

The railway girder bridge is a distinctive element on this stretch, whilst the abutments left by the former rail line to Rugby tell us something of the past infrastructure that served the town.



FORMER CROSSINGS BY CLAPHAM TERRACE SCHOOL

South of the canal a Malthouse sat between the former railway crossing and Clapham Terrace bridge facing the waterside. To the east of the bridge a pocket of land was subsequently developed as an enclave of two storey terraced housing; Clapham Terrace and Clapham Street and an inlet basin with wharves was introduced which remained until late 20c when St Mary’s Road was extended with a new bridge to serve industrial development on what was allotment land and Sydenham farm further east. St Mary’s bridge is a more modern structure and the leftover space on the southern side is perhaps an opportunity for enhancement.



CLAPHAM TERRACE SOUTH OF CANAL

The proposed canal corridor conservation area should encompass this area and the residential enclave, Clapham Street and its communal green. This area is likely to respond to the uplift in value and it would be possible to explore whether a re-introduction of water space, to compensate for the missing basin, should be part of the change

The pattern of use on the south side has substantially changed. The land between the railway and Sydenham drive was infilled with industrial sheds. This area is currently in a state of change as the industrial sheds give way to new residential. The demand for housing has outstripped that of employment use, and there is a potential for further change in the medium term, bringing with it the need to address the new residents relationship with the waterway as an attractive edge. A creative approach to development here; particularly a better relationship with the canal would be beneficial.

The canal provides a greener, quieter route through town and has the potential to link open spaces on both sides. Eagle Recreation Ground; purchased as a People’s Park by Leamington Corporation in 1900, would benefit from an improved relationship with the canal and there is scope for a waterside link under the railway embankment to land to the East.



There is an intimate canal side garden and barbecue space on the offside at Clapham Street. It sits opposite the playspace on Rushmore Street which includes a seating area facing south overlooking the canal.

The whole southern bank from here through to Sydenham Drive has established tree cover acting as a wildlife corridor, which presumably will be retained in the scheme for residential redevelopment currently underway.



To the north of the canal up to the Radford Road the land is predominantly residential. The Map regression starting with the OS first edition shows development already established around St Mary’s Church.



Looking south to canal over Warneford Hospital site

The cottage hospital and Warneford hospital had been built on the site of the former poor law institution, but this has now been redeveloped as housing. A gateway access from the canal towpath links to a green space. Traditionally this site was well planted and new suitable planting could add to biodiversity along the fine brick boundary to the school.



Listed structures set the tone of the area north of the canal. By the second edition Clapham Terrace school is built and the militia have gone from Clapham Square to Budbrooke. The avenue of trees stretching from Radford Road to the canal is thus curtailed and becomes hidden behind terraced houses on west side of Clapham Terrace



1838 PLAN FOR WILLES BY J G JACKSON

The other avenue; St Mary’s Road, set out on Willes’s land south from his Newbold Comyn house on the north side of the river towards Whitnash church, is populated by larger houses. Rushmore Street, Chesham Street and the first established street; Waterloo Street, have smaller dwellings and therefore a finer grain. This contrasts particularly with Eastnor Grove a series of much larger villa dwellings in substantial plots, whose boundaries reach the canal, but deliberately had no connection with it.



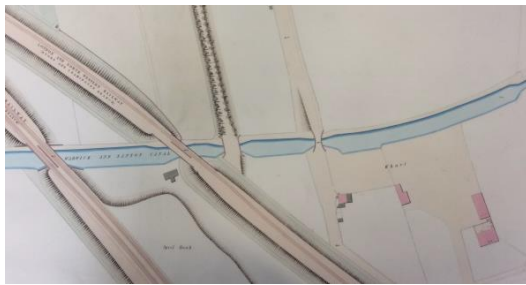
The prevalent roofing materials are slate, with some use of concrete tiles as a cheaper replacement. So far there is a small take-up of PV. The smaller houses are walled in brick, some painted and use of stucco. This is predominantly on the frontage elevations to St Mary's Crescent and St Mary's Road and those fronting the eastern side Chesham Street. Apart from the stoned up towpath surface most of the floorscape is tarmac.



The Experience of moving along the canal corridor is essentially linear, with longer views being to bridge crossings and out between canal side dwellings or the enclosing trees, although generally the focus is on the canal and activity along it. Land either side is flat with the railway embankments and arches therefore quite dominant.



