

GRAND TRUNK



The Old Mill, Moston, Trent and Mersey Canal

Photo by Andrew Leese



March/April 2016

www.trentandmerseycanalsociety.co.uk

Chairman's Bit

CRT replied quickly to my query (last issue) about why Tilstock Park Lift Bridge No 42 (the "Green" one) on the Llangollen suddenly needed an anti-vandal key without any advance warning. They told me that it had actually been fitted by the local council, who own the bridge. After bad publicity in the local press, and many complaints from users, the padlock was quickly disabled by the council pending removal.

Back in 2014 a local resident repainted bridge 169 (Brooks Lane, Middlewich) a very light blue instead of the traditional white (which was wearing a bit thin). CRT pointed out to them that this was not helpful, especially as the paint used was not suitable for covering bricks. I am glad to report that the bridge has finally been painted white again, CRT taking advantage of scaffolding erected recently to repair vehicle damage.

This year our sales/exhibition stand will be out and about quite a bit, so if you would like to help please contact Paula (details on page 23) who has organised six outings (so far) :-

CRT Lock 63 Open Day: *Sunday 3rd April* (nobody available on Sat. 2nd).

Lion Salt Works Steam Fair: *Sunday 1st May & Monday 2nd May.*

TMCS AGM (Stone): *Saturday May 14th* (indoors, just for our attendees).

Middlewich FAB Festival: *Saturday 18th June & Sunday 19th June.*

Middleport Pottery (250th Anniversary of First Sod): *Saturday 23rd July.*

Winsford Salt Regatta: *Sunday 18th September.*

Speaking of the sales stand, we have two new items of clothing for sale: a Fleecy (various sizes £25); baseball cap (one size £8.50). They are also on sale at meetings, but NOT by post (as you really need to try the fleecy for size, and a cap would cost around £3.50 to post!).

Finally, I am pleased to announce that we have decided to run another photo competition (for use on our 2017 calendar) at the AGM. See page 13 for more details.



Editorial

Not much room left in our action-packed magazine this month! I thought you would like to know that our beloved boat now has a new water tank (non-leaky), and is awaiting the replacement of her floorboards, hearth and furniture in the front cabin. All I have to do then is retille the hearth and nag the menfolk into replacing the fire (the cats will never agree to a cruise without heating!).

At the end of the day, *The Lady Margaret* may be ageing and a bit shabby and eccentric (much like her crew), but we couldn't do without all those memories, even though a new boat would be easier!

We are off to La Palma at Easter with our extended family– it would be great to have her back before then, but at least she is safely moored at the boatyard on the T&M!



The stall (with Eddie) at MFAB 2015

You will see from Roger's bit that our stall, manned by the outgoing and lovable Paula and Eddie (with a little help from their friends) is booked into *six* venues this year. Roger and I hope to attend at least one of these with our aged lady of the waterways

(the boat, not me!) but will do our utmost to put in an appearance at as many as we can anyway. Please help out if you can– it is fun, lots of people stop and chat and we even attract some new members. We are experimenting with various items for sale, but the publicity is the main purpose of the outings,

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL SOCIETY

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members of the Trent and Mersey Canal Society are hereby given notice that the 2016 Annual General Meeting will be held at:

**Stone Station Community Centre
Station Road
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 8ER**

**on Saturday 14th May 2015 at 12.15pm
(Room open from 12 noon)**

A finger buffet will be provided after the meeting.

Stone Railway Station was built in 1848 and designed in typical North Staffordshire Railway Company Tudor style by H.A. Hunt. The station stands at the junction between the line to Norton Bridge (in the foreground of this postcard view) and the line to Colwich (behind the station).

The station building was renovated in 2003-4 for use as a community centre. It has a spacious but cosy meeting room with an adjoining kitchen.

Also

The photographic competition will be judged with a view to choosing pictures for the Society's 2017 calendar.

In the afternoon (about 1.45pm) members will have the opportunity to join a guided walk led by David Dumbelton along the Stone towpath, lasting about an hour.

Existing committee members who retire by rotation do not need to be nominated for re-election. Nomination of any other member for the committee must be in writing and must be proposed and seconded by paid up

and voting members of the society. The nomination paper must contain the signed consent of the nominated person.

