The challenge is to set up initiatives persuasive enough to take root and become possessed by the community. Art is purely a means by which this can be accomplished, rather than an end in itself. Art has an important role which is to help get the community behind the canal restoration where for the greater part of their lives it has been little more than an albeit attractive, but moribund, weedy waterway. Changing perception and generating enthusiasm become key aims. I daresay that apart from dog walking and jogging potential, the canal has featured very little in many people's lives once it has ceased to be a base for childhood play. The canal has not had an impact upon its community for a great many years but as can be seen at Hickling Basin, open it up, maintain it and it rapidly becomes a roaring success. Water is a magnet, people want to visit it, sit by it, feed the ducks and given the chance, get afloat on it.

Recently I have been thinking about how the canal threads its way through different communities territory and Bruce Chatwin's 'Songlines'<sup>1</sup> came to mind. 'Songlines' was written about the aborigine relationship with landscape; it is a story, but its enchantment lies in the concept of the land being a song and that each individual by birth inherits a part of that song. By association I can see a similarity between the canal as a single linear entity and the communities whose parishes it passes through, each possesses a part of the song. Within each parish there are families and social groups, all with their own collective memory, for whom certain places have a redolence. My desire is to access the consciousness of how the canal is a part of a sense of place, and it is this note of possession that I feel it is important to affirm.

An organisation I have had some collaboration with and for whom I have tremendous admiration is Common Ground; their aim of engendering an awareness of the environment through a deeper understanding of one's immediate environment has been hugely successful. Their most well known outcome perhaps is the parish map initiative which is continuing to be taken up by more and more communities around the country.<sup>2</sup> Mention the word environment, and most people's eyes glaze over, it is abstract and most definitely not where you happen to live. The uniqueness of Common Ground's practice is in the ability to inculcate a sense of continuity, and awareness of our place as a part of the whole.

I have mentioned the possibility of an artist-initiated community guide book very much on an 'in my backyard' principle. This could be organised in a linear fashion from parish to parish even to the extent of including anomalies like the meander the canal takes from Hickling Parish to Kinoulton, back to Hickling and into Kinoulton again. It would be an opportunity to source oral histories and anecdotes, include projects set in schools, reflect perceptions of wildlife, fishing and of course people's working lives.

1. Bibliography. Bruce Chatwin, *Songlines*. Vintage Press.

2. Parish Maps was an invitation to communities to produce a map to include what they considered vital about their own parish. Made in all kinds of media including needlepoint, and all scales.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

Most communities have art clubs and many have photography clubs which seek out what is particular to their area to turn into pictures. This is one source of imagery for a guide book and could become the basis for a regional competition with an associated exhibition.

The guide book is an opportunity for a community to tell the visitor about its own place, in fact to sing its own song. An artist in residence should have a function additional to that of exploring communities, gathering material and giving consideration to the integrity of a publication. This is to lace it with his or her own perceptions and provide a foil. The residency<sup>3</sup> could be for an artist interested in archival work or in an involvement in community initiatives, it could be a writer, a photographer, in fact in terms of specific disciplines it would be very open. This project in particular would benefit from a collaboration with Nottingham Trent University in drawing up a shortlist.

The entire renovation programme has been carrying on since the 1970s and although it is now moving faster, completion is still a long way off. Bearing this in mind it makes sense that the community living along the canal, as well as those organisations specifically involved in the work are best placed to create an archive of the changes and also of life along the canal. This could be artist led but would have to rely ultimately upon some form of co-ordination reliably in place; I shall continue to discuss the need for project management later in this document. The archive exercise<sup>4</sup> could be seen as a latter day 'mass observation' where the act of recording daily life also incorporates the changes happening around it. Ultimately an archive has to be housed and there are various possibilities; British Waterways may have reflected on this. I strongly advocate the eventual acquisition of a building to become a canal resource centre however in the meantime the Boots Library at Nottingham Trent University might be willing to house it.

A few years ago I was invited to exhibit two large drawings of the Suffolk Coast which, among other things, showed how the area had changed over a century. The occasion was to mark the outcome of a five year project instigated by the Countryside Agency and the planning department of Suffolk Coastal District Council and carried out by the region's Women's Institute Federation to record landscape change on a local basis. What came out of this was a totally engaging but rigorously conceived exhibition, which recorded in exhaustive detail changes in agricultural practice and corresponding effects upon trees, hedgerows, the wellbeing of the landscape. There was a real scientific intent to this exercise and it is a credit to the organisers' perspicacity that they realised that there are means by which it could be carried out thoroughly on a local level, and also that it would nurture a sensitivity to changes in the landscape and a methodology for assessing them which may not have been hitherto realised by the participants.

This is a strategy by which the changes along the canal may be recorded in such a way as to produce specific data to form a reliable archive at the same time as reinforcing a sense within the community that it is their landscape. It would surprise me if an enterprise of this type doesn't attract the interest of the Countryside Agency, perhaps under the auspices of the Local Heritage Initiative, could well receive support from Local Authorities and from British Waterways.

3. See Section 4. 'An ongoing artist in residence scheme'. P14

4. See Section 2. 'Collaborations and commissions directly the result of restoration activity' under Cotgrave and Colston Bassett. P8

# The Twenty Mile Pound

The canal passes through sixteen parishes between Nottingham and Grantham, I wonder whether there is an opportunity to foster a sense of participation and ownership on the part of each community for its own section. A well organised 'Tidy Canal' project where incentives given to care for and enhance the canal on a parish by parish basis may nourish a sense of healthy rivalry. This could be a competition for active communities to gain support for further improvements to carry out, which may be anything from landscaping and planting areas where there is greater public access to establishing seating, benches and shelter. Initially I had considered a major supermarket chain to be a most apt sponsor, since the final resting place for supermarket trolleys, poking above the surface of the nearest canal, is an all too familiar sight. Perhaps they are too hard nosed to become involved in a sustained way, however it will be necessary to identify a suitable regional corporate partner to sponsor a competition, and to commission a trophy to be awarded annually. The trophy could be a plaque designed by an artist to be displayed prominently, affixed to a bridge if permitted or other suitable structure along the stretch of canal of a particular year's winning community. The plaque should bear an image and here my thoughts echo those I had relating to the need for a logo for waymarking and the possibility of a heraldic device already in existence. What must be avoided is the type of cliché which is ubiquitous for waterside developments around the country, which would be counterproductive and tend to undermine the intention to establish a particular public perception of the canal.<sup>5</sup>

On a local level and for identified community based projects, sponsorship could be sought from garden centres and local business and I suggest that a great deal of help is more likely to be forthcoming were it in kind, such as planting and expertise, or earthmoving and construction than as cash.