CLAPHAM TERRACE BRIDGE 38



The canal by contrast acted as a linking element which complemented the turnpike route from Warwick and directly served numerous wharfs that have since been lost, as the activity on the water changed

to leisure purposes. The canal in use for moving heavy goods by foundries like Flavels , timber, stone, coal and gasworks traffic would have had a different character to today, but the essential integrity of it as a historic structure remains. It is the uses that continue to evolve, including as a long distance walk and cycle path, as well as a waterway link to London. Evidence of the value to the local community is seen in the local groups who have adopted it and who help maintain its appearance; litter picking, planting and the like.



Use of the canal after dark introduces elements that could change the character. Some low-level lighting preferably of the face of buildings could be introduced to offset feelings of insecurity amongst some users, however care must be taken not to over illuminate as this has a deleterious effect on bats using the corridor as a route. Equally though the sparkle of individual lights dancing on the surface of even relatively still dark canal water can be part of the intrinsic charm as anyone who has been to Venice or Amsterdam will attest. Increasing activity is a key element in safety, so developing the connections and improving accessibility both physically and through greater awareness of the length as part of daily journey to work or school.

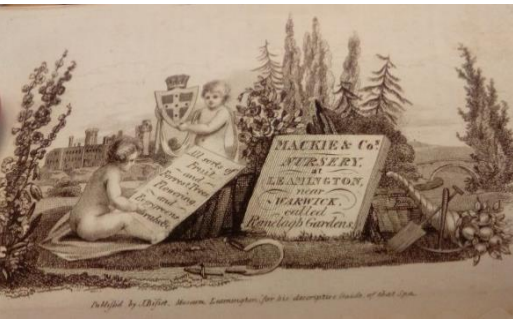


Access points to the towpath are limited to Clapham Terrace and Sydenham Drive on the south side. Some streets on the northside were cut off during General Improvement Area works towards the end of the last century and these might be revisited.



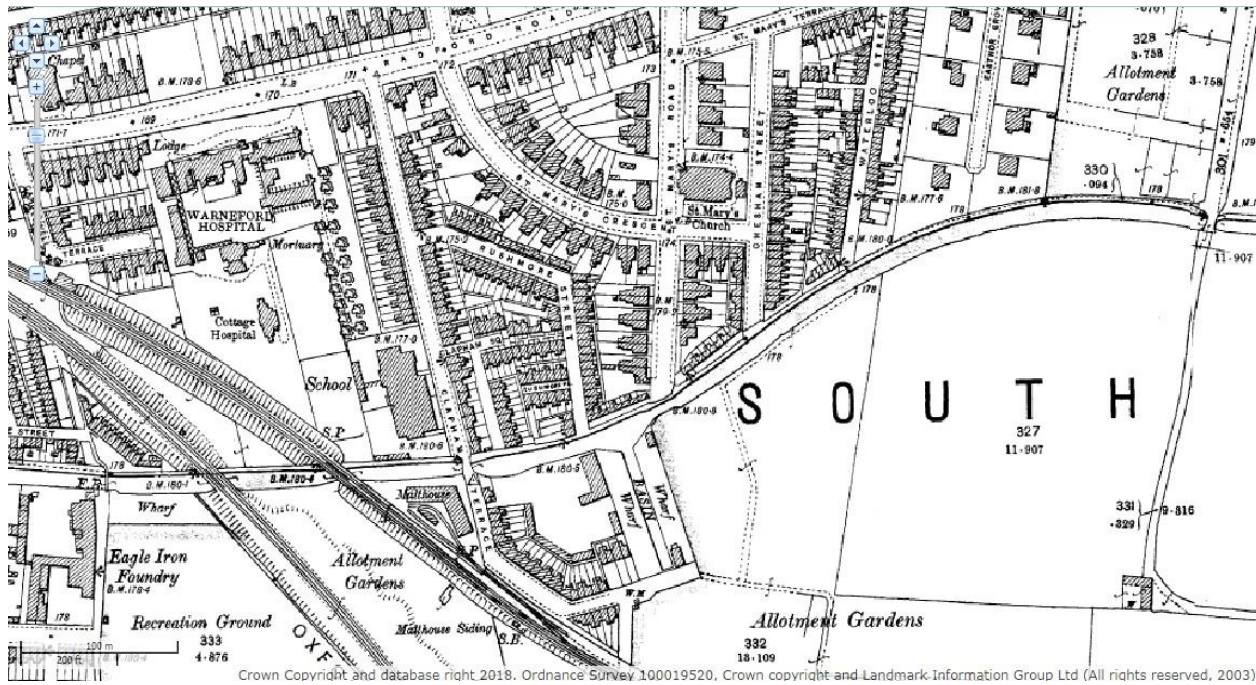
There is a lack of active edge apart from Rushmore Terrace in the lee of St Mary's roadbridge.