No motion can be dealt with at the AGM unless such a motion has been included in the formal notice of the meeting. Nominations of persons to the committee and details of any motions to be considered by the AGM must be received by the secretary at her home address by Thursday 14th April 2016, otherwise any motion or nomination cannot be accepted.



Everyone is welcome, **but we do need an idea of numbers** for catering purposes. Please therefore let Roger and Margaret know (by phone or email) if you will be attending.

Margaret English

Talks for 2016/17

This season's talks and those of the last few years have been well received and to date I have found the speakers, but you may have some ideas to share.



Please let me know if you have any suggestions of speakers or talk contents that you would like me to bring to the society.

I already have some ideas of my own and some suggestions from the committee, I will start making contact with potential speakers after the AGM, so if you have any ideas please get them to me by the end of the meeting.

Gillian Watson
gillian.watson@me.com
01606 835 606

Unique canal bridge

Engineers are giving a unique canal footbridge, built out of 100 year old railway tracks, a new lease of life. CRT is carrying out the works at Bully's, otherwise known as Potlocks, Bridge on the Trent & Mersey Canal at Willington in Derbyshire. The bridge was built in the late 19th Century, at a time when the canal was owned by the North Staffordshire Railway and the bullhead rails would have been a cheap, readily available material. The tracks were used to form both a lower rail which the bridge deck would sit on and an upper rail to prevent people falling.



photo by Jo James

The bridge would have connected the town of Findern with a now filled-in wharf built to enable the transport of goods from rail to canal and vice versa. Today the canal towpath is a popular walking route, and the bridge is used frequently by the residents of nearby Mercia Marina. During the works the whole bridge has been covered in polythene so that the old paint can be blasted off, and a new coat applied safely, without anything nasty getting into the water.



The engineers have also been improving the structure of the bridge, installing new bracing and fitting a new timber deck and steps. The project is being carried out by the Trust's main contractor Kier.

Tim Brownrigg, project manager for CRT said; "This bridge has got a really fascinating history and helps to tell a wider story about what the area would have looked like over a century ago. The construction shows the resourcefulness of those working on the canal at that time. Today the bridge forms part of a popular walking route so it's important that we carry out these works, making the bridge look smarter and more welcoming for all the people that use it every day and preserving a fascinating part of the area's history."

Thanks to CRT and the editor of IWA East Midlands magazine Aegre who allowed us to share this article.



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Talks for The T&MCS social calendar September 2015 to April 2016

The location is the Big Lock, run by Jackie and Ken Pickles. The Big Lock can be accessed on 2 levels.

If accessed from the road level you can collect your refreshment from the bar before going down stairs to the function room.

For those who prefer not to use stairs, there is access to the room at the back of the building via the door facing the lock, and we can arrange for your drinks to be collected from the bar for you.

There is no charge (we have a raffle to pay for the room hire) and no need to be a member.

If you want to make more of an event of your evening I can recommend the food, I usually eat there before each talk.

Where appropriate the speakers will bring associated objects and products to be viewed or bought. We positively encourage interaction.

To find Big Lock by road, the address is:

Webbs Lane, Middlewich,
Cheshire, CW10 9DN

Telephone: (01606)
833489

<http://www.thebiglockpub.com>

The room will be open at 7.30pm, the talks will start at 8.00pm, in two 40 minute parts with a comfort break.

Contact:

Gillian Watson 01606 835 606



Friday 18th March 2016

President travels from Etruria to London 2012

The steam-driven narrowboat *President* was built in 1909 for Fellows, Morton and Clayton, entered their carrying fleet in 1927, and was chosen to represent Staffordshire in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant in 2012 to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Queen coming to the throne. The film shows the boat travelling from Etruria, to London and then in the pageant itself.

Friday 15th April 2016

The Restoration of Bugsworth Basin

We will see the various openings, the Basin's present success and conclude with “Where do we go from here”; followed by a short but very topical illustrated talk on the Brunner Mond Alkali Works at Malkins Bank and the limestone traffic between Bugsworth Basin and Malkins Bank.

There are no new members to welcome for this issue.

Does anyone have friends or relatives whose New Year Resolution was to join a friendly, interesting Society?

