

An investigation of the changing nature of the Western end of the Kennet and Avon Canal since the early 19th century, and an evaluation of the evidence at the site and in other sources.

Prospectus

In 1790, the Kennet and Avon canal prospectus was produced to show every body in the government what it would be like and involve. The canal would link Bristol [in the west] to London [in the east]. The reasons why the canal was going to be built are, that it was too long and too dangerous to go round the coast of the UK because of the possibility of attack from the French. The prospectus was written to persuade the authorities into supporting the canal. They made this possible by using lots of long, complicated words and diagrams used to baffle them. Work started in 1794, and was not completed until 1810.

Widcombe Flights

The evidence for the justification, is what was put into the prospectus that puts forward the reasons for why the canal was needed to encourage the building of the canal. Some of the reasons were : - to increase speed of trade between ports and Cities and Transport by road was way too bumpy and damaging to the cargo.

Along the side of the canal are lots of old disused boats that still have some of their cargo in it, which proves that they were used for that purpose. Some ware houses that were used for storing goods before they were sold or moved on, are now converted into homes and retirement homes. There was evidence that the canal uses have changed since the early 1800's, such as new pleasure boats, and old trade boats are now converted into pleasure barges. Also, the towpaths are now tarmac for walking dogs and cycling.

This site was very useful for me because it was almost the same as back in the day when it was a full and working trade canal. It was one of the most important trade routes in the 1800's. There are lots of features that indicate that it was used frequently, such as

warehouses, bridges, changeover bridges, the lock keepers cottages and stables. Also the tow paths and piers.

Sydney Gardens Print

I think that the print is not very useful to me because it differs considerably from what I saw at the site.

If the artist was looking west, he left out Cleveland house. The house was built in 1810, 2 years before the print was published. The artist might have done this because he didn't want the scenery to look too cluttered, and the house might have made it look ugly. The print could have been for an advert, and the artist was told to make the place look more attractive by changing the gardens about so it would look appealing. Instead of having a large trade barge, he has placed a nice little pleasure boat, to give the place a sense of class. The women in the picture are slightly over dressed but all to make them and the surroundings look more elegant. Also, if the artist was drawing the advert from the other direction, the tow path would be on the other side to what is drawn in the picture. If the artist had drawn the picture accurately, there would have been big ugly trade boats and not nice pleasure boats.

I think that this interpretation of the canal was for an advertisement, to go in a paper or for a review. The whole picture is not actually very accurate, in the sense that all of the ugly features are not there. And lots of beautiful things have been added to make it look more appealing.

Dundus Aqueduct

The evidence to back up the justification for the canal was that the canal would be better in so many ways, in lots of aspects. The canal would be an alternative route to using the south coast with the risk of an attack from the French. This was probably a good start to help promote the building of the canal. Secondly, the canal would be just as quick as a road, but there would be no damage to cargo. Also you can carry a lot more on the canal than on a cart or

trailer. The canal would just link up the river between London and Bristol, so there would not be too much building involved.

The 1864 Print

This image was produced to show every one of how the technology in the area is up to date, [also to promote the area]. It could also be for a newspaper on the day that it opened to show what it was like.

I think that the picture is relatively correct, as there are no immediate faults with the image. The hut does look wrongly positioned, because it is right in the way of the path and it should be further towards the coal canal, out of the way. The barge that is going under the bridge, does not appear to have any horse pulling it.

Devizes Museum

In the Devizes museum, there are lots of permits and artifacts to prove the questions. Boat permits are very useful because they tell us all the information about each boat that travels along the canal. It could tell us when the boat was in use, what it was carrying, how much it was carrying and its destination. The reason we can trust these documents, that the people who wrote them had no reason to lie about what they said. Apart from the boat owners might have lied about how much they had on board, to try and save money on tax.

There was posters there to advertise the canal to try and convince traders to use the canal for transport. On the posters would have been lots of reasons to try and promote the canal, such as how it is cheaper, safer, does less damage to cargo and can carry bigger loads. There was also lots of other objects in the museum such as maps, horse harnesses and digging equipment.