This length is not secluded, but apart from St Marys and Sydenham Road bridges, traffic noise is mainly from the Chiltern line trains.



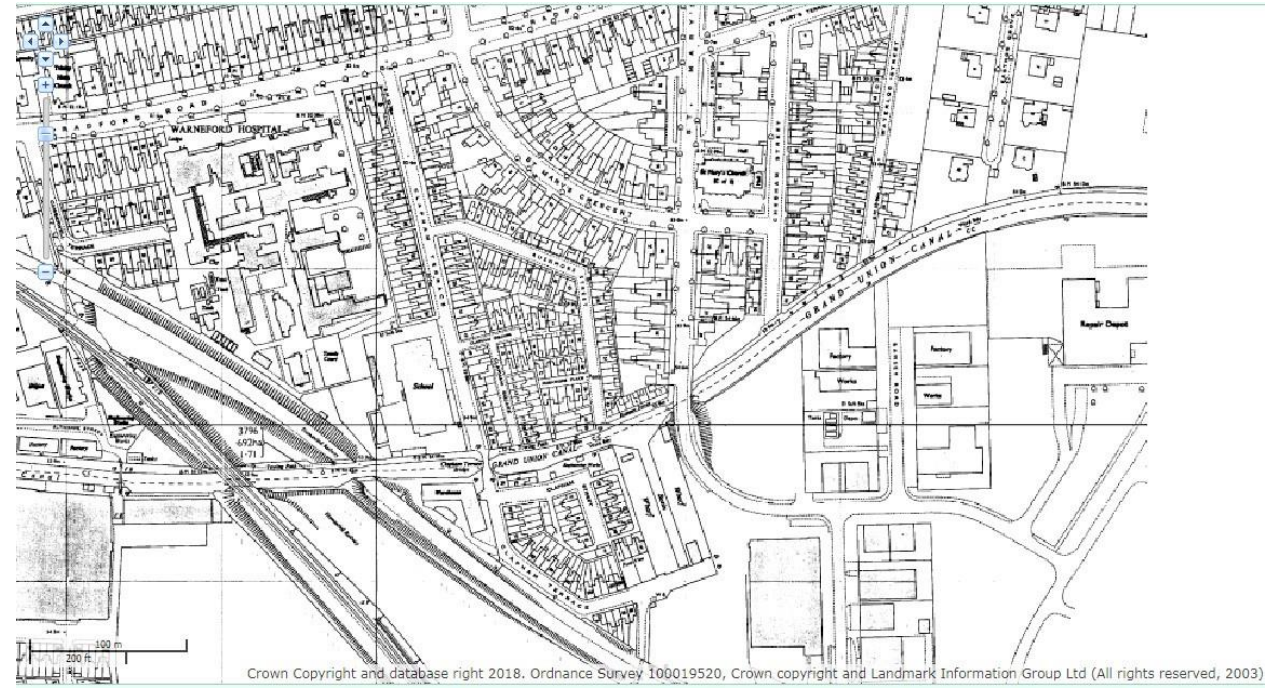


1880 1st edition ordnance survey



1906 2nd edition ordnance survey

EAGLE WHARF TO SYDENHAM DRIVE Wharfs along the canal on the north side gradually were built up. A new basin appears opposite Rushmore Terrace whilst Sydenham farm and allotments give way to sheds . The basin disappears along with the second railway infrastructure and that route east to the countryside is lost to development.

