

CANAL WILL GIVE US SELF-RESPECT

IN response to Barbara Williams' letter (SA, April 22, 2008) I can tell you Barbara that you are not alone!

As a born and bred Swindonian I have lived in this town my entire life, all 38 years of it. But thankfully I am in the fortuitous position of being employed in a job where I travel to numerous towns and cities across the nation and to that end I can completely identify with your point of view and vision in respect of bringing the proposed canal to Swindon.

I have seen examples of this type of investment and have experienced the positive ambience and pleasure a waterway fills a town centre with. I firmly believe this investment is vital to the rejuvenation of the Swindon town centre and will breathe life and pride into its all too often limp and self-deprecating body.

Since the industrial revolution the 'New-Town' of Swindon was seemingly built ad-hoc with only short-term practical solutions spiralling across one another in a myriad of quick fixes, shoddy buildings and planning.

Seemingly there was never a thought or vision to provide a timeless identity giving Swindon and its people something it can be truly proud of.

Over the years Swindonians have been told, constantly,



HOW IT COULD LOOK The canal at Reading

through various sections of the media (including David Brent), that we are little more than a blot on Wiltshire's landscape, a social model of productivity within middle England's countryside knocking out a workforce that is consumed by its own apathy towards life outside the factory gate.

I can only assume this is why so many Swindon people have written to the SA to vent their objection to this proposal. Perhaps they think we don't deserve it? Well I believe we do.

The new canal will not only make the town aesthetically more pleasing to the eye but the collateral benefits (long term to all those small-minded quick fixers who sadly still seem to plague our council) will bring new investment and development opportunities to the town, even tourism (there, I

said it, tourism to Swindon, whatever next eh?).

I, like Barbara Williams, see the shops, the rejuvenated properties, the cafes, the restaurants, the festivals, the bars, the boats, the jobs, the wild life, the cleaner air and the draw of visitors.

If all the cynic wants to see is an upturned shopping trolley poking out of the water as a stumbling block and a reason to not have the canal then they have my pity.

I see Swindon town centre as being no different. Give us something to be proud of and watch the level of self-respect rise within the people who live, work and socialise here. Give us this canal. It is an investment for the future and not a waste of money. Swindon has earned it.

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