

The Montgomery Canal

&

“HOW IT ALL BEGAN”

THE WIDER PICTURE.

Way back in the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution had seen the migration of workers and their families from the countryside to towns and industrial areas. This migration had put increased pressure on farms to produce more food as these families were no longer producing their own.

To cope with this increasing demand, the farming community was forced to look at ways of expanding their production of food.

Large areas of land that had originally been rough ground was being brought under cultivation with the aid of new industrially produced affordable ploughs.

Owing to the acidic (peaty) nature of the soil along the Severn Valley, the demand for lime as a neutralising agent saw a rapidly increasing market.

To cope with this new demand, the number of lime kilns producing it also saw a rapid increase in their numbers.

Limestone from the Llanymynech and Porthywaen Limestone quarries and the fuel to fire the kilns (mainly coal) from Oswestry, Chirk and Ruabon mines, had to be transported great distances.

The woolen industry was also becoming firmly established in Mid Wales, especially around Newtown.

Transport at the time was mainly limited to horse drawn vehicles and pack horses travelling over very rough roads and tracks.

Water transport along the River Severn as far as Poolquay, was hard and unreliable.

A new form of transport was urgently needed.

Several new canals had already been built in other parts of the country and were being seen as a success.

Groups of landowners and other business people then decided that this was the mode of transport needed in the area to boost production (and also their profits).

AND SO IT ALL BEGAN!

The Montgomery Canal as we know it originally started off as two canals:-

The Llanymynech Branch of the Ellesmere Canal by an act of Parliament in 1793

and:-

The Montgomeryshire Canal ---- receiving Royal Assent in 1794.