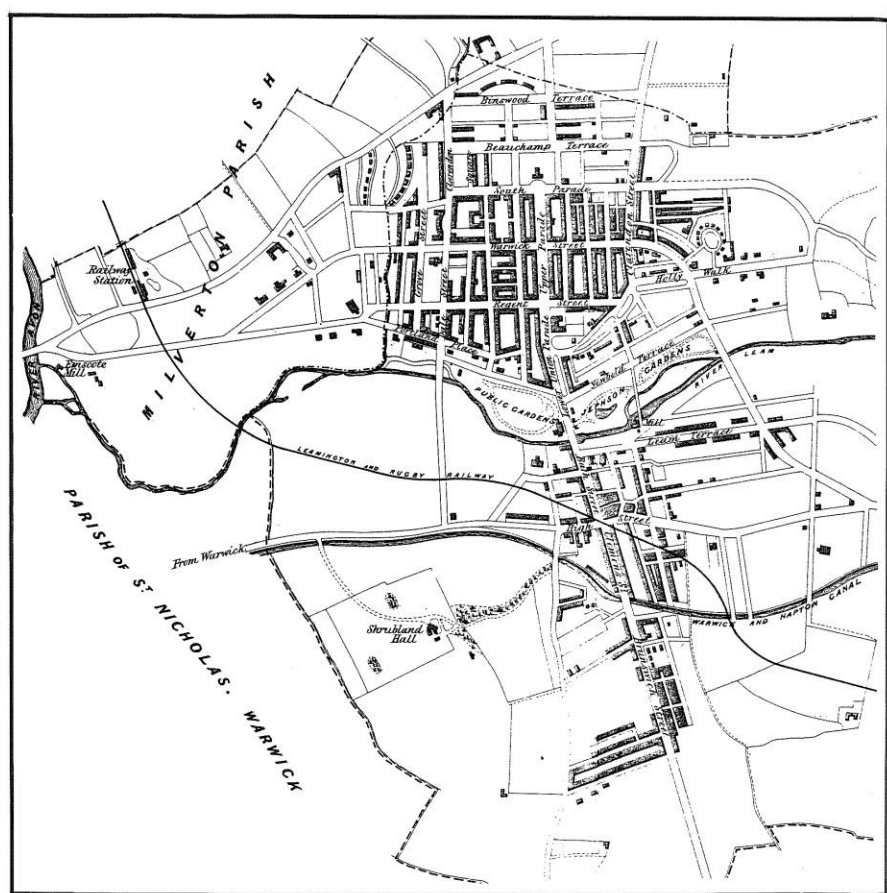


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Source Warwickshire Historical & Current Maps available on lin



Leamington in 1850, from the report of the General Board of Health's inspector.



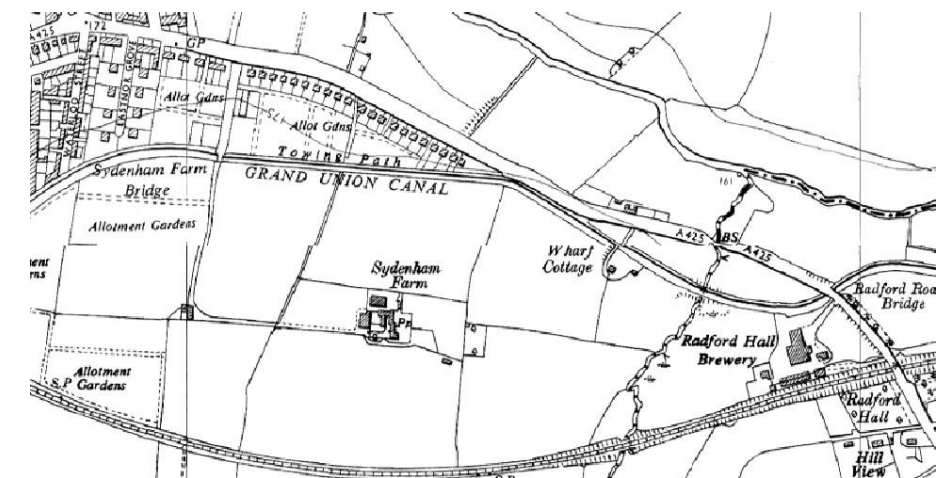
Rushmore Terrace which takes its name from the farm across the canal, is an example of some of the past waterside development at the end of St Marys Road. Old plans indicate something similar before the old peoples units were slotted in. Before the road was extended in the twentieth century, there was a basin opposite and then allotment gardens. The opportunity to recapture some waterspace in the future should be considered along with the siting on the axis of St Mary's road, REF JG JACKSON 1841 PLAN a vista that originally stretched from Willes House to Whitnash Church.



1925 REVISION OS

Under the enclosure award of 1768, the Wise family of Shrubland Hall got 170 acres of land extending towards Radford Semele to the east of the settlement. This included the land for Sydenham farm, and the cottages which belong to the farm appear on 1887 Ordnance survey.

