

# *Junction Bridge Picture Special*

MOWS has campaigned for over 15 years to get the Wreake End Footbridge, popularly known as Junction Bridge, replaced.



The problem lay in the steps shown on the left of this photograph, which were prohibitive to some groups of people. This bridge, which has been standing for many years has no navigable headroom.

But it wasn't always like that. The photograph (right) circa 1900, shows an earlier version with easy pedestrian and tow horse access and, to the right, the original toll house. This scene would be recreated if our plans to add a Syston 'Hub' to the Soar/Grand Union Partnership 'wish list' are fulfilled.





Several years ago, the Sustrans Connect2 Scheme needed votes via a telephone poll to secure £50m from the People's Millions Lottery Fund. This money would be used to complete over 100 projects that were in the Sustrans backlog. Thanks to massive support, the funding was secured and one of the schemes earmarked was the Watermead Park area alongside the canal. The plans included to and through routes being made accessible to all. As the Wreake End footbridge fell into this category, money was available to make changes for the better.

Officers from the County Council, EA, Syston and Cossington Parish Councils and others came up with a workable plan that fulfilled all the missing criteria, including navigable headroom.

Work commenced in the autumn of 2012, with the removal of the old concrete structure and the installation of a temporary crossing for the use of the workforce.



Temporary bridge



*Top:* Foundation of concrete bridge showing connecting bolt

*Bottom:* Bridge removed





It was now all systems go as shuttering was put in place ready to cast the new foundation and posts erected to support the ramps and superstructure.

Heavy rainfall in the area meant that flood water brought a temporary halt to the proceedings. But once the water has receded, work recommenced. All that remained now was to swing the new bridge into place, complete the woodwork and add the final touches.





The finished bridge shows some nice detail.



Steps have been included on the 'Gate Hangs Well' side, but a footpath diversion looks on the cards to solve any access problems.

Thanks to all concerned for a job well done. Thanks also to Sam Ireson of LCC for some of the photographs.

