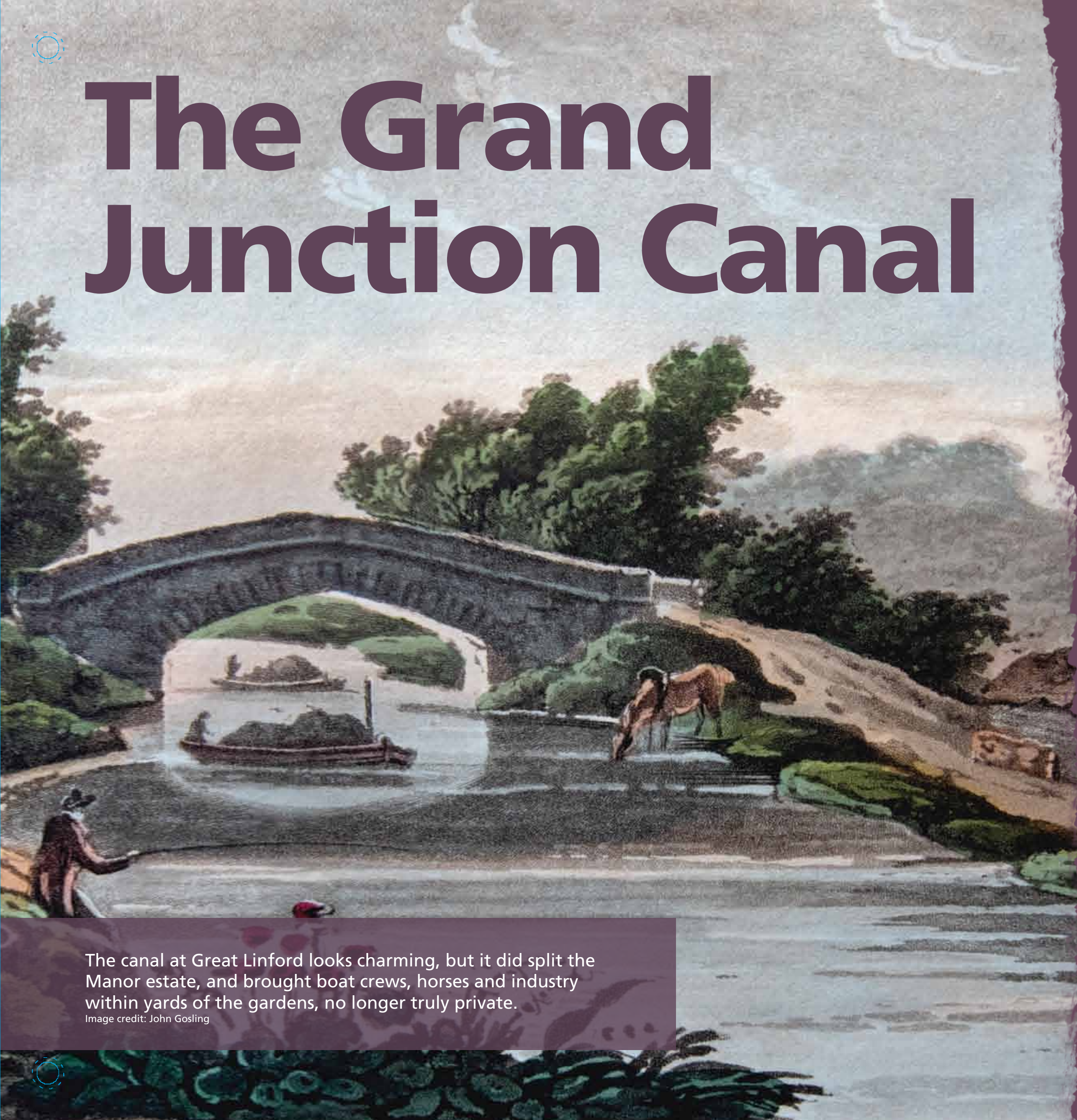


The Grand Junction Canal



The canal at Great Linford looks charming, but it did split the Manor estate, and brought boat crews, horses and industry within yards of the gardens, no longer truly private.

Image credit: John Gosling

Oxford Bypass

In the late 18th century, goods moved by canal. Waterways were being built at a furious rate. The Grand Junction was built as an Oxford bypass, speeding the route between the Midlands and London.

A Nuisance

When Royal Assent was given for the Grand Junction Canal in 1793, Great Linford Manor was occupied by elderly widow Frances Uthwatt. The Uthwatts had lovingly developed the Pleasure Gardens – and now a compulsory purchase of the land threatened to split them in two.

On Frances's death, the Manor was to pass to cousin Henry Uthwatt Andrewes. He was furious. "Would any gentleman like to have such a nuisance near his garden or in view of it?", he wrote, but the canal could not be stopped. It was completed in 1800, the year Frances died.

Look

... for differences between the canal banks on this side and the opposite side.

Do you agree it is a 'handsome piece of water'?



How the gardens may have looked around 1790, just prior to the canal's arrival. To appease the owner, the company offered to make the passing canal "a handsome piece of water" at their own expense.