

JOHN TIMMINS

The Canal is one of the newest/oldest Canals on the Birmingham Canal Navigation Company. It was opened in 1844 to bypass the heavily congested Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, which was open 24/7 365 days a year and even had gas lamps on the towpaths. Even if the narrow boats wanted to deliver their cargo to the Black Country and beyond, they had to go up the 13 Farmers Bridge set of locks towards Birmingham City Centre to pick up the new/old main lines towards the Black Country.

The Tame Valley Canal was the M6 toll road of its day, allowing narrow boats and their cargo to access the Black Country and beyond, saving both time and money for the Canal Companies.

Photo 1, Map of the canal stretch that I walked.

Photo 2, Start, College Road Bridge, a busy road leading to Kingstanding and Sutton Coldfield.

Photo 3, A Bridge over a bricked-up wharf that is now an industrial estate.

Photo 4, Aldridge Road Bridge, another busy road.

Photo 5, Moggy using the Canal towpath to go mousing!

Photo 6, M6 Motorway, an extremely busy road as anybody will know if they have had to use in rush hour, particularly on Friday afternoons.

Photo 7, Diverted footpath around Perry Barr Park Reservoir while they were re-building the Alexander Stadium for the Commonwealth Games. The stadium was completed in July 2022 but the sign and diversion are still in place.

Photo 8, Perry Barr Locks cast iron pedestrian bridge: this is a very popular spot to access the Canal.

Photo 9, close-up of the cast iron pedestrian bridge.

Photo 10, Finish. Freeth Bridge, a local landmark, now pedestrian only due to the weakness of the structure. It was named after Mr Freeth, an accountant of the Birmingham Canal Navigation Company who turned the company into one of the largest, richest companies of its time. There is a Freeth Street named after him in Birmingham city centre.