

BARGING THROUGH ISLINGTON

200 years of the Regent's Canal

1802

A canal between the Paddington Canal and the river Thames at Limehouse proposed by Thomas Homer, and the concept of the Regent's Canal is born.

1819

Work on Islington Tunnel completed. The Regent's Canal runs through the tunnel under Angel.



1820's

City Basin, the Regent's Canal, watercolour by C. Barrow.

1822

Opening of Horsfall Basin, now Battlebridge Basin.

1826

A steam-chain tug was introduced to Islington Tunnel, which assisted with bottle neck and was one of the earliest uses of steam power on the canals.

1857

Carlo Gatti starts importing ice from Norway, brought to his ice warehouses via barges travelling from the Thames through to Regent's Canal.

1929

The Regent's Canal and Grand Junction Companies merge to form the Grand Union Canal Company.



1937

Entrance to Islington Tunnel photograph, ILHC.

1950's

Horsedrawn boats cease to operate in 1956, already replaced by small tractors which had began pulling boats in the 1940's.

1969

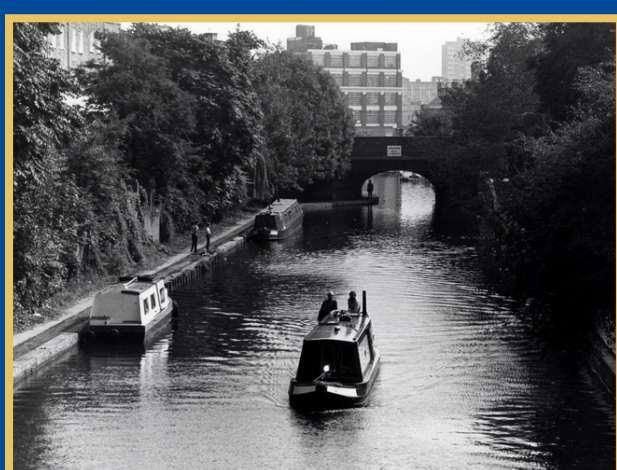
The Regent's Canal Dock, at the junction with the Thames, closed to shipping due to lost commercial traffic to railways and lorries.

1972

Crystal Hale led a campaign against the British Waterways proposal to fill in and build on the entire basin, preserving the canal.

1979

Underground electricity cables laid in a trough below the towpath between St John's Wood and City Road, with pumped canal water used to cool high voltage cables; Part of City Road Basin filled in.



1982

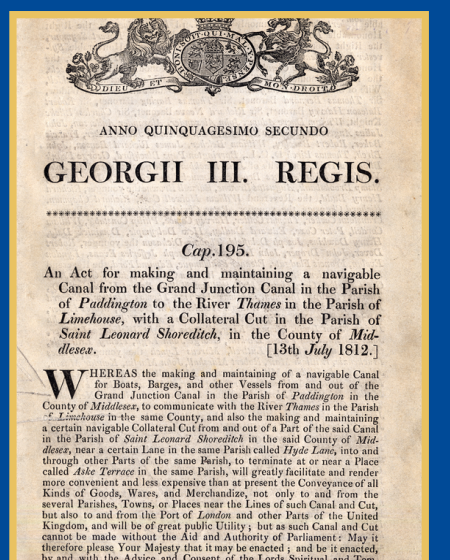
The Regent's Canal looking towards Frog's Lane Bridge, ILHC.

2012

The Canal and River Trust formed, taking over management of the Canal from British Waterways.

1812

Passing of the Regent's Canal Act (right); Regent's Canal Dock at Limehouse links to the Grand Junction Canal at Paddington. Materials from around the globe are delivered by canal boat are used to build on Islington's largely agricultural landscape.



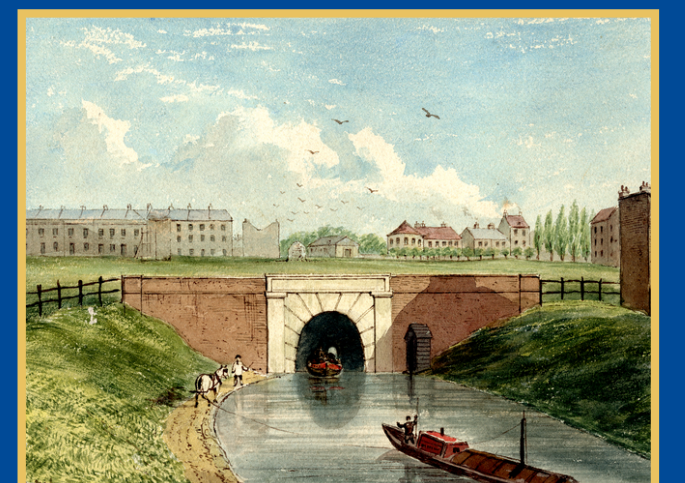
1820

The Regent's Canal opens from Islington to the Thames on 1st August 1820, with brass bands on a procession of boats and fireworks at City Road Basin. The canal:

- is 13.8 km in length, including Islington Tunnel which is 878 metres long.
- cost £772,000 to build, double the estimate.
- has twelve locks along its length. Two are in Islington: City Road and Sturt's Locks.

1830's

Islington Tunnel, watercolour, by C H Matthews.



1908

Diespeker's terrazzo and mosaic factory built by City Road Basin. Employing two hundred and fifty craftsmen, they would work on marble delivered via barge through the canal.

1930's

Islington Tunnel's tug ceased being used.

1948

The canal network is nationalised under the British Transport Commission.

1963

British Waterways takes over canal management.

1964

Canal towpaths open up to the public.

1970

The Islington Boat Club is established by Crystal Hale, who aimed to turn the canal into a 'children's paradise'.

1974

Locks made self-operating and lock keepers disappear; City Road Basin - Islington Boat Club, photograph, ILHC.



1980's

Step and ramp access built by bridges enable public access.

1992

London Canal Museum opens on the site of Gatti's ice warehouse at Battlebridge Basin.

2020

The Regent's Canal celebrates 200 years of providing a waterway for industry, sport and leisure.