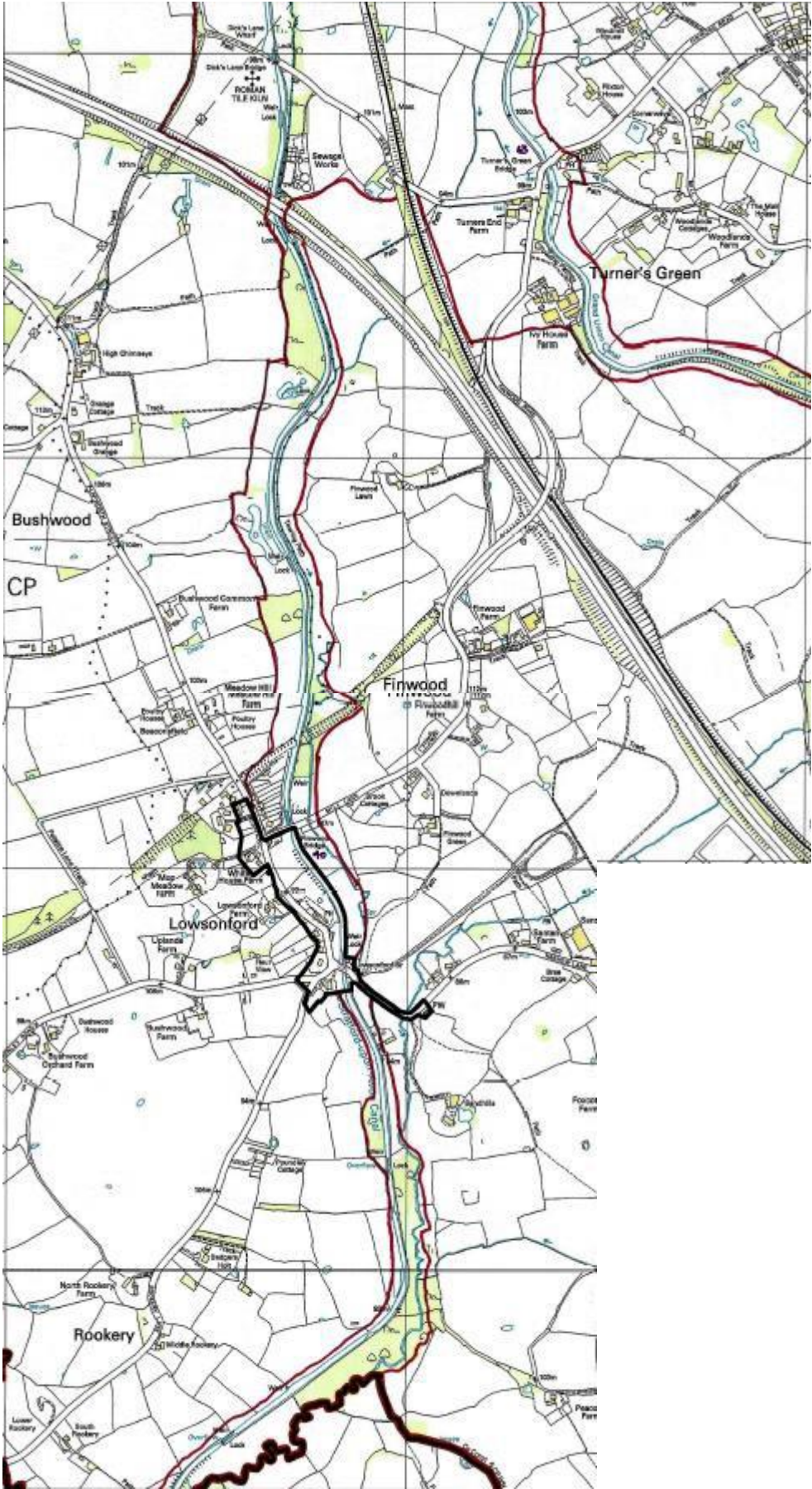