Although there has been an allowance made for seating and benches<sup>6</sup> it makes sense for the decision making to be devolved to the community along whose section of canal they would be located. I have already discussed commissioning a range of designs to give a sense of homogeneity to the canal, my suggestion is that communities be invited to bid for them and that decisions be made on the basis of how well considered their overall scheme may be. The guiding principle is that if something is obviously cared about, it is less likely to be trashed. In order for this to work the local community has to leave its 'footprint' so that the visitor is not left with the impression that a well cared for environment is merely the product of a well meaning but ultimately anonymous and bureaucratic national agency. It is difficult to strike a balance between embracing the particular or idiosyncratic and the need for an homogeneous linear environment, intimacy is a characteristic of the English landscape, the aim should be to foster this whilst avoiding an impression of exclusiveness. If as a strategy this takes off then I am quite sure that a vernacular particular to the Grantham Canal will arise out of its own accord for to engender an albeit low key competitive atmosphere will be to establish criteria for distinctness and compatability.

5. This plaque would have to be a multiple and therefore cast, bronze would be acceptable; a recycled glass form would lend itself to being incorporated into the fabric of a wall or bridge as a brick, or laid as a slab on the towpath. It also brings the potential to use colour. Free Form Arts Ltd. in London run a green bottle unit making recycled glass forms for architectural applications.

6. See section 3. 'Commissioned seating and signage'. P10

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## *6. The need for project management*

The question keeps on coming up in my mind 'but who is going to be responsible for making sure this happens?' From a starting point of believing that I was suggesting a straightforward structure that would cascade from a single strategy, I have arrived at a point where the diagram is in reality quite different, it would be a rich and organic interpenetration of concerns which will need a referee. As it stands, from within the partnership there would have to be a means by which an artist in residence programme is managed and decisions made as to how it is to be oriented, a community programme kept on track including discussion over who is to bear responsibility for a 'Tidy Canal' project, an archive to be overseen, signage has to be planned and administered and major commissions agreed upon and organised as the need arises. There are many more tasks which will arise and which point to the need to establish a distinct post. As the project develops and if it is agreed that eventually a permanent resource centre to incorporate exhibition venue and archive base be established, a full time curator/administrator should be sought.

I am aware that British Waterways are in receipt of funds for project management but very much doubt that what I am suggesting would be seen as a part of this, however, it is worth mentioning. There is once more a need to identify a major corporate partner to which end the help of Art and Business should be sought, and also, if this has not already happened, members of the partnership should consider attending the Sponsorship Training Workshops offered by Art and Business.

## *7. The creation of a canal resource centre*

It is important to raise public awareness of the restoration of the Grantham Canal in order to encourage both interest and investment. Although this will happen gradually as it improves section by section, there is an immediate need to give the canal an identity and capture the imagination of the public. A major part of this will be the establishing of a visitors centre which is likely to be a long term aim rather than short term solution. In the meantime an intriguing proposal which came up in conversation, and is both do-able and sensible, is to create a floating visitors resource. Just as in my proposal for the artist in residence, a boat could be craned into the water at any point along the navigable sections of canal, this would be a customised narrowboat which would serve the purpose of informing the public about the canal, the progress of the restoration, fresh initiatives happening along the canal and obviously any opportunities to become involved. There is a real possibility of the boat being manned by the Grantham Canal Restoration Society and I am sure that British Waterways would be able to devote sufficient resources and logistical support to ensure that it happens. This would certainly be a tremendous publicity coup; likely to attract the attention of the media and help dispel disbelief that the canal will ever be navigable.

It occurred to me that those parts of the canal open for navigation could also be open for horse navigation, this would most emphatically reinforce the impression that things are happening down on the canal. At the risk of ruffling the feathers of the angling community this would be a real attraction at Cotgrave and perhaps an additional incentive to get rid of the concrete bridge in the middle of the Country Park to make the whole of that section usable. The same applies to Woolsthorpe and Hickling, both highly visited 'honey pot' sites.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

I understand that the Duke of Rutland is interested in integrating trips on the canal with visits to Belvoir Castle and perhaps this comes within his purview. A horse drawn narrowboat is quiet, admirably suited to being a mobile vantage point for viewing wildlife and has virtually no impact upon the environmentally sensitive areas through which it would pass. This is worthwhile considering especially in the interim period whilst the canal is in effect a series of long pools not connected to the National Network and therefore unviable for visitors with powerboats in any appreciable number. Coincidentally this gives a link with the equestrian community, where although we are not exactly talking bloodstock, horses have to be fed, watered, housed, cared for and trained. The breed of horse used along the canal was less likely to be of the Shire Horse type than a smaller cob; more able to negotiate the narrow tow paths as they pass under bridges and having tremendous staying power and stamina. I wonder whether by establishing something in common in terms of language there may ensue a more sympathetic and harmonious conversation with the equestrian community.

Ultimately a boat can only satisfy limited needs so far as a resource centre is concerned, and the long term aim should be to establish a centre at a suitable location along the canal with the narrowboat operating as a vital outreach, field study and workshop facility. If a canal visitors centre was considered desirable, it must be determined early:

- Where it should be sited.
- What it should accomplish.
- How ambitious this should be.