Tell them about us!



The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the [Trent and Mersey Canal Society](#). They are, however, published as being of interest to our members and readers

Trent and Mersey Canal Society - Annual Accounts

<u>Income</u>	<u>2015 Accounts</u>	versus	<u>2014 Accounts</u>
	Nil		Nil
(Note 2) Bank Interest	£301.32		£796.65
Gift Aid	£120.00		£160.00
Grand Trunk Advertising	£1,440.00		£1,580.00
Membership Subscriptions	£297.27		£231.63
(Note 3) Donations	£67.00		Nil
Fund Raising	£790.60		£441.15
(Note 4) Sale of Goods	Nil		Nil
Members Meetings etc	£3,016.19		£3,209.43
Expenditure			
	Nil		Nil
(Note 5) Accountancy	£240.00		£121.04
AGM & Annual Report	£1,371.29		£1,431.80
Grand Trunk	£295.65		£286.20
Insurance	Nil		£44.96
Meetings	£7.99		£7.50
Prizes and Engraving	£154.39		£436.51
(Note 6) Publicity & Recruitment	£789.32		£153.89
(Note 4) Sales (Stock,Postage)	£71.50		£68.50
Subscriptions to other organisations	Nil		Nil
Sundry Expenses	£2,930.14		£2,550.40

Surplus in 2015 (before Campaigns & £86.05	Surplus in 2014 (before Campaigns & £659.03
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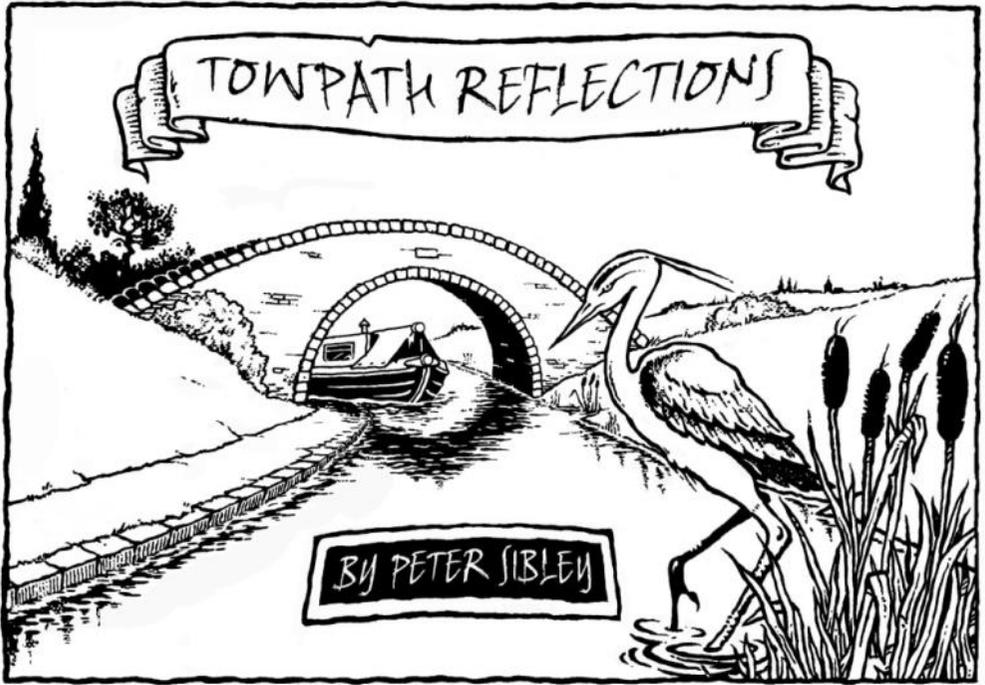
Campaigns and Donations

	Nil	Nil
Burslem Port Trust	Nil	Nil
Canal & River Trust	Nil	Nil
Cheshire Locks Campaign	Nil	Nil
(Note 7) Etruria Boat Group	-£428.86	£250.00
IWA Chester	Nil	Nil
Maureen Shaw Appeal	Nil	Nil
	-£428.86	£250.00

Final Surplus in 2015 £514.91	Final Surplus in 2014 £409.03
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Notes