There is also a polo ground , established in 1884, that lasted for 30 years, to the south of the farm. It was managed by the farmer, Joseph Stanley, who leased the farm from the Wise family until 1920's.



1950 EDITION OS



Ref Sydenham history group

The aerial view taken in the early 1970's is of the two principal roads with new bridge crossings over the canal and the line of the abandoned railway to Rugby. The employment land between St Mary's Road and what was originally planned as the town's eastern by pass, Sydenham Drive, ran alongside the canal. It included the Ford main dealer Soans who opened in 1967 and also in 1969 Elizabeth the chef's, an operation at its peak employing 350 people, supplying the supermarkets as well as shops throughout the district. 50 years on much of this is now being turned into housing land. The canal borders the current Leamington Conservation Area. The potential impact on the character and appearance on a Canal Conservation Area is considerable.



There have been at least seven wharfs and two basins along the old town stretch on this offside bank. There was also a waterside facility for youngsters, named The Landing Stage, in what had been the Maltings. Space within one of the various redevelopments should be made available to support community use, particularly if it engages with the waterspace as well as enjoying the other benefits arising from the legacy of the construction of a canal.



The employment sites on the offside of the canal that were part of the development of waterside allotments and Sydenham Farm in the latter part of the twentieth century had a screen of vegetation along an embankment that planting is to be largely retained now that they have become housing land .



There is a margin for a sewer that sees the housing set back. The western block has balconies and openings facing the canal and the laying out of a wildflower grassed area between the apartment block and the canal as a communal amenity space. The retention of existing trees and planting of dogwoods, hawthorn and blackthorns, this should help to maintain an appropriate informal character adjacent to the canal.

The site sits higher above this stretch of the canal (53.8 water level - land 54.5 survey levels - apartments 55ffl) as such it was not considered by the developers to consider moorings -ref Design & Access statement, as part of their proposal. Given the landscape margin along the water edge a more active frontage onto the canal offside might be suitable.



The open space is welcome alongside the canal and the layout supports movement to and through the space. However the western portion which has two blocks of apartments and the waterside margin is semi private space means that the pedestrian route is taken out to St Marys Road to go around this and then over the canal bridge, so is diminished in value as it loses connection. A mapping of the pedestrian movement framework along the canal corridor might have revealed this issue. There are still some residual employment uses including a kitchen retailer.





The pedestrian underpass route under the Sydenham drive canal bridge emerges alongside the new open space margin.



Discrete, safe and appropriate boundary treatment



The rest of the length from Stanleys Bridge(rebuilt as Sydenham drive) was used to provide new housing for the town. The allotment gardens to the north of the canal were used for a school and Cowdray Close a strip of 14 semi-detached houses back onto the canal towpath poorly sited so that as the land falls towards the west the space between the towpath hedge and the private garden is reduced.



This has resulted in some unfortunate boundary treatment that harms the canal, particularly beyond the hammerhead.



Numbers 1, 3, 5 & 7 Sydenham Drive were built as cottages for farm labourers in 1950. The old bridge on Stanleys Lane was replaced and the new road named Sydenham Drive built in 1964, when work began on the new estate for 2500 people. Local builders AC Lloyd engaged the famous architect Frederick Gibberd at the behest of the Leamington Society, who were critical of inadequate and monotonous post-war developments in Lillington and Whitnash. [Footnote Gibberd](#)