Central to these questions is the matter of funding and it has to be understood that opportunism will play a large part in this; if either a development appeared in Grantham or the canal was carried through to Holme Pierrepont it is feasible that a visitors centre could be a part of the negotiated agreement with a developer. If I were to have a free hand I would locate a centre somewhere along the length of the canal and preferably not at either extremity. The two most obvious candidates are the 19th century warehouse buildings and redundant windmill at Harby, a grade II listed site at present used for packaging bulk agricultural chemical, the other is a small warehouse building at Hickling Basin. Very speculatively I would add to these; a building within the restored and developed group of 19th century industrial buildings beside the canal at Cropwell Bishop, and a new building as a part of Cotgrave Country Park.

## **Harby**

To me, the warehouses at Harby seem to be most appropriate; they are at present badly run down and will need substantial investment, which I suspect the current users would be reluctant to find. The site is roughly equidistant from Nottingham and Grantham, the canal is in water and would be an eminently suitable stretch to link up to the two navigable sections from Hickling and from Woolsthorpe. It is in very rich countryside right on the edge of an SSSI running from Harby to Redmile, in fact it is right in the middle of what could be called quintessential Grantham Canal rural landscape.

Primarily the function of a centre is to inform visitors about the canal. This would be a permanent resource housing the canal archive and be a centre for activities upon the canal including getting out on the water. The centre would be an exhibition venue and serve as a base where work arising from the artist in residency is shown, a focus for the residency and where proposals for new works along the canal may be viewed.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

A recurrent theme of my conversations with Alan Powell of British Waterways has been the conundrum of what is special about this very ordinary waterway; it doesn't pass through dramatic landscape, it does not have any outstanding engineering features, even its function when constructed was modest, it is in fact unassuming, tranquil and very English.

The landscape the canal passes through is typically English, perhaps more than we would care to acknowledge: it is flanked by medieval pasture, by marsh, woodland and also by intensive, highly industrialised, arable farmland. It emerges from an area which although not particularly degraded, could not be much more urban; from between Nottingham Forest Football Ground and the Environment Agency Building, it passes the neat backs of terraced house gardens, through modern housing estates to where town negotiates country with an airfield and a golf club. It forms the focus of a regenerated coalfield and passes through gypsum digging. When it reaches Grantham, quite typically, it has to duck under a major road complex before carrying on to leaven what would otherwise be a pretty dismal edge of town council estate, to fizzle out in a scrapyards.



*Harby Warehouse*

This sounds all quite unremarkable except in many respects it is an experience which is very familiar whatever part of the country we come from. It is the result of many conflicting demands made within a confined landscape over a long period of time, and as such is strangely organic.

What is vital about the canal corridor is the same as for a great many of our national pathways, it is a linear habitat, a 'green corridor'. Where once canals were seen as industrial intrusions into rural landscapes, the outgrowth of an urban aesthetic, the position now has inverted; they have become protected and tranquil routes through landscapes farmed in an increasingly aggressive and industrialised manner where incursion by any wanderer is normally unwelcome if not discouraged.

In East Anglia where I live, there is not much pleasure to be derived from wandering over intensively cropped farmland; there is a distinct absence of wildlife and horrific practices such as using sulphuric acid as a defoliant on potato plants become the norm. The absence of hedges kicks up dust storms and drifts on dry windy days, which run off to become slurry, clogging streams and making a slimy hazard of roads when wet. I am not so naïve as to be unaware of the constraints under which farmers have to operate these days but this does make our green pathways a sheer delight in ways which we could never have predicted. At one time they were our access to the countryside and now they have a significance all of their own.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

When I was young and growing up in rural Somerset I became accustomed to never crossing the centre of a field, not out of respect for a crop or to avoid treading down the grass but out of a fear of being shouted at, whether or not I was up to mischief I was and still am furtive; I used the hedgerow as a shelter against which my presence would not be so obvious, and into which I could dive if the farmer appeared. The instinct that we don't have the right to walk through our own countryside is I fear something with which we have all been indoctrinated, we are ill at ease and do not quite know how to behave. Our current attitude to landscape must be at least as old as enclosures and could well correspond to the enforced removal of an agrarian population to new industrial centres. It relates to when the vast majority became disenfranchised from the land, thenceforth to enjoy it only as a view and not to participate in. I wonder whether it is no small coincidence that the English Romantic Landscape tradition in painting and landscape design stems from this time?

These are the traditions we have inherited and are very poor preparation indeed for the current challenge for us to become more knowingly involved in our environment, where the initiatives we are asked to follow are those set by new arbiters of value in landscape who use the arcane language of conservation to control our access, which of course is only correct but does very little to inspire a communal sense of responsibility.

This is not a digression for I am proposing something intrinsically related to the canal, its ecological integrity, the quintessentially typical English rural landscape that it passes through and to the critical need for our society to rethink its relationship with the land. My proposal is that a canal resource centre is also a centre for understanding landscape and the reconsideration of how we interact with it. There are of course visitors centres related to particular landscapes around the country, especially those which are protected, but none, so far as I know, dedicated to how we relate to what we are all so familiar with, that quintessential English landscape.<sup>1</sup> The canal is an artery which runs through this; it is the point of departure on a journey into how we view and experience our own land. As a study centre this would be to take a local feature as the starting point for something of national significance where its sheer normality is its strength.

Where does art come into this? We have to remind ourselves that it was artists who gave visual form to a socio-political effect in the 18th and 19th centuries, they were the ones who normalised and packaged an attitude to landscape. Now those attitudes are changing and I believe that artists should be at the core of the discussion. Not that a canal centre should be an arts centre but that it should seek to develop an ongoing conversation which includes art alongside agriculture, environmental science, protection of habitat and access for the public.