- 1) Ring-fenced for Anderton Boat Lift (ex-Trust) £1,601.28
- 2) Gift Aid is much less as we only claimed for 1 year (2014); in 2014 we claimed for 2 years (2012 & 2013).
- 3) Donations are significantly up because they include £200 as a single donation this year.
- 4) Sales made a tiny profit (£1.38) in 2015, but we finished the year with £300 more stock (new lines added).
- 5) AGM cost was higher because the food had to be purchased from a caterer as a condition of room hire.
- 6) Publicity and Recruitment costs are less because 2014 included two large items not in 2015 :-
400 new-style membership Leaflets (£73.46).
Purchase of new stronger sales stand (£179.98) after previous one destroyed by wind.
- 7) Campaigns and Donations total is negative as Etruria Boat Group returned part of an earlier donation.
This was the unused part of the £500 we gave in 2012 towards the cost of the Etruria Boat Festivals.
- 8) Bank Balance at the end of year **£13,534.64** **£13,019.73**



We left Peter and Val shopping in Banbury.....

We set off from Banbury at 8am. The lift bridge and lock were operated for us by a hire boat crew. We emptied the toilet in a rather filthy services station. Most of the locks had been removed from the doors including the toilet. Being situated in the same building as the bus station toilets, also with missing locks, probably doesn't help the situation. The southern exit from Banbury doesn't show its better side and the M40 spoils the next 6 miles.

However, after that the canal gets back to its tranquil and picturesque self. The sun even came out and made the scene idyllic. The river Cherwell crosses the canal immediately above Aynho Weir Lock which unusually is diamond shaped and with a shallow fall (about 18" at the time of our visit but is variable depending on the amount of water in the river). This



helps feed the rather greedy Somerton Deep Lock with its 12 foot drop which comes next.

From Aynho onwards the river Cherwell makes its presence known as it meanders through a lush valley of water meadows which at this time of year are covered in a thick carpet of buttercups. Sometimes the river is within a few yards of the canal, at others it is way across the other side of the meadow, but its position can always be identified by the line of willow trees which line its banks. Lift bridges come thick and fast in this area although most are kept in the open position and some have been removed completely, only the abutments are left to identify their position. At Lower Heyford a friendly local family offered to open the lift bridge for us, so we only had to work one ourselves today.

We moored for the night just past Dashwoods Lock in the heart of the country with only the sound of the occasional train across the valley and 2 noisy pheasants in a field opposite to disturb the peace. Shortly after mooring we had a sudden torrential downpour of hailstones which lasted all of 3 minutes. Almost as soon as it had started it stopped and the sun burst forth once more.



Tuesday 13th May.

We had a peaceful nights sleep but around 5am I was awoken by the sound of the dawn chorus and one particular bird close by who kept up his or her chirping continuously for seemingly ages. We set off around 7.45am. The weather showed promise but was slow to buck up! The next stretch of canal was really delightful; tree lined and gently curving. The sun burst through every now and again, illuminating the lush fresh new Spring leaves. On the off-side there are some delightful moorings by a redundant stone quarry. It is now a public park with pathways winding up and down through the trees.

Shipton Weir Lock is another diamond shaped lock (or squashed hexagon might be a truer description!) The fall on this one is around 2½ feet according to the guide books but on our visit it was 15 inches. Thrupp soon follows, a truly delightful spot. An ancient stone church sits so close to the canal it almost seems in danger of tumbling in!

Beyond this the canal widens into a basin which is used as moorings by Thrupp Canal Cruising Club! The facilities block here is looked after it seems by the club. It is immaculate and a well maintained garden and flowerbeds border the building and the adjacent water point. At the end of the basin the canal does a sharp right hand turn under a lift bridge, now electrified, the only one on the canal like it. From here on into Oxford visitor moorings seem to be well regulated with warning of £25 per day fine on over-stayers. Also many do not allow a return visit within 28 days.

We went right down to Isis Lock and moored close by. We then walked down to Osney Lock to enquire about a short term licence for the Thames but the lock keeper was nowhere to be seen.

To be continued.....

Calendar Photographs

After the success of our 2016 calendar, we are hoping to do the same again next year.

WE NEED PICTURES!

