

Timeline Activity Guide

Purpose: To begin to understand why and when the Cromford and High Peak Railway (CHPR) was built, how was it linked to the canal and what all these buildings were used for.

Time: Approximately 30 minutes

Location: Any safe space at High Peak Junction where there is room to spread out the children and make a physical timeline

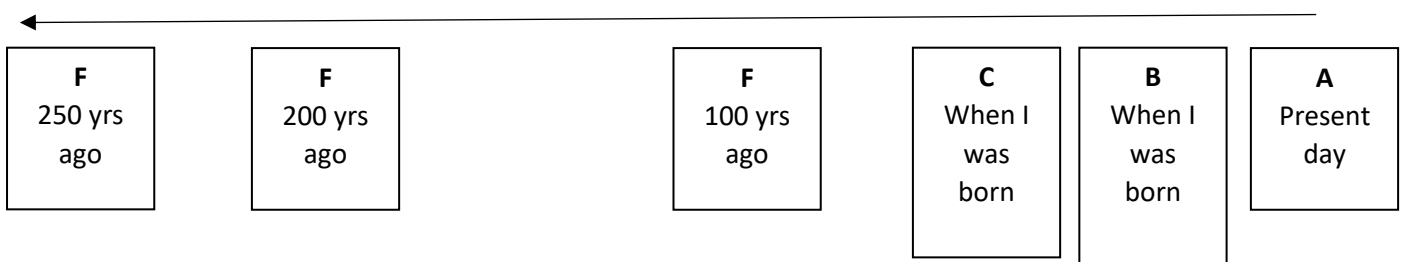
Resources: Timeline cards, a bottle of water, plastic tray and model canal boat

Teaching notes:

Explain to the children that they are going to go back in time to find out what High Peak Junction was like in the past, why it was built and what happened here.

You need to set out going back in time 250 years, by 'placing' children in your class roughly along an imaginary line that goes backwards. Using the timeline cards:

Place child A first, representing the present day, then place child B on the line at the year they were born, place an adult C on the line to show when they were born, child D shows 100 years ago child E 200 years ago and child F 250 years ago (try to get roughly the right spacing for the dates)



Spend a few minutes questioning the children to help them build up a picture of what it was like 250 years ago.

How did people travel around? – no railways, no canals, only very rough roads for horse and carts / carriages and horse drawn barges on rivers where it was possible. So here at High Peak Junction it was just farmers' fields.

What were the problems with horse and cart? – very slow, especially if you want to move lots of heavy things e.g. limestone blocks for building or coal for the factories

Why not use more rivers and horse drawn barges for the heavy loads? – only some rivers were suitable, they may be too rough, too shallow, not wide enough or just in the wrong place, rivers are natural and you cannot choose where to put them.

What solution did people come up with to solve the problem of moving heavy loads in exactly the place they needed to? – they started to build canals, with 1000's of men using only spades, shovels and pick axes digging out 100's of mile of canals that criss-crossed the country. The horse drawn canal boats were just like lorries on motorways today, carrying goods from one part of the country to another.

Once you have established what it was like 250 years ago use the timeline cards and supporting photos to work your way back up the line of children from 250 years ago to the present day.

Additional notes for the timeline

1794 – Cromford Canal built to transport coal and limestone, the canal joined onto other canals to the East, but they really needed to take the boats and their cargo to the west of the country, unfortunately there are some really big hills in the middle of our country (The Peak District).

Use the tray full of water with the model boat in it held horizontally to represent the canal then show them what would happen if they tried to build the canal going up steep hills - all the water would slosh out of the canal!

Because they could not build the canals up and over the hills they had to go the long way around.

At about this time there were also small sections of railways that were being built, where horses pulled wagons full of stone or coal along the tracks away from mines and quarries.

Some people had the idea that they could use horse drawn railways to join up Cromford Canal with the canal far away on the other side of the hills.

1831 – Cromford and High Peak Railway (CHPR) was completed joining the 2 canal networks. Horses pulled the wagons on the flat sections and huge stationary steam engines pulled the wagons up and lowered them down on the steep inclines.

The railway was 33 miles long, one of the longest in the world at that and it took 2 days to get across due to the steep sections that needed the wagons hauling up or down safely.

The buildings you can see at High Peak Junction are the first railways workshops to support the railway, some of the oldest in the world.

1833 – The first steam powered locomotive called 'Peak' and built by Robert Stephenson (son of George Stephenson) was used to pull the wagons along the flat sections of railway, though they often broke down and they would continue with horses for a while as well.

1850 – At either end of CHPR there is now a railway built to join onto, so it no longer is used much for goods transported on the canal. Cromford Canal starts to be used for more local journeys.

1944 – Cromford Canal is closed, boats no longer transport goods along it.

1967 – CHPR is closed

1971 – The route of CHPR becomes a walking trail

Present Day

When I was born

When I was born

100 years ago

200 years ago

250 years ago

How did people get from one place to another?

What if they had a very heavy load to move?

1794

Cromford Canal was built to transport coal and limestone.

It was linked to the Trent and Mersey Canal which went to Liverpool, but it was a very long way around to get to that part of the country.



1831

The Cromford and High Peak Railway is completed.

Horses pull the wagons on the flat sections and steam engines pull them up and lower them down on the steep sections.



1833

First steam powered locomotive is used on the flat sections of the railway.

It keeps breaking down and so horses are still used for many years to pull the wagons.



1850

Cromford and High Peak Railway (CHPR) is now linked to railways at both ends, not canals.

1870

Cromford Canal is now only used for local traffic.

1944

Cromford Canal is closed to boats.

1967

The last train ran along the Cromford and High Peak Railway.



1971

Derbyshire
County Council
turn the
disused railway
into a cycle /
walking path
for all to use.



