

Cooper's Wharf was the name suggested by the Parish Council and chosen for the recently completed housing fronting Marsh Drive adjacent to the Grand Union Canal.

What perhaps you don't realise as you cross bridge 77 over the formerly named Grand Junction Canal is that the land on which the development stands was originally the commencement of a suggested canal linking Great Linford to Bedford.

The route of the canal was surveyed in 1793 and a Bill in Parliament received the Royal Assent on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1814 authorising the construction of the short section to Newport Pagnell, which opened in 1817.

The estimate for this work was made in 1813 by Mr. B. Bevan. He calculated the cost to be £12,650, of which, £9,700 was subscribed; the shares were made of the value of £100 each, but half and quarters were allowed.

The canal from Newport to its opening into the Grand Junction Canal is only a mile and a quarter long, with a rise of 50 feet 9 inches, from Newport to the level of the Grand Junction, which was effected by seven locks of 7 feet 3 inches each.

The Bill stated "The conveniences afforded by this communication with the Grand Junction Canal in the transit of coal, agricultural produce, timber, deals, stone and groceries, are important to the town and neighbourhood of Newport Pagnell."<sup>1</sup>

The Tonnage Rates were: "- ...for all Goods, Wares, Merchandise and Things 2 shillings a ton, for Coals and Coke 1 shilling and six pence a ton and for Manure six pence a ton."

The canal closed in 1864 and the Wolverton to Newport Pagnell railway, which was built over a major part of the former canal, opened for goods, cattle and parcels on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1866. The ceremonial opening of the line for passengers was celebrated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1867. The line was closed on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 1964.

There are still signs of the canal's existence. The entrance to the Newport Pagnell Canal was at Linford Wharf, alongside which there were the old wharf buildings recently occupied by Cooper's the agricultural machinery supplier. Hence the conjunction of the name for the new housing development "**Cooper's Wharf.**"

There is an interpretation board beside the Grand Union adjacent bridge 77, briefly recording the history of the Newport Pagnell Canal and showing a circular walk where traces of the canal can be seen.

Following the footpath from the board the cottage by Lock 1 is still standing although the site of the lock chamber is now part of the front garden. However just beyond the cottage, the overgrown canal bed is clearly seen and holds water for a while after heavy rain.

The path [perhaps the towpath?] continues through a gate into the Giffard Park housing and follows beside the grassed-over depression, clearly showing the route of the canal up to the next lock. The site of the lock is now a children's play area and the road passing across the canal at what would originally have been bridge 4 is appropriately enough called "Boulter's Lock".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Priestley's Navigable Rivers and Canals" by Joseph Priestley published in April 1831

<sup>2</sup> Jill Gourlay Bucks Canal Society 1996