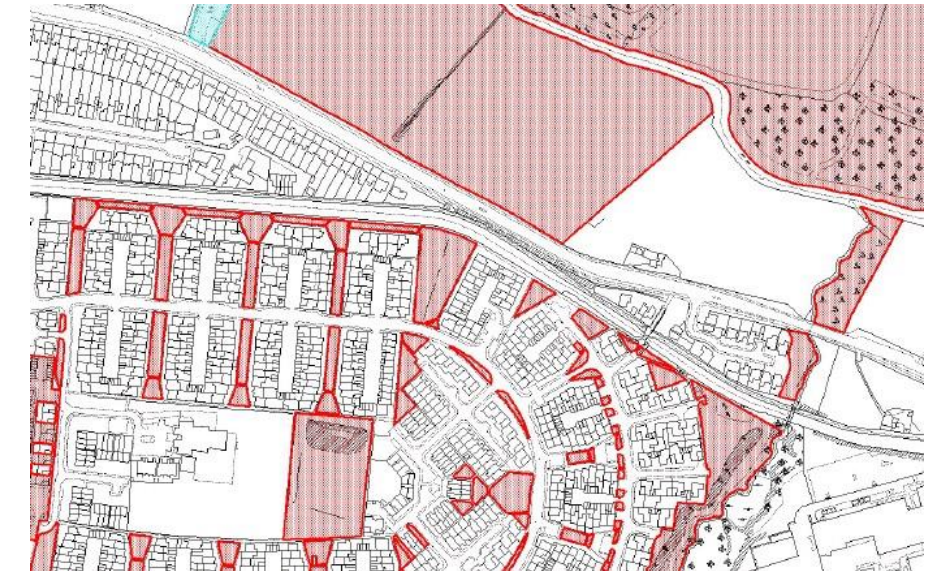
Appointed in May 1962, Gibberd said, "I am not sure I am at all the right person to do this job for you because, being interested in urban design, what I would really like to see built is something as splendid as Old Leamington Spa; whereas what the public properly wants is rows of detached and semi-detached houses all of them different". By 1967 the estate having become established, he was able to say quote it was becoming a small neighbourhood and not just another housing estate." Sir Frederick was knighted in 1967, having set up his practice in 1930 and published books on town design and visual planning. He died in 1984.



Offside east of Sydenham drive with neighbourhood pub and shops



Gibberd's masterplans for places like Harlow gardens as here, demonstrate his appreciation of landscape in placemaking. The waterside walk is a benign route, fenced so that adults can rescue anyone in difficulty. The walk links to the green lanes that run between the housing blocks and extend the connection to the Historic Canal. The public realm embraces the water with vistas up and down the canal.



The estate is illustrative of the changes to urban areas wrought by increasing cars, crystallising in the Buchanan Report, Traffic in Towns. Radburn design housing is a concept for planned housing estates, derived from the English garden city movement and culminated in the 1929 Radburn estate New Jersey USA, a National Historic Landmark. When Clarence Stein was commissioned in 1929 to design a Masterplan for the Radburn estate he set out to build a 'garden city for the motor age'. The housing layout used at Radburn was to create a pedestrian circulation system that allowed people to walk to the local centre, park and the school without the need to cross a road. It did this by the simple expedient of super blocks 300m by 600m with a series of cul-de-sacs pointing into the centre of each block. 'Traffic in Towns' called them environmental areas. These cul-de-sacs provide car access to the front of each home while a separate pedestrian network links to the back gardens via which residents can walk through a central area of open space to local facilities. The concept was turned inside out in Britain, whereas the houses in the original Radburn faced onto a street, British planners decided to turn them around so that they fronted onto the pedestrian network with cars relegated to rear parking courts beyond high 'rear' garden fences, these were seen as vulnerable to crime.

The estate is a good example of comprehensive design to address the impact of the increase in car ownership and the noise, fumes, severance and visual intrusion this brought. Not least it was in response to the risk to children of sharing movement frameworks at a time when fatalities were increasing.



The benefit of this design approach along the canal is that there is a public realm and activity alongside the waterway, as well as trees and bushes. Anyone living there can make walking part of their daily activities. The number of dwellings with at least a partial view of the canal corridor is two to three times that of Cowdray Close on the towpath side, where back gardens abut the boundary hedge.



Bridge 36 linked the Radford Road to Wharf cottage on the offside and to the lime kilns, and is known as Gullimans Bridge. The Sydenham estate housing and Gullimans Way mark the eastern extent of Leamington Spa. The towpath here is a metre and a half above the road and there are vistas out to the comyn. Wharf cottage was demolished to make way for AC Lloyds development and the lime kilns disused.



There is some further infill housing alongside Gullimans Bridge before the brook acts as a green boundary. The brook passes under a brick aqueduct on the canal, before passing under the road and feeding into the Leam.



At Wharf cottage, one occupant was Harry Godfrey who ran lime kilns using lime stone brought by boat from Stockton to Gullimans's Wharf, where it was burnt for use in building and to improve farmland. There were further lime kilns at Emscote and Guy Cliffe wharfs. Coal merchants were based in the town at Eagle and Ranelagh Wharf.



Radford Hall Brewery and a now dismantled railway completed the length to the east as far as Radford Road. There is now a modern engineering complex on the offside occupying the former brewery site, it with the wooded valley to the west.

Access to the towpath here could be beneficial. Radford Road Bridge 35