I am putting this idea forward for discussion, however I have talked it over with several people including Sue Clifford, the director of Common Ground who at present is working on a publication to be called 'England in Particular' which will explore what gives England and its landscape a particular quality and will feature projects undertaken by Common Ground to help sharpen people's awareness of their sense of place. She expressed extreme interest and that we should keep in close contact on this project and should it materialise it could feature in the forthcoming book. East Midlands Development Agency responded positively seeing in it an opportunity to transcend what would otherwise be a thoroughly worthwhile but ultimately regional project.

1. Mention should be made of the Landscape Foundation, and its mission to promote debate over contemporary perceptions of landscape.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Holme Pierrepont

The other potential sites for a visitor centre previously identified also have their merits: In conjunction with a new Trent Link for the canal via Holme Pierrepont, National Watersports Centre; given the proposed size and scope of a development this would certainly be viable and gain by association with a major national institution. By its location it would celebrate the addition of the Grantham Canal to the national network and it could be a prestigious new building, the result of a major architectural competition.

Were a visitors centre to be at Holme Pierrepont, the location would largely determine its content; to me the disadvantages lie fundamentally in it not sitting well with the spin I have given to the idea; it is a predominantly rural canal and the National Watersports Centre is more closely associated with the city. On the other hand it would put the canal on the map and encourage more people from other urban centres to visit and walk it.

## Grantham

In Grantham there are two possible locations, the first by a reconstructed canal basin, the focus for a major redevelopment at the light industrial site in the Earlesfield area. It does make sense to be located at the terminus and to be associated with a sense of arrival, but I do have reservations similar to those I have over Holme Pierrepont.

In the event of there being a business park to the west of the A1 at Grantham, a canal visitors facility has already been earmarked as a focal point for a development to include a marina and marine maintenance service area. As mentioned, this is very well placed to draw the attention of travellers stopping off from the A1 and could be considered a part of the negotiated agreement with a developer.

## Cotgrave

A new building at Cotgrave is extremely speculative on my part; the area is already seen as a public landscape amenity, it is well visited and the criteria of regeneration provides a focus for the kind of enterprise I have outlined. The area has been in receipt of single regeneration funding, my query would be whether it would now qualify for Objective II funding for a project of this nature.



*Dry Canal Bed & Industrial Buildings, Cropwell Bishop*

## Cropwell Bishop

I do not know anything about the use or ownership of the buildings at Cropwell Bishop except that they are being consolidated as a small trading estate, and that maybe a waterfront building would be appropriate for the purposes I propose. It is an accessible site and has considerable landscape interest being within an area which has undergone rehabilitation after the closure of the extensive gypsum diggings and through the return of water to the canal after having been dry for the best part of forty years.



# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Hickling

At Hickling Basin there is a small warehouse building which in my opinion should be pressed into use to serve the restored waterway. Whether in its present form it is large enough to serve the purposes I have discussed, I very much doubt, but considering the popularity of the basin, it is a waste not to take advantage of it and were the basin to be used once again by canal traffic it would be an appropriate service point. This building is at present lying idle and would benefit the village community, the waterway and visitors were it to become a visitors resource of some description.



*Warehouse, Hickling Basin*

It sits on its own land and if the will were there could be sympathetically restored and extended to become a full scale resource, enhancing the potential of the basin, which is at present the only one along the canal of any size.

The kind of centre I am advocating could be seen as a distraction from the main business which is to get the canal back into working order; bricks and mortar can become an end in itself and absorb energy which could be better placed. However I hope that I have argued convincingly that a study centre is integral to the perception of the canal as a whole.

Were this to be acted upon careful consideration needs to be given to implementation. The canal partnership is composed of two boroughs and a district council, three county councils and British Waterways, although a building would be within one local authority's area it is vital that it reflects the whole partnership and is separated in administration from the canal restoration effort. The simplest solution is for the partnership to form a company, the express purpose of which would be to locate a site, explore funding, oversee planning and construction through to eventual staffing and programming. Whilst the board would have partnership members as its core this presents a fine opportunity to pull influential and interested individuals from the region into the project. Although a visitor centre may be considered a long term aim, if there is an agreement that its presence will be fundamental to a public perception of the canal and how it is to be promoted, it should be under immediate discussion to ensure that the intention is that it will happen and that the purpose it serves is clear and understood. This is an ambitious addition to a project which is already extremely challenging but given the potential I have described it could attract funding and interest additional to the immediate potential in restoring the canal and linking it to the national network.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## *8. Summary*

Where do we start? This has to be with the artist in residence; support needs to be sought through East Midlands Arts and serious consideration given to identifying a major corporate sponsor,<sup>1</sup> if it is deemed appropriate Nottingham Trent University must be brought into the discussion at an early stage and crucially, it must be confirmed with British Waterways that they can support the scheme by supplying a base and a live-work facility aboard a narrowboat.

Once all of this is in place we can consider the role the residency is expected to perform, whether for example there will be the need to address specific tasks or not; I have already indicated that an artist in residence could be a means to focus upon issues like signage, an archive, a community publication; however it is important to understand that where there is the likelihood of a distinct outcome from an artist's research, this would have to be treated separately and funds targetted on a project by project basis.

I have identified a number of possibilities for major commissioning initiatives, and since they are dependent upon circumstances relating to the overall restoration of the canal, suffice it to say for now that the principles I have outlined for the inclusion of art as a part of all major works should be honoured and acted upon where appropriate.

Aside from this I trust I have described a rich symbiosis, where art and artists are woven inextricably into the fabric of the canal and its immediate community. It is fundamental that equal attention be given to progressing each part and that regard is paid to the intended outcome in the planning and fund seeking stages.

There is a risk that whatever is agreed upon together will happen in an ad hoc manner; given the scattered nature of the partnership I strongly urge that an effective forum is established to ensure the integrity of the strategy as it crosses administrative boundaries.

