

You may be surprised to find out that.....

For nearly a hundred years horse drawn narrow boats brought coal from the Somersetshire coalfields to the towns of the Vale of the White Horse and on to the River Thames via it's junction in ABINGDON.

This original cast iron bridge has the inscription "Wilts and Berks Canal Company 1824", but it is not over the canal. It is over a tributary of the Thames, the River Ock. It was built by the Canal Company to provide access to the junction and wharf.



The actual junction was about a hundred yards down stream. The entrance is now blocked off, but still quite obvious.



During the Summer of 2003, the Environment Agency provided a sign to mark the site of a proposed new junction for the canal with the river. This is about one mile downstream from the original junction and opposite Culham Lock Cut. The sign was installed by members of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, who are leading the restoration of the whole canal.



The sign immediately attracted the attention of passing boats.



The canal was abandoned by Act of Parliament in 1914 following years of decline.

For nearly seventy years it slowly disappeared from view.

In the towns, such as Abingdon, it was filled in and built over.

In the countryside some infilling took place but much of it was slowly reclaimed by nature and lay hidden from view.

This was its salvation.

In 1977 a Group was formed.

The Wilts & Berks Canal Amenity Group determined to try to preserve and protect the remains of the canal and promote areas for the public to enjoy.

The name of the Group eventually changed to the [Wilts & Berks Canal Trust](#), and its object has become the full restoration of the canal to navigation.

[This is **NOT** an Official WBCT website, but is run in support of the work of the East Vale Branch of the Trust which includes Abingdon]