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## Stockport's Hidden Waterway

**How many people can still remember the Lanky Cut, or to give it the correct name, the Stockport Branch of the Ashton Canal?**

How many people in Stockport and Reddish know that there was once a busy canal that flowed through their town? The Stockport Branch Canal branched off from the Ashton Canal at Clayton and terminated at the top of Lancashire Hill by Nelstrop Mill. It opened in 1797 and was important in the development of Reddish, carrying goods and passengers to and from the many mills along the 4.2 miles through Gorton and Openshaw from its junction at Clayton to Stockport.

As canal traffic decreased, the canal was eventually closed and filled in during the 1960s. However, in 2004 the Manchester and Stockport Canal Society was set up for the purpose of restoring the canal from Clayton to Stockport with a group of enthusiastic volunteers, under the leadership of the former Reddish Councillor, Peter Scott. The restoration of the canal has the backing in principle of both Manchester and Stockport local authorities. Steps have been taken and are still being taken to ensure the canal is recognised by the relevant Local Planning Authorities to protect the line.

It is believed that the restoration of the canal would greatly improve the Openshaw, Gorton, Reddish areas. Other restorations around the country have consistently shown immediate benefits for the communities near to or backing onto canals, by providing walking and cycling facilities which improve the health and well being of the population. This restoration would provide a high quality pedestrian and cycling route, which would improve public access and leisure opportunities, including walking, boating and angling, and encourage wildlife.

The restoration would fall into three phases:-

Phase 1: Clayton Junction to Gorton Reservoir, where permission has been granted from United Utilities to allow a marina to be established subject to technical approval. At present the line of the canal in this area is a cycleway and footpath known as "the yellow brick road".

Phase 2: Gorton Reservoir to Broadstone Mill

Phase 3: Broadstone Mill to Lancashire Hill

The Society has already been engaged in the necessary preparatory work to achieve Phase 1 of the restoration. This has involved establishing and maintaining a "litter free" corridor, and clearing the area of unsightly scrubland and undergrowth, such as in the aqueduct near Gorton station. We will also need to remove trees that will eventually impede the line of the canal and replant.

For more information about the society please visit the website [www.mscs.org.uk](http://www.mscs.org.uk), follow us on Facebook:- [www.facebook.com/Manchester-and-Stockport-Canal-Society-236418740149659](http://www.facebook.com/Manchester-and-Stockport-Canal-Society-236418740149659) and look out for us at local festivals and events along the original canal line in Clayton, Openshaw, Gorton, Reddish and Stockport. Walk the length of the old canal route and look for the green information plaques, installed by the Society.