1. Throughout this document, I have recommended for different aspects of the whole strategy, the need to establish corporate partnerships. These could be relationships set up project by project or the expression of an over-arching interest from a single corporation. More than once I have suggested consulting Art and Business, who obviously should be invited into the whole discussion at an early stage, rather than contacted piecemeal as could be construed from my recurrent references to them.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## *9. Conclusion*

Along its length the Grantham Canal is cherished, ignored and abused by turn, the task is for it to be recognised as a dynamic part of the lives and landscapes through which it passes. Where it manages this, it does so with unqualified success, my feelings are that art has to try to focus upon the whole canal; that it is a continuum, a story, albeit made up of episodes.

Throughout this analysis I have avoided as much as possible making specific recommendations for artworks along the canal, preferring to concentrate on the principle of a sustainable framework to ensure that art is integral and concurrent to the restoration process, in particular that it can guide a perception of the canal upon a local and national level.

I am proposing that it is fundamental to acknowledge that the canal represents a model for how we understand and access landscape in Britain; because of the intensity of land use the web of green pathways which articulate it are crucial to our ability to negotiate it and also vital as protected linear habitats, ecological envelopes which help restore a balance in relation to an agricultural regime which often appears out of control.

I believe that the contemplative presence of art in situations such as this can guide the visiting public to a deeper understanding of what makes the landscape work and lead it back to a sense of ownership of and responsibility for it. My strategy for siting artworks is that they should arise from a real discourse. To come across well considered work in the right place is to see a signal that it is cared for and not just a token for care.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Appendix 1 - Reflections

### *Sunken Sofa*

It must be an act of blind faith to believe that a sofa may be made to disappear by shoving it into the water of a canal and a huge disappointment that it is neither deep nor mysterious enough to swallow it up; it just lies there, obscene and almost impossible to retrieve. The same fate has overtaken a motorscooter, nose down in the mud, pillion end on the bank, frozen upright in the act of unsuccessfully entering the water, or else the result of a bizarre accident. If I were generous I would say that this landlocked burial at sea is a ritual of severance from objects which have served their purpose and are now defunct. If there were no water available they would be set alight, water and fire, elemental ways of transforming and returning them to the earth.



We could say that this instinct runs strong; recently I had to take leave of a much-mended washing machine with which over the years I had acquired a strong personal relationship. We put it in the back of the pickup, took it to the council dump where there are huge skips, one of which for defunct domestic appliances. The attendant took my washing machine, pushed it over on its side and slid it to the back with a screech of metal on metal. This was upsetting. I

would have been much happier to have put it in a boat, taken it out into the river and shoved it overboard. I wonder what curious mixture of guilt and catharsis I would have experienced?

This is all quite fanciful when the aftermath is a semi-submerged carcass in the water with all of the floatable bits gathering to clog up the culvert. Add a few desultory ducks mooching around in the rain and the whole scene has an air of indescribable wistfulness.



# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Rain

If I had done my homework I might have realised that it was not necessary to scare myself and possibly several drivers by dashing across the A1. This is what I did, and gaining the other side, stumbled down a woody embankment to look for the rest of the canal. Here it is, silent and dripping; self contained, compact, with its very own gravel towpath and signs, giving an



impression of destiny, distinct from the surrounding landscape. This is enhanced by the overarching trees which increase a sense of isolation and reduce the traffic noise to a subdued buzz, where now ambient water sounds: the hiss of rain, plops and drips in the water from the trees, become dominant. Under these conditions, a vague mist hangs over the water, the weed is a shocking green, the leaves of sycamore, plane and chestnut burnished in the rain, it is suddenly exotic, almost Japanese.

The coots thrive on it, black icebreakers in green ice leaving a ragged trail behind, submerging and surfacing, weed draped over their heads, with perfect aplomb.

I am keeping a journal to provide some kind of continuity to my journey, at present it is no more than a terse rain spotted aide memorandum; 'under bridge 66, brickbuilt, very good condition, ditto 67', and so on. The rain on the page blots my words and carries them over when I close the book, to appear as smudged and reversed reflections on the opposite side.

There is nobody around, even where there are pile driving works in progress it is deserted, silent, a lifebelt lies on the path like a forlorn hope. I am happy to have the place to myself, to have nothing to puncture the mood in which I am drifting. Squat down for shelter under Denton Bridge, Denton Feeder comes in over to the east and upon the south bank, it gives no hint of the magnificent reservoir behind the trees where incongruously I thought I saw cormorant drying their wings a few weeks before. Yet here is one diving for fish and coming up, polished jet.



There is a heron on the far bank, he is at home in the rain, it is his element; not a happy looking creature, exuberance and herons do not seem to go together. He hunkers down looking like the components of an umbrella, he is feathered rain.



# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Birdlife

As the rain eases and the sky clears, the canalside becomes a litany of birdsong, a skylark gives the first signal and instantly the whole place bursts into life, a reed warbler whilst keeping well out of sight continually reels in and lets out his line, chaffinch, yellowhammer, great tit and blackbird can be heard in the hedgerow trees whilst sparrows squabble below. Coot bounce their own little sliver of song across the water while moorhens fuss and panic. Fish are jumping,



a pair of great crested grebe saunter past, just out of the picture a flock of canada geese mind their own business and call occasionally to keep order and to complete the picture the odd stroppy swan or two.

Swans flourish here, much more than on tidal water where I live, where the height a nest happens to be above the high water mark, depends completely upon the state of the tide when they start building it. In France they

would represent so many dinners, but here the swan is king and an outrageous bully. Come across a family settled down for a nap on the towpath and you set in motion a well rehearsed manoeuvre; first the cygnets twitter and slither unobtrusively into the water under mother's supervision, who after a backward glance follows them, whilst father, like a drunk in a pub, puffs himself up, arches his neck and lurches over hissing; 'who are you looking at? What's your game? Don't mess with me.' Mother has quit the scene completely during our little confrontation, 'I'm warning you', but the brood is now well out of harm's way and the crisis is over. Father backs off, gives me one baleful look, turns round and sidles off to the gap in the reeds.



# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Strategies

As I approach Woolsthorpe, there are two morose fishermen sunk in that meditative gloom characteristic of fishermen the world over, the first human life I have encountered on the path today, and I suppose they are not pleased at the sprightly crunch of my boots on the gravel as I sense lunch in the offing; all the fish will have retreated to the weed by the far bank at the first tremor of my approach. There is smoke curling from what was once the lock keeper's cottage, and very soon the neat white painted rail of a lock gate breaks the horizon. I am at the top of the Woolsthorpe flight, where there are three locks, completely restored but only after the herculean task of removing a railway embankment had been accomplished by voluntary labour.



These locks are underused, the top chamber even has a vigorous young tree shooting from the timber of its gate. It is vital that some real boating takes place as soon as possible to ensure that the results of all that hard labour do not deteriorate. Once a use of the canal is established it may become easier to identify the most useful order for the continuing restoration to follow. Certainly the viability of the waterway should not in the first instance be conditional upon linking it to the national network; of course this is the ultimate aim, but in the meantime it will be viable in other ways. Another kind of boating can take place and it would be well to take the opportunity to try out the balance between a waterborne use of the canal and the need to protect a wildlife habitat established over years of non-interference.



Downstream from Woolsthorpe, in quick succession there are four ruined locks. Aside from this there are surprisingly few engineering impediments before reaching Plungar; of nine bridges three need replacing and one, Redmile Bridge, needs to have a concrete sill and an errant water pipe removed. If these works were all carried out, about 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles of canal would become navigable to the A1.

Further west, there is the beautifully restored Stathern Bride sitting in glorious isolation in the middle of a mile of potentially navigable canal, in fact between this and Plungar, there are three farm access bridges which could be replaced using the same pattern as those near Hickling, then a further two miles would be made accessible. Renew Plungar Bridge and the whole 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles to Grantham would be open.

This is easy to write but not so easy to accomplish, however, the restoration of the canal so far has been opportunist; a bridge here, a section there through a successful lottery bid, another section from spinoff of a coalmine regeneration area. Soon some thought must be given to joining up restored sections and priorities determined in the context of planned use of the canal, enhanced by increased navigability.

Schemes to capture public attention such as a visitors information facility on a narrowboat, an artist in residency based on the water, a narrowboat trip as part of a visit to Belvoir Castle, or in Cotgrave Country Park can help inform the order in which restoration works are carried out, which in turn may give a sense of focus to what so far, out of necessity, has happened incrementally.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Level

It must be for all of five miles that Belvoir Castle accompanies the walker, glimpsed from the canal as it curves around the scarp upon which it is built. For twenty miles the canal hugs the 45 metre contour and in order to maintain a level, perforce it must wander; for the greater part you are unaware of the great loops the path takes until you find yourself looking at the same landmark again and again, each time from a different angle. The thought of a level maintained in this characteristically rolling landscape is tantalising, equivalent in its own horizontal way to the Roman Roads of which this part of the world has its fair share and which run as straight as an arrow, in spite of the topography.



The control of water to make this happen is deceptively simple; there is something unassuming about the way that locks accomplish their silent task of holding back unimaginable tons. This is all the more difficult to conceive because they are integral to the landscape and are visually homely. The hydraulic potential through a flight of locks such as at Woolsthorpe must be immense, it prompts me to suggest a commissioned work to explore and harness it.

The canal has been kept in water for all of these years to serve as an irrigation facility, without which by now it would be little more than a ditch. Water is still extracted but along the way I have seen relatively few pumps at work. The thought of the canal as a linear reservoir had not occurred to me before and although it is not practical on

this particular canal, a new initiative, 'water transfer', has come about to harness the potential in the huge body of standing water that our national network represents. The canal system across the country is not unlike the arterial system of the body and could be made to divert water across the country as need arises. This brings a dynamic edge to the whole enterprise of canal renewal which is exciting and challenging to our preconceptions.





# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Redmile

The late afternoon light as I approach Redmile makes everything vivid, straight out of the Shell Guides of my childhood; there are tantalising glimpses of the church spire, now off to the left, now dead ahead, to my right is a well-tended hawthorn hedge, I am walking on a cropped grassy path, there is purple vetch on the canal bank and in the water luxurious reed beds where three weeks previously there were spectacular yellow flag iris. Swallows dip to kiss the water's surface and soar away over the ripening cornfield growing almost to the water's edge.

When I reach the Peacock Inn where I am due to stay in Redmile, it is sad to find that it has turned its back on the canal and hidden it behind a hedge at the bottom of the carpark. I walk into the teatime gathering of locals in the bar playing 'bait the barmaid', who, phlegmatic, is holding her corner with a wit evidently born of boredom with a repartee that follows the same pattern every day.

This is an ancient building, much added to, it is fanciful inside and slightly ramshackle. Under the flat roof extension there are pots and pans to catch drips and upstairs a huge damp patch extends from under the carpet. Each bedroom is identified by a trompe l'œil animal disappearing behind a curtain, painted on the door; I have the piglet.

The village, I gather, was used for 'Auf Wiedersehen Pet' as well as for 'Crossroads', which perhaps explains why so much is faux something else. Like a lot of villages, there is a Bakers Lane with no baker, a Post Office Lane with no post office. It is not unusual in new heritage England to celebrate places by what they have just ceased to be. As a nation I don't think we cope with the present very well, it is distasteful so we disguise it with the past.



