

The Newport Branch, Branch Canal

When originally mooted, the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal (now known as the Shropshire Union Main Line) was intended to have a branch from near Cowley to join the Donnington Wood Canal at Pave Lane. This would have been 7¾ miles long, but the idea was abandoned. The branch would have linked the East Shropshire tub-boat canals to the main canal network.

This objective was revived when the canal company obtained a further Act of Parliament in 1827 to „alter the line“ and to “make certain branches therefrom”. The Newport Branch, from Norbury to Wappenshall, connected with the tub-boat canals via the Shrewsbury Canal, rather than the Donnington Wood, which allowed the former to be widened and narrowboats to reach Shrewsbury. The original proposal would undoubtedly have left all the tub-boat canals as just that.

In addition, as Joseph Priesley recorded in his 1831 “Historical Account of the Navigable Rivers, Canals, and Railways, throughout Great Britain”:

“From this [Newport] branch there is a collateral cut to a place called The Buttery, in the parish of Edgmond, which is nearly half a mile in length, the estimate for which is £2,421 18s. 10d. and for the Newport Branch, £72,629 13s. 2d. The company had it in contemplation to make a second collateral cut, from the Newport Branch, to Lime Kiln Bridge, but it was abandoned. The length was two miles and three quarters, and the estimate for making it amounted to the sum of £17,652 14s. 6d....All these estimates were made by Mr. Thomas Telford, in 1826.”

The map below shows this “abandoned” branch. It is taken from an undated “Map of the Birmingham and Liverpool Canal, surveyed under the direction of Thomas Telford, Civil Engineer, F.R.S.L.&E.”

