

In 1286 the municipal leaders of Buis les Baronnies began negotiations with their overlord, Bertran de Mévouillon, to build a new canal, or beal, to replace the existing ones. The word beal comes from the latin bedalia, which means a canal, or water channel, the water providing power to mills. The new canal was also needed because Buis les Baronnies was growing, both demographically and economically. As well as running mills, it would irrigate vegetable gardens and orchards, and provide water power to the town's artisans. Because this is an area where rain is relatively scarce and irregular, it was proposed that the source of the new canal should be as high as practicable in the river Ouvèze, that is to say just downstream of the Gorges d'Ubrieux.

The work was finished in 1291. The new canal allowed additional gardens and orchards to be irrigated without limit, even in times of drought. It followed contours and, in the town itself, probably used the old, 12th century moats. Here it provided power to flour mills, which produced white flour, wholemeal flour and herot ground cereals. It also powered tanneries and associated workshops, and oil mills, both olive and grignon. (Grignons are the by-product of pressing olives for oil – the skins, stones and residual flesh – which can be repressed to produce an inferior oil). There were three oil mills in Jews' Street (Galandy Mill, New Mill and a grignon mill), one in the Street of the Communal Well and probably one in the vicinity of the Dominicans' Convent. Finally, the canal powered the tanneries in Cauquières Road.

In the 19th century the use of this water power was extended to the expanding silk industry in the town.