# The Twenty Mile Pound

## The Whale



A few miles from Hickling Basin I see just what can be accomplished with investment; a series of well designed opening bridges have been installed to give access for farmers to their land, and the canal has been newly cleared of weed. In fact, I come across the British Waterways weed clearing boat, the 'John Nuttall' and have a long conversation with its operator who obviously has great empathy for the canal and its wildlife; he tells me about the birds he has seen around, where they are nesting and how he wouldn't dream of disturbing their nest

sites before the chicks have flown. I experienced something similar to this amongst the working community on the Thames, a refreshing sensitivity to a place, its identity and integrity as a habitat.

At Hickling there is a sudden rainstorm but I am already snug in the pub; 'Stair rods', announces a barfly in cavalry twills before subsiding back into his pint. I dither around with notes and maps, generally looking preoccupied, and catch sight of a little publication of memories of Hickling compiled by a local lady; there is a picture of the bridge



before its demolition in the 1950s and an abundance of Edwardian picnic parties, there is as well a reference to a children's tale about a whale in the canal which used Hickling Basin as a suitable place for turning round. I wonder how ubiquitous this story is, I have it as 'Stanley

Bagshaw and the Twenty Two Ton Whale'<sup>1</sup> which I read to my son thirteen years ago. Whales in Canals: were the Grantham Canal the source of the tale perhaps its incongruity might provide the symbol or logo for it. Certainly if there was the inclination to pursue my proposal that the canal and its environs be considered a model upon which we base a wider ranging exploration of how we understand and access our landscape, the relationship between whale and canal could be seen as appropriate, for the importance of the canal would reach beyond its immediate regional value.



The story certainly lends itself to being revived for local children and a means by which schools can introduce an awareness of the canal. I remember that Greenpeace used to have a dirigible whale which it used for its 'Save the Whale' campaign, I wonder what happened to it?

1. *Stanley Bagshaw and the Twenty Two Ton Whale*. Bob Wilson. Puffin Books, London, 1983.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

Hickling Basin is a natural magnet for visitors, it should be made more of; a floating visitors centre based there and an artist in residency on a boat to make use of it. There certainly should be a long term plan to utilise the warehouse building, the basin itself makes an ideal venue for water based performance, be it music, drama, or my own folly, a drive in movie for boats. I am reminded of a performance made by Charlie Hooker at Camden Lock where accordion players on boats continually crossed each others path, interweaving snatches of themes in time and space.

Would there be an audience? How receptive is a community likely to be? Something like this must have the collaboration of the community, in whose midst it would be planned to happen, from the very outset. This could be ambitious and the pub over the road would have no small part to play in any event's success.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

## *Vimy Ridge Farm*

Once clear of Kinoulton on the way to Nottingham a line of Lombardy Poplars may be seen in the distance, these mark the access road leading across the canal to Vimy Ridge Farm. 184 trees



line the road, each dedicated to a soldier from the 9th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters killed on the Somme and planted by Sir Jesse William Hind, father of Francis Montagu Hind, one of those who fell. At the top of the avenue on the farm there is a gaunt concrete silo like a memorial column with an absurd dovecote roof. There is a sombre beauty to the place which I imagine could engage the interest of artists such as Ed Whittaker, who has for at least the last fifteen years been exploring the First World War battlefields of Belgium and France.

This site, of all along the canal, is perhaps the most compelling, its atmosphere compounded by the apparent dereliction of many of the farm buildings which bear witness to its one-time function as a centre for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen and war orphans and for teaching farm trades.

## *Nitrate*

From Cotgrave into Nottingham the canal is mostly in water, the weed and reed beds are super-luxuriant and that intense green reasserts itself, perhaps this is all for the wrong reasons, testimony to run-off from the surrounding farmland making the waterway nitrate rich. The weed is so green as to hurt the eye. A chocolate brown duck sits in stark contrast and as I pass it gives me a single golden wink.

# The Twenty Mile Pound

## Urban Canal

Unlike Grantham, there is no evidence of the canal being a repository for junk as it negotiates Nottingham, indeed it has a definite softening effect on the dull city fringe landscape of housing estates, supermarket and playing fields.

As it passes the backs of terraced houses before reaching Lady Bay Bridge Road the canal is scruffy and the path unkempt, but so far as the householders are concerned, it is something to celebrate; they take an obvious delight in possessing a few feet of canal bank by making it the climax of their gardens. It is a distinct pleasure to walk this last section before it dives beneath the road to emerge, barely tolerated between Nottingham forest Football Ground and the Environment Agency headquarters, ending somewhat half-heartedly at the Trent.



It is all very well to discuss gateways and signage but it would be better as a preliminary to consider the immediate landscape of the canal and that here the Environment Agency should be exhorted to make more of the canal in relation to its own grounds rather than appearing to begrudge its presence.

## Signs

Once into an urban area the social environment betrays itself in the comprehensive abuse of information boards, this is pretty territorial and I guess the canal is as good a demarcation as any. I wonder whether this should be considered when planning signage, I wonder who it is to be directed at; who is telling what to who. There appears to be a case for bringing the community into the conversation, even to the point of enlisting the graffiti makers.

Much of my discussion of signs and information has concentrated on formal concerns, how the signs could be designed and sited. Very little has been said about content:

Our relationship with the landscape and therefore the mental maps we carry around implies that topography and fact are only a part of the story, we can add to it a collective consciousness, the continual revision of levels of interest according to the time of the year and state of weather, the preoccupation of the walker, personal reflections concurrent with walking the landscape. Colour, light, warmth, cold, day, night, wind, rain all draw their own maps as does the purpose of the walk; be it fishing or shooting, birdspotting, plant species counting, surveying, dog walking, long distance hiking, strolling cogitating or even romance.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

The artist Simon Lewty discusses these kinds of contact very well:

'A walk, whatever the age of the walker may take in not only landmarks such as trees, gates, ponds and so on but the people and animals we meet, the birds, flowers and stones we see, the changes in light, weather and season. It also includes the history of the land on which we walk, whether we are aware of it or not – that a hedge for instance, might be (as mine was) part of an ancient parish boundary. It means the footprints we leave behind us and the thoughts we think as we go. The same walk can mean something different each time it is made, so that familiarity may lead not to contempt, but to renewed astonishment, as the known yields up the unknown.'<sup>1</sup>

It is important that formal challenges do not overwhelm content. I can think of any number of potential formal solutions; be they slabs inlaid in the ground or boards, all of which would of course impact upon content and can be seen as starting points, but cannot be answers in themselves.

