Local Snippets

The name Braunston is derived from Brandleston, i.e., Brant or Brand's ton (or village), Brant or Brand being the name of the Anglo-Saxon lord responsible to the king. The name first occurs in a Royal Charter 956 A.D. when the land was granted to a nobleman.

Braunston was always an important village on the Midland's waterways system. In 1788 it was a stopping place on the Oxford Canal and later, in 1800, it was intersected by the Grand Junction Canal built to join the countries north and south cruising circuits. From this union new sources of employment sprang up and carpenters, blacksmiths, saddlers and rope makers opened up shops in the village which now boasted as many as 12 Inns catering for the burgeoning work force.

The decline of canal traffic came with the building of the railways. The Great Central Line opened in 1899 with a station at Braunston. Goods, particularly perishable items were now transported by rail resulting in a loss of canal tolls and ultimately a loss of jobs.

Braunston's rectory was built by the Rev A.B. Clough in a grand style to accommodate his bride in the manner to which she had become accustomed! Indeed, the new Mrs. Clough was the daughter of Mr. R. Howson Lamb, owner of nearby Bragborough Hall, and her new home imitated its 'Grecian' lines. The house is now 'Berryfields' and best seen from the canal towpath.

A Walkers' Code

1. Always keep to the path to avoid trespass. If the path is obstructed you are allowed to seek a reasonable way round the obstruction, taking care to avoid causing damage. Please report the obstruction to the highway authority.
2. Remember to close gates behind you. Straying stock can cause damage or spread disease and carelessness may lead to tragedy.
3. To avoid harm or distress to farm animals and wildlife it is best to leave dogs at home. If you have to bring them they should be kept on a lead.
4. If your route takes you onto a road keep to the right, facing oncoming traffic and use the verge if one exists.
5. Always wear suitable clothing and footwear for the season and remember to allow plenty of time to complete your chosen walk.
6. Remember that every piece of land in the country belongs to someone, so please treat it with respect so that other walkers will be made welcome.
7. Remember that Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected by law in order to ensure their survival. Please respect them and other archaeological sites.
8. Take extra care near locks and don't be tempted to assist boat crews unless you are certain of what to do. Remember, because boats cannot stop immediately if someone falls into the water, the risk of injury is great.

If you experience any difficulty on your walk such as barbed wire, locked gates or damaged stiles and footbridges, please report them to the Principal Rights of Way Officer, West Office, Annex House, London Road, Daventry, Tel. Daventry 706081.

For information and matters relating to the canal and towpath: The Waterway Manager, The Stop House, Braunston, Northants. Tel. Braunston 0788 810666.

Drawn and compiled by Sue Payne. 1991.

Countryside Walks Leaflet No. 11.

Northamptonshire Countryside Services is a branch of Northamptonshire Planning and Transportation Department.
All Saints Church was built in 1849, the third on the site since Norman times. It was rebuilt in the original deep red sandstone with the addition of some grey, yellow and brown Duxton stone. The tower is 150 feet tall, a prominent landmark for many miles around.

Close to the church is an early 19th century soil-less brick tower-mill. Made from local bricks the mill has been converted into a private residence.

In 1829 the Grand Junction Canal combined with the Birmingham, Warwick and Nantwich Canals. These were bought by the Regents Canal Company and became the Grand Union Canal which then ran from London to Birmingham.

During the 1930s the Northern Oxford Canal was re-routed and shortened. A small part of the original canal remains alongside, a bridge over a road. A footbridge marks the spot of the former canal junction.

The ‘turn over bridge’ has two ramps on the same face which enable towing horses to cross to the opposite path without disconnecting their rope.

The triangular junction of the Oxford and Grand Union Canal is crossed by delightful twin iron bridges which were later at Horsey Iron Works in the Black Country.

Bottom Lock. Until the late 1950’s workshops and dry dock at Bottom Lock were used by craftsmen for the repair of Commercial Narrow Boats that piled their trade on this waterway. Today those same skills and facilities are still engaged in maintaining the craft of the pleasure boating fraternity.

Ideally situated at the bottom of the flight of six locks is the Boot Shop with workshops, painted ware, brass ware and old lace prints.

Braunston Tunnel.

Braunston Tunnel which was opened in 1846 is 2,048 yards long and is 16'/6" feet wide. For the time it represented a considerable engineering achievement especially in mind the local quick sands and the underdeveloped art of tunnelling which led to the two ends rot'ting meeting. The resultant 'kink' caused traffic jams and frustration in the waterways commercial era.

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