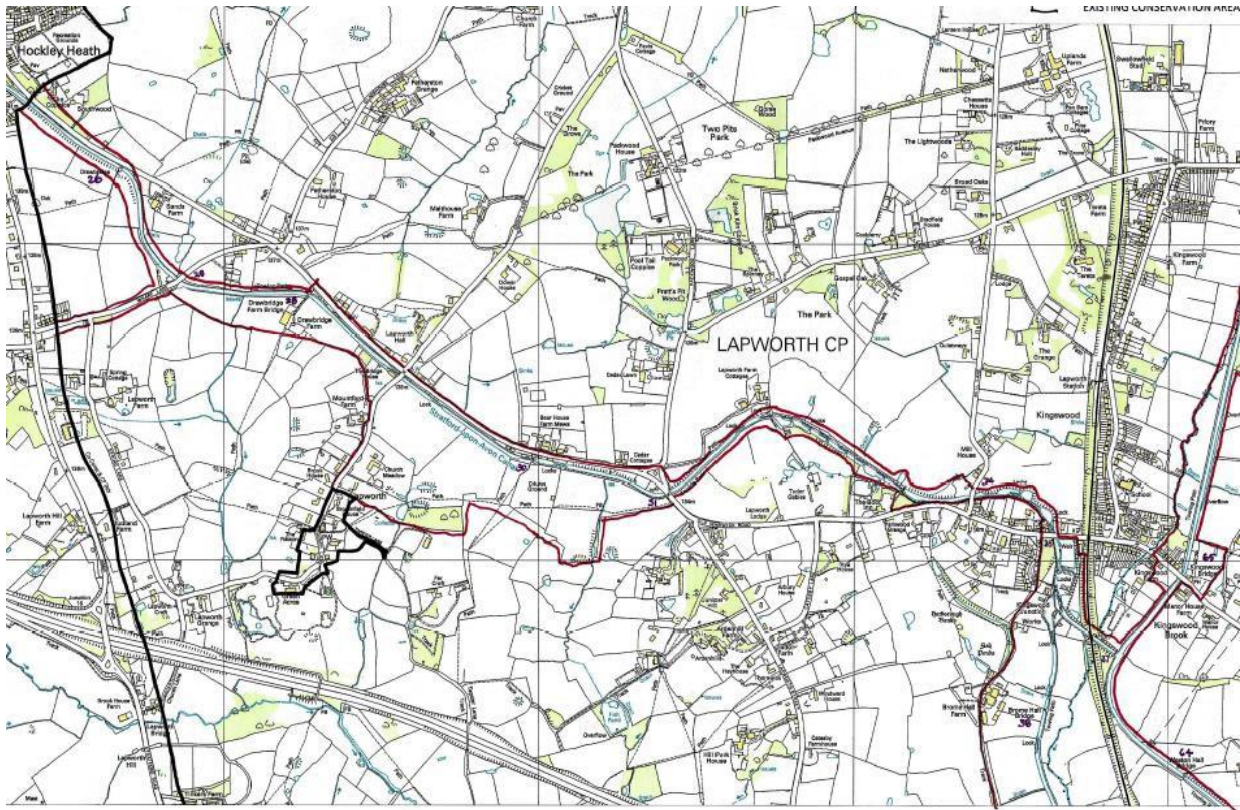