## *Tourism*

For the canal enthusiast the restoration of the Grantham Canal to navigability must be a good thing Q.E.D. For the agencies, authorities and organisations engaged in making it happen, it is not so simple; there are hard-nosed questions to be asked over who would benefit from increased accessibility both on the water and by foot, whether this would threaten the very qualities of sanctuary, seclusion and a vibrant wildlife habitat that the canal strategy seeks to promote, what opportunities are there for this to be a factor in raising the economic viability of the region and what return is there likely to be on a sustained investment on this scale.

That the unexceptional nature of the Grantham Canal landscape poses questions as to how it should be promoted need not be an issue, particularly in the light of an ongoing environmental debate in this country which underscores the importance of a continuity of principles of conservation across the land in parallel to the protection of specific landscapes enshrined in our cultural psyche which therefore automatically become tourist destinations. The Council for the Protection of Rural England would have no problem with this and I suggest that the integrity of what is a typical working English landscape should be a starting point and that the canal, as do many other of our green pathways, offers us an unique insight into this.

Subject the canal to an over-anxious marketing imagination and something spurious is likely to come up which can become a liability; it is important to exploit what is there rather than to invent what is not. Tourism implies a preconception; that the visitor arrives already equipped with expectations which inform the spin put upon what is offered. If we foster this, what we seek to promote can become an unchallenging, watered-down version of what is already known, and we end up colluding in fictions or worse, creating pastiche. As soon as the tourism word comes up it excites two reactions: local authorities think jobs and income, local communities fear invasion. To be realistic, on the Grantham Canal, the vision of coach parties and crowds along the towpath is not going to happen, but through raising accessibility, establishing navigability and making sure that the level of publicity is high, it will sell itself. More people from within the region will become aware of the canal, visit it on days out and attend advertised events and attendance figures will grow nationally and perhaps internationally as the word gets around.

1. Parish Map (Old Milverton), 1986. Some notes in retrospect by Simon Lewty.  
From place to PLACE, maps and Parish maps. Common Ground, London, 1996.

# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

Only if efforts are made to create attractions of national or international importance such as already exist at Belvoir Castle and Holme Pierrepont is there likely to be a surge in visitor numbers, and this is a risk. I have already proposed a centre which would take as its theme an analysis and exploration of our changing views of the English countryside, using the canal as a point of departure. Is this risk worthwhile or is it a black hole down which we pour money?

For the time being we are discussing raising the level of attention and leaving the creation of 'crowd pullers' for later, and with this in mind we can develop an idea of the relationship between the restoration, its cost and the amount it is likely to be used. Obviously it is desirable that it should justify the effort by paying its way and generating the conditions for a steady growth in visitor related businesses, including overnight accommodation in the rural areas.

There is a third route and I know that I am bound to say this, however it is the subject of this report. Art could become a key to the public experience of the canal, be at the forefront of nourishing curiosity and reflecting upon the landscape. It can work on very many levels including where appropriate, the monumental. My proposal is that any effort made to promote the canal should consider that art and artists are intended to be an integral aspect of the experience and not grafted into it. The intention is that effort is devoted to making it work through the imagination rather than in your face - The Art Canal?



# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## **Appendix 2 - Bibliography**

- Canal Boats and Boaters. D. J. Smith. London. 1973.
- Canal Camps 2001. Waterway Recovery Group.
- Discover the Grantham Canal. Nottinghamshire County Council. 1993.
- From Place to Place. Maps and Parish maps. Sue Clifford and Angela King. Common Ground, London 1996.
- Future Nature. W. M. Adams. Earthscan. London. 1996.
- Grantham Canal Action Plan. British Waterways.
- Grantham Canal Strategy. British Waterways.
- Introducing Government Offices. RCU. 2000.
- Restoration of the Grantham Canal. Nottinghamshire County Council, British Waterways.
- Stanley Bagshaw and the Twenty Two Ton Whale. Bob Wilson. Puffin Books. London. 1983.
- Suffolk Hedgerow Survey. May 2002.
- Vital Villages, Local Heritage Initiative. Market Towns Forum. Countryside Agency.
- Waterways for Tomorrow. DETR. June 2000.
- Waterways World. September 1997. Horsepower Heritage. Tony Lewery.



# *The Twenty Mile Pound*

---

## **Appendix 3**

### *Simon Read - The Artist*

Simon Read is an artist for whom the landscape and its wellbeing has particular resonance. He is most typically known for his photographic work with cameras constructed by himself, many examples of which have been included in major national and international collections. However, more pertinent to this project; over the last 15 years or so, he has been able to explore ways in which artists may usefully become engaged in the environment debate. 1993 was for him a watershed point when he was invited by the (then) Countryside Commission to be Artist in Residence on the Upper Thames, during which, amongst other elements, he studied in depth the control of water flow and engineering solutions applied in the Thames Flood Plain. This led to a lively relationship with both the Countryside Agency and the Environment Agency, two notable outcomes of which have been an 80 metre profile of the River Thames from Thames Head to Sea Reach incised into a concrete wall alongside the path of the Thames Barrier in 1996 and 'Memory and the Tideline' a series of carved granite pier caps for the new flood defences for Poole Harbour in 2001.

Appropriately he lives on the tideline on a barge in Woodbridge and works as a lecturer at Chelsea College of Art and in fine art at Middlesex University.