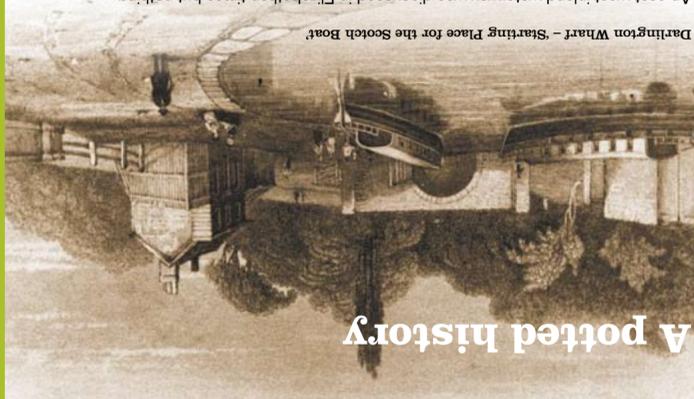


1788	John Rennie appointed to survey a route between Newbury and Bath.
1794	An Act of Parliament received Royal Assent to make a navigable canal from the River Kennet at Newbury to the River Avon at Bath. Work started on the towpath.
1810	Kennet & Avon Canal completed and opened on 28 December. 1810-1840 were the heydays of the canal with toll receipts of over £50,000 a year.
1841	Great Western Railway arrived in Bath.
1852	Great Western Railway bought the Kennet & Avon Canal Company.
1877	Kennet & Avon Canal Company made a loss for the first time.
1920	Commercial navigation ceased, and the canal's condition declined.
1951	Kennet & Avon Canal Association formed to prevent further deterioration.
1955	A stretch of the canal was closed.
1956	Kennet & Avon Canal Association petitioned successfully against further closure.
1962	Restoration work started, with hundreds of volunteers.
1962	Kennet & Avon Canal Association became the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust.
1990	Canal re-opened by the Queen.
1996	Heritage Lottery Fund gave £25million grant for a five-year restoration project.
2010	British Waterways celebrated the canal's bicentenary with conservation and improvement work, plus a commemorative sundial at Widcombe.
2012	British Waterways becomes The Canal & River Trust, the new custodian of the Kennet & Avon Canal.

An east-west inland waterway was discussed in Elizabethan times but nothing happened until the early 1700s, when stretches of the rivers Kennet and Avon were made navigable to Newbury and Bath respectively.



Darlington Wharf - Starting Place for the Scotch Boat

A potted history

The canal arrives in Bath

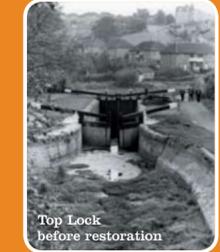


Commercial wealth
Built as a commercial transport route between 1794 and 1810, the Kennet & Avon Canal transformed Bath, providing safe and efficient travel between London and Bath, and via the River Avon, to Bristol. Before the canal, the journey to London involved a difficult overland route or a perilous sea journey via the Bristol Channel and around the south coast. The canal shortened the journey, offered

a safe and efficient route and created new opportunities for trade and transport. Bath stone could be delivered easily to London and other cities, and tons of coal, food and other goods essential for Bath's profitable tourist industry could be brought into the city.

Canal trade then gradually decreased until stretches became virtually derelict in the 1950s. The creation of the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust in the 1960s reversed the decline, and now the canal and its towpath is popular with walkers, cyclists, fishermen and boaters.

Rise, fall and rediscovery
The canal flourished between 1810 and 1840, carrying stone from Bath and bringing coal and domestic goods into the city. It reached its trading peak in 1840 transporting building materials for the Great Western Railway. Ironically the railway signaled the end of the canal's prosperity as it offered quicker journeys for goods and people.



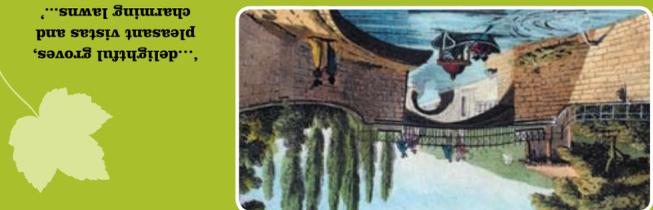
Top Lock before restoration



The Mayoress of Bath re-opens the Kennet & Avon Canal in the 1970s



Sydney Gardens



Bath's pleasure gardens
the theatres and music halls. Huge loads of coal came into Bath via the canal to heat the fashionable and wealthy visitors including members of the Royal Family. They came to take the waters at the spa and to enjoy the social activities taking place later known as Sydney Gardens, and social life of Bath, patronised by rich and poor alike, from royal dukes to impoverished servants. offering spectacle and delight with firework displays, hot-air balloon rides, theatrical and musical performances, a lady-in-resident hermit! The gardens were a vital part of the cultural and social life of Bath, later known as Sydney Gardens, the Bath Vauxhall Gardens, were the highlight for many visitors' experiences in Bath, Rooms, the Pump Rooms and in the city at the Assembly

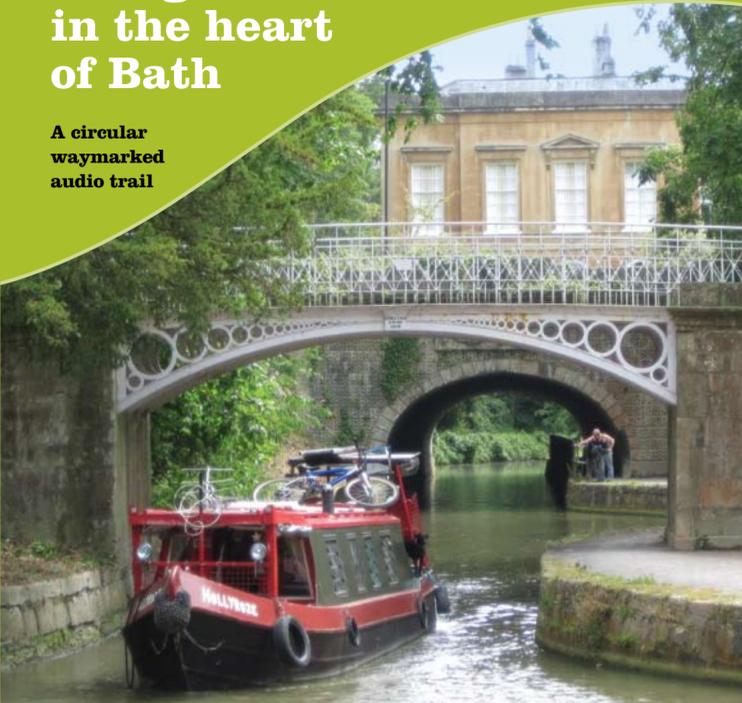
High society



The Kennet & Avon Canal in Bath

A unique Georgian canal in the heart of Bath

A circular waymarked audio trail



Thimble Mill and Widcombe Lock

Local heroes
"Back then the canal was a perfect local amenity for anglers – the water was gin-clear, water lilies were prolific, insect and fish life thrived. The long pond below Abbey View Gardens had an enormous population of freshwater mussels on the bottom! I got to know the View in Widcombe between 1948 and 1967 and remember best places to find the tench, bream, roach, perch and pike his childhood spent fishing in the canal, cooking supper in an orchard and skating on thick ice. "There was an old orchard, now buried under the Travodge, where at night we would cook a supper or early breakfast on a methyated sprits stove. Occasionally the still of a long splash – it would be one of my friends who had a knack for regularly falling in the canal."



Gin-clear water and an obsession with fishing



Canal & River Trust
Keeping people, nature & history connected

Get involved, join us
In an increasingly fast-paced and crowded world, our historic canals and rivers are a local haven for people and nature. The Canal & River Trust is the charity entrusted with the care of 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales.

Discover places to visit, ways to volunteer and how you can donate at:
www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Find out more...

Two audio trails tell you more about the Kennet & Avon Canal. **Audio Tales** explores 12 key features on the canal between Halfpenny Bridge and Darlington Wharf. **Overheard Conversations** invites you to eavesdrop on intriguing historic conversations and letters about the canal. You can download the audio trails from www.canalrivertrust.org.uk or scan the QR code on the map overleaf. This code is also displayed on the canal-side waymarkers.

Always remember to stay **SAFE** near water – **Stay Away From the Edge**. Families, schools and youth groups can find fun things to do at www.canalriverexplorers.org.uk

The Museum of Bath at Work has fascinating information about the canal and other transport in Bath. Visit www.bath-at-work.org.uk for more information.



Canal & River Trust

Tel: 0303 040 4040
Email: customer.services@canalrivertrust.org.uk
www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

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Stothert Footbridge at Abbey View Lock



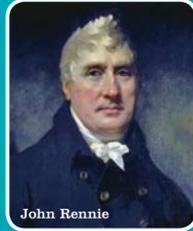
Keeping the angle
James Curtis is the expert 8/9 and 12 are said to be the first items made in the Stothert Foundry. Many other items for the canal were made at Stothert's Foundry and are now a key part of Bath's industrial heritage. Recent restoration of these footbridges involved using reclaimed wrought iron, as this material is no longer manufactured. Stothert's company flourished, becoming the fight were installed around 1814, soon after the canal opened, following reports of thousands of workers in Bath until it closed in 1989. The wrought iron bridges on the country. reclaimed wrought iron, as footbridges involved using templates of the original learning structure and recreated it with exactly the same angle!"

The Kennet & Avon Canal was 200 years old in 2010 and the anniversary was celebrated with an exciting programme of repair and conservation of the canal's important features.

Celebrating 200 years

The canal in the city

Stylish architecture
Although the canal was a commercial route, John Rennie, the chief engineer, took great care to make sure that the canal and its bridges and buildings reflected Bath's Georgian architecture.



John Rennie

Where the canal cut through the popular Vauxhall pleasure gardens (today's Sydney Gardens), the proprietors insisted that the Canal Company provided two 'elegant cast-iron bridges, after the manner of the Chinese'.

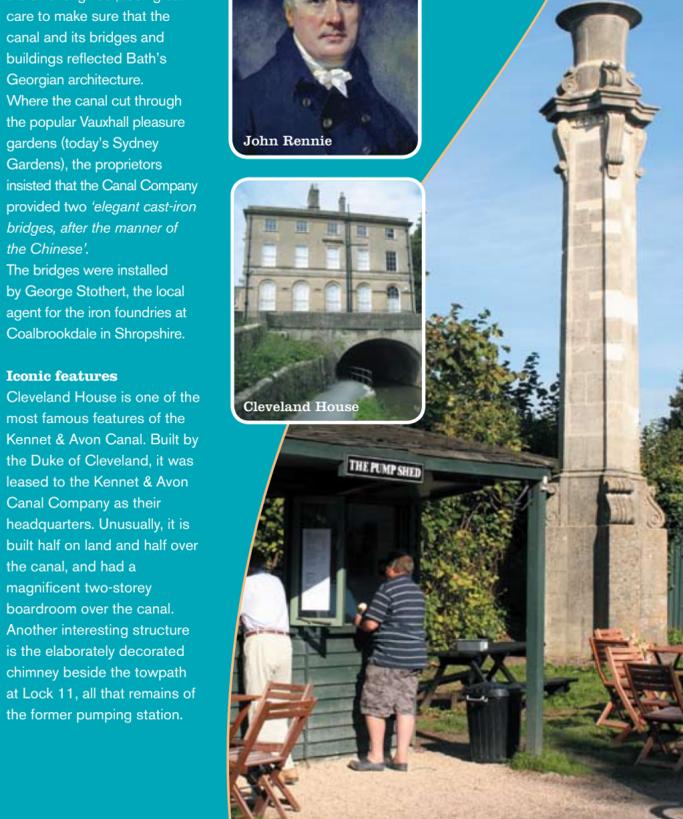
The bridges were installed by George Stothert, the local agent for the iron foundries at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire.



Cleveland House

Iconic features
Cleveland House is one of the most famous features of the Kennet & Avon Canal. Built by the Duke of Cleveland, it was leased to the Kennet & Avon Canal Company as their headquarters. Unusually, it is built half on land and half over the canal, and had a magnificent two-storey boardroom over the canal. Another interesting structure is the elaborately decorated chimney beside the towpath at Lock 11, all that remains of the former pumping station.

Pumphouse Chimney



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