James Brindley Encyclopedia Article

James Brindley

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James Brindley

1716-1772

English engineer who constructed the first economically successful English canal. In 1759 the Duke of Bridgewater hired Brindley to build a canal to transport coal from the duke's mines to a textile manufacturing plant 10 miles (16 km) away. To accomplish this, Brindley designed a subterranean channel, which extended from the barge basin at the head of the canal into the mines, and the Barton Aqueduct, which carried the canal over the River Irwell. Brindley's self-made success eventually led to a network of canals totaling 360 miles (579 km), with all but one designed and constructed by Brindley. Since Brindley never took notes, the only record of his designs are the canals themselves.