7 LAPWORTH Hockley Heath bridge 25 to Yarningale bridge 34 locks 16 km 10m

Stratford upon Avon Canal initial Act of Parliament in 1793, and additional Acts in 1795 and 1799.





## 7 Lapworth Stratford upon Avon canal

Hockley Heath bridge 25 to Yarningale bridge 34 16 km 10m

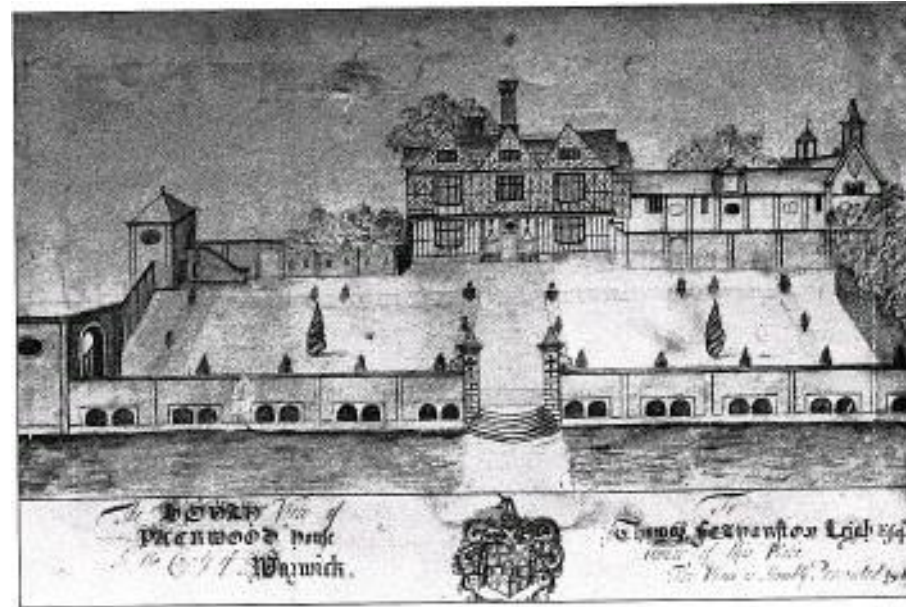
In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the River's Severn and Avon provided water transport to Stratford, while coaches and wagons travelled the rudimentary roads between the towns of Birmingham, Warwick and Stratford. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, improvements were made to the river, and tolls charged on the increasing traffic of coal, agricultural produce, stone, manufactured goods, etc. to and from such towns and Stratford-upon-Avon. The limitations of river navigation were really felt with the watershed that separated the growing manufacturies from markets, and the reliance on packhorse and carts.

**The Stratford upon Avon Canal was authorised by an initial Act of Parliament in 1793, and additional Acts in 1795 and 1799. Cutting began in November 1793 at Kings Norton on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal and went as far as Hockley Heath. The northern section was completed to Kingswood and connected to the Warwick and Birmingham by 1802. In 1809 a further act enabled the work to start again south in 1812 and the full canal was opened at its junction with the River Avon at Stratford on 24th June 1816.**

As completed the canal was twenty five and a half miles long and had cost £297,000 to build. The major constructions on the canal include 56 locks, a 352 yard 16 feet wide tunnel, a large single span brick aqueduct and three cast iron trough aqueducts, three high embankments and a reservoir. The Stratford canal company then extended their line further by Tramway built to Morton in the Marsh in 1826 with a branch to Shipston upon Stour in 1836.



**The northern part of the Stratford Canal was built first and joined the Warwick canals at Kingswood.** In the early days, heavy goods were carried to here from industrial Staffordshire and Worcestershire, using the Dudley canal and along the Northern Stratford-upon-Avon canal heading south along the Warwick Canals. The two Warwick canals were open to trade from Birmingham to Napton on the Oxford Canal in 1800, the same year the Grand Junction Canal opened from Braunston to Brentford with a temporary railroad across Blisworth Hill. **By 1805, when the Grand Junction was finally completed, the county town of Warwick was at the heart of a major new waterways from the industrial Midlands to London.**



The canal edged the Packwood estate of Mr Featherstone to the north and that of Philip Martin largely to the south of Old Warwick Road. There are historic timber framed houses in the vicinity of the canal from the former Forest of Arden, with red clay being burnt for local brick and tile making. Limestone was quarried locally, coal was needed. Trade on the canal steadily increased to a peak in 1838, with 181000 tons in that year ; 50,000 tons of it was coal, with agricultural produce malt and corn going up to Birmingham; but with the coming of the railways trade was gradually taken from the canal. The Stratford canal company sold out to the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway Co in 1856. Three years later the railway company also bought the Upper Avon navigation. Ownership passed to the Great Western Railway in 1865. Great Western Railway controlled all the water and rail routes to Stratford and the river navigation was allowed to gradually decay, as was the southern section of the Stratford-upon-Avon canal.