If you have any photos (digital are fine) that you think might suit, please forward these to either Margaret or Roger (details on p. 23) **up to 1 week before the AGM** (See p. 4).

If we have enough entries, we will treat this as a competition, and there might even be a prize (or a free calendar anyway)!

Pictures should be of, or associated with, the T&M.



For our friends in the South.....

IWA Lichfield Branch

Saturday/Sunday 16-17th April 2016 – BCN Clean-Up. The annual mass work party to remove rubbish from the Birmingham Canal Navigations, organised jointly by IWA's Waterway Recovery Group, the BCN Society, CRT and others. This year it will be based at Ocker Hill with teams of volunteers working on the Walsall Canal, Tame Valley Canal, and Ryders Green Locks. Day volunteers can sign on at Ocker Hill CRT Depot from 10am. Wear old clothes, waterproof clothing and safety footwear and bring a lunch or book in with WRG. For full details email Chris Morgan at cbmorgan@sky.com.

Wednesday 20th April 2016 - A talk about River Canal Rescue. 7.15 for 7.30 pm at Martin Heath Hall, Christchurch Lane (off Walsall Road), Lichfield, Staffs. WS13 8AY

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Ronald Gerrard

Ron and Sylvia Gerrard have been supporters, if not always actual members of the Society for nigh on 40 years. They were very evident at the boat gathering to launch the Save Anderton Boat Lift campaign just over 30 years ago, and Sylvia was one of the gang who presented the petition to No 10 Downing St, Ron being unable to get time off work. They lived in Comberbach at the time and were active in our campaign activities over several years, be it at Big Lock weekends or Anderton Bonfire Night Shindigs. Ron was always cheerful, always full of ideas, and always supportive in any local campaigns.

They moved to South Wales to live some years ago and personal contact drifted, as it does. But whenever they came back over to the Cheshire area they always tried to get together with whoever remained of the "old gang" for a meal and a catch up.

Ron had been diagnosed with terminal cancer two years ago which gave him time to prepare his funeral down to the last detail and travel with his wife and two sons, Sean and Lee. He passed away peacefully on 28th Jan 2016, aged 82.

His ashes will be scattered, partly at Anderton Boat Lift and partly on the River Mersey at Liverpool (where he was born).



The petition is delivered to Downing Street
(Detail of the Anderton Mural by Bernice Tackley)



Join Us on a Canal Work Party

Cheshire Locks, Trent & Mersey Canal Monthly work party on the third Thursday each month

Why not join us for our monthly work parties, on the Cheshire Locks between Kidsgrove and Wheelock, carrying out vegetation management and other tasks in the fresh air and good company?

Work parties run from 10am to 4pm on the third Thursday each month (except December) and volunteers are welcome to come for a couple of hours or all day. The meeting place varies each month, so please contact us for details.

All tools and equipment will be provided. Volunteers are advised to wear old clothes, stout shoes and to bring waterproofs in case of rain and a packed lunch if staying all day.

Contact: John Brighthouse
John.brighthouse@waterways.co.uk 07808878317

Cheshire Locks Work Party 18th February 2016

Seven willing volunteers joined the February work party and contributed 40 hours of work. The day started cold but bright so the team spent the morning continuing to develop the memorial garden at Red Bull; preparing the ground for seeding later in the year. By afternoon the sun had dried some of the metalwork at Lock 43 so part of the team resumed painting the railings there. It was the first time since October that the weather had allowed painting! Over the last month CRT have provided a storage cabin at Red Bull for volunteers' tools and equipment which will be a real help.

Work will continue around Red Bull and Lock 43 at the next work party on Thursday 17th March. Weather permitting it will include painting and further development of the garden.



The Red Bull garden starting to take shape

Gongoozling by the Seine

During part of April and May 2015 we returned to France to follow the River Seine from the English Channel at Le Havre to its source 19 miles north west of Dijon. At just over 482 miles long it is France's second largest river – the longest being the Loire.

Much of Le Havre was destroyed during the Second World War but has been rebuilt and there is a very large complex of docks and basins for ocean-going ships. Having visited the picturesque fishing village of Honfleur on the opposite bank we travelled beside the tidal River Seine and drove beyond Rouen and booked into a riverside campsite.

