

The Erewash Canal

The Erewash Canal was opened in 1779 at a cost of £21,000. It took 22 months to build; John Varley was both the designer and chief engineer of the canal.

The canal is almost 12 miles long and travels from Langley Mill to Trent Lock. In total there are 15 locks for narrow boats and other craft to navigate.

Other canals were built to join the Erewash Canal. These include Nottingham, Cromford, Derby and Nutbrook Canals. The Derby Canal was further connected with the Trent and Mersey Canal.

Industry

The Erewash Canal was constructed 1779 to move a broad range of goods and commerce across the Midlands. The canal initially distributed coal from the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire coalfields to the River Trent to power industry and also for household use. However, horse drawn boats were simply too slow for a growing economy! By the 1830s transporting coal by train was the preferred, cheaper means of transport.

In addition a range of industries such as the significant iron works at Stanton and the lace and hosiery mills of Long Eaton and Sandiacre were built on the side of the canal. They relied on the waterways network to bring in resources and also to distribute finished goods.



Langley Mill



Great Northern Basin
 Built by William Jessop 1796
 Restored by ECP & DA 1971-73 with financial and other aid generously given by local councils, organisations, individuals and by waterway enthusiasts from near and far afield.
 Opened May 26th 1973

Eastwood



EASTWOOD No.73



SHIPLEY LOCK No.72



STENSON'S LOCK No.71



BARKERS LOCK No.70

Ilkeston



POTTERS' LOCK No.69



GALLOWS LOCK No.67



GREEN'S LOCK No.68



HALLAM FIELDS LOCK No.66

Stanton Iron Works
 At it's height 7000 people worked at Stanton Iron Works producing pipes, manhole covers and other street iron fittings. During the First and Second World Wars the Iron Works was a major supplier of bomb and shell cases.



Stanton Iron Works



STANTON LOCK No.65



PASTURES LOCK No.64

Sandiacre



Toton Slidings
 In the 1950s Toton was the largest marshelling yard in Europe with over 1 million wagons passing through.



DOCKHOLME LOCK No.62



LONG EATON LOCK No.61



SANDIACRE LOCK No.11



Sandiacre Lock Cottages and Toll House 1779



Springfield Mill 1888
 Once a lace mill, now apartment accommodation

Long Eaton



Harrington Mill 1888
 Once a lace mill, now small businesses including upholstery and fashion.



TRENT LOCK No.60

Recent History

By 1952 the canal was no longer in use; trains and lorries being the cheaper and preferred method of transport. By 1962 the canal section from Langley Mill to Ilkeston was only used by a few intrepid pleasure boaters with industrial and household rubbish blocking the once navigable water. The Transport Act 1968 proposed the canal was closed to navigation above Tamworth Road, Long Eaton. In response, local canal boaters, fishermen and rambles grouped together in an attempt to keep the canal open along its full length. They became the Erewash Canal Preservation & Development Association (ECP&DA). They embarked on the challenge of repairing and sometimes rebuilding parts of the canal in an attempt to fully reopen the 12 mile stretch of water. They achieved success in 1973 with the grand opening of the Great Northern Basin at Langley Mill as an appropriate terminal of the restored Erewash Canal. The ECP&DA continues to play a key role in restoration and preservation along the Erewash Canal, examples include Sandiacre lock cottages, the pump house and swing bridge at Langley Mill. As a result of the effort and vision of the ECP&DA, the Erewash canal continues to thrive with people near and far enjoying the water and landscape in the shadows of its industrial past.