In the twentieth century, the Stratford-upon-Avon canal saw the GWR replace a collapsed bridge with a 'temporary' steel structure that prevented the passage of most boats. LTC Rolt, a trained engineer and the writer of Narrowboat(1944), and an enthusiast for industrial archaeology, wrote and publicised this in Parliament, and announced his intention to exercise the

right of navigation. As a result the railway company had to lift the steelwork to allow passage.

The canals were nationalised in 1948 as part of the British Transport Commission. Then in 1958 Warwickshire County Council applied for the abandonment of the southern section of the canal to enable them to erect a new bridge at Wilmcote as part of road improvements. The Inland Waterways Association led opposition. Architect David Hutchings was appointed director of operations and, under his leadership, volunteers from various Waterways Societies, Boy Scouts, the Armed Services and later prisoners from Winson Green prison, carried out the restoration work from 1961 to 1964. The threatened closure was prevented and the southern section was restored and formally reopened in 1964. It became part of the National Trust .

A Lower Avon trust was formed in 1950, it acquired property navigational rights before restoring the River in 1962 from Tewkesbury to Evesham. The Upper Avon navigation trust followed in 1965 to finish the task and by 1974 the whole River up to Stratford was opened.



**Of the fifty four locks on the Stratford canal, Lock 2 near Lapworth Hall to Lock 33 at Yarningdale are in Warwick District.** All of these are narrow locks with single gates having ground paddles by the top gate and gate paddles at the bottom gates, some twin and some single . The lock chambers were originally brick lined with sandstone copings from the Forest of Dean. The integrity of the chambers and wing walls, particularly on the southern section, has survived despite patching and repairs with a wide variety of different materials, with the copings having also been repaired in a variety of brick, stone and concrete infilling.



Bridges run from Bridge 25 near Hockley Heath to Bridge 44A on the way down to Stratford at Yarningale Common; the numbers going south to Stratford, whereas the Grand Union is numbered north to Birmingham. The design of bridges, particularly the cast iron decks split to allow tow ropes to pass through are a distinct characteristic of the South Stratford. The sweeping brick parapets are a key element too. The Horseley Iron works aqueduct at Yarningale, dating from 1834, is the boundary of Warwick district. It is the smallest of the aqueducts, the others part of the 1813-16 works under Whitmore, are at Wootton Wawen and Bearley/Edstone. Cast Iron Aqueducts are rare. Yarningale was installed when the Grand union burst and flooded the stream running under the Stratford canal demolishing the original structure on July 28, the canal was reopened on the 23 August 1834 with this cast iron trough in place. The diamond shaped cast iron were signs added by Great Western Railway to proscribe weight limitations on some bridges.