Rouen is 75 miles inland from the English Channel and has been a river



port for sea-going ships from the 16th century. The docks here are still busy as this is the closest point that large ships can get to Paris. Until 1959 the only way for people and motorists to cross the river between Le Havre and Rouen was by using one of the many ferries that operated.

Heurteauville to Jumieges Ferry

However the Tancarville bridge was built in 1959, followed by the Brotonne bridge in 1977 and the 2,343 yards long Normandie Bridge was opened in 1995. As a result less ferries were needed. Eight ferries are still working though for pedestrians and motorists who are not situated near to one of the three bridges. There are two sizes of ferry and they can carry up to 12 or 34 cars and these eight ferries transport about 10 million passengers a year.

From the campsite we walked along a footpath which took us next to the river and to the huge Amfreville Dam and the two locks which end the tidal section of the Seine. We crossed the river by means of an overhead foot-

way and so had good views both up and downstream of the river and of the two very large locks - the dimensions of these locks being 240 yards long by 18 feet wide and 202 yards long by 13 feet!



Barge at La Mailleraie

The Seine is still very much a commercial waterway and we were surprised at how much shipping we had seen on our journey from Le Havre through to the Amfreville locks. These included pilot boats, Dutch, French and Belgian barges - all with a car on board, pusher tugs, hotel boats and massive container ships registered in Panama, Hong Kong, Gibraltar and Colombo. The non-tidal Seine is much more leisure boat friendly although smaller commercial craft still use the river to reach Paris and beyond.

Next to the locks is a restaurant where tea dances are regularly held. We stood by the locks watching assorted craft go through and listening to accordion music being played whilst the dancers were enjoying themselves on the dance floor and terrace. The sun was shining well and it was very hot and one of the diners came out to watch a boat ascend the lock. He was a bald Frenchman and he'd forgotten to bring his hat with him so he tied a patterned hanky at four corners and wore it Monty Python gumbly style – so the French do have a sense of humour after all!

*Annette & Terry
NB Emily and Steamboat Sidney
Kennet & Avon Canal*



Colwich Lock
*Photo by Roger
Kidd*

As you all know, The Trent and Mersey Canal Act was passed in Parliament in 1766. James Brindley was appointed engineer for the project. Construction took eleven years and the 93 mile canal was opened in 1777 from Derwent Mouth to Preston Brook. There are 76 locks. Colwich Lock, near Little Haywood, is Lock No 21, and alters the water level by 6ft 6in, about two metres. The railway bridge ahead carries the line to Stafford (left) and Lichfield (right). This lock, seen dreaming in solitary peace here is officially one of the busiest locks on the whole canal system. The line of queuing boats can stretch from well before the railway bridge, and the situation is made worse by the fact that boats beyond the bridge, or below the lock, cannot be seen.

Frustrated crews can however feast their eyes on the grade II listed lock cottage beside the lock (see next page)!



Colwich Lock Cottage (picture from Wikimapia)

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Sweat-Shirts and Polo Shirts

To make your purchase, simply ring or e-mail Roger or Margaret (details on p.23) to arrange payment and postage.

The garments are navy with a society logo on the left-hand breast.

Sweat-shirt -Price £15 Stock sizes: S, M, L, XL,XXL

Polo-Shirt -Price £12 Stock sizes: M, L, XL,XXL

Lady-Fit -Price £11 (to clear) Stock sizes: S, M, L,XL

Fleecies!

We are now stocking navy fleecies with a full zip opening and the society logo– lovely and warm!

After a trial with a ‘small’, we are currently stocking small, medium large and XL. Sizes are generous and really need to be tried.

Price £25.00– The Society has decided to retail these at cost as they are quite expensive, but very nice!

Baseball Caps (new)

One size– navy with embroidered society logo– £8.50 each



Please send contributions for the next issue to me, Margaret English, by e-mail to margaretetlm@hotmail.com, by post, or by hand. Remember, this is *your* magazine. Contributions from the South especially welcome!

Last date for inclusion in the May/June edition is 01/05/2016.

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL SOCIETY

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Telephone: 01606 834471

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Malkin's Bank
Cheshire Locks**

Photos by Andrew Leese