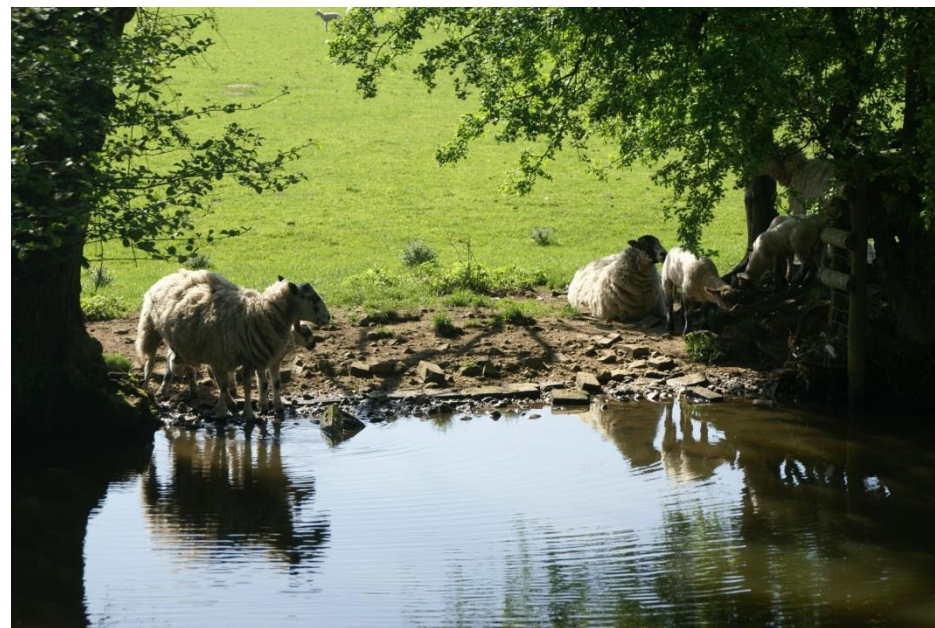
DICKS LANE LOCK 25

Also built as part of the 1813 works are six barrel vaulted lock cottages, including one at Kingswood Junction, where there is also a canal managers house with a polygonal front overlooking the canal; one at Dicks lane, lock 25; an isolated one at lock 28; the one at lock 31 at Lowsonford, with lock 34 at Yarningale being beyond the district boundary, as is the remaining barrel vaulted cottage at lock 37. Canal workshops at Kingswood in a brindle brick and plain tiled roof, are a good example of functional but not plain design.



The character of this canal is rural despite its nearness to large settlements and at times the impact of traffic noise from the M40. It is desirable to maintain the historic bridge and lock and cottage structures, but also the treatment of the cut itself, in order to best preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the corridor.

The setting of these assets is part of the experience of passing along this early infrastructure either on the towpath or afloat. The tree and hedgerow margins and the open vistas are part of this.



New buildings introduced into this setting should be compatible with what is there. Access can be improved, and surfacing introduced which respects the rural character. Generally being within an area of green belt introduces restraint. Designation as a conservation area will protect the special character as a historic asset from ill-considered development, without banning all change. Enhanced use by local people, as well as visiting tourists, will celebrate the value of this historic asset, broaden understanding of its significance and how what is of value may be maintained.





Stratford canal at the western boundary of the District.



Construction of the Stratford upon Avon canal from the stop lock with the Worcester and Birmingham canal at Kings Norton, paused at Hockley Heath, which became a busy wharf, and is now a pub.



Canal bridge 25 under the A3400 is in Solihull, but at the edge of settlement lies the District boundary marked by an oak tree on the offside.



The canal is in a delightful wooded cutting here around one and a half metres below the old Warwick Road level, with an informal access down this bank. As well as the towpath tree cover, the mature trees of the coppice on the far side of the road add to the character. Overnight moorings at the rings set in the towpath make this an attractive place for people to stop en-route.

The steel sheet piling along the water’s edge is set just above the waterline creating a soft bank with wildflowers making it feel very natural.



About midway between the bridges the tree cover has been lost making road more noticeable and the woodland on the North side of the road is more important still. Bluebells on the bank help celebrate the season.

Drawbridge 26 serves a public right of way and therefore has to be lifted by boat crews. The metal structure with counterbalancing weight, echoes the Van Gogh dutch style, unlike the Oxford style canal lift bridges further on.



There is a gated access to the towpath for maintenance here and the road is visible. To the east of the bridge, the road is just above the canal grade and



becomes more intrusive. This is exacerbated by a hedge which is manicured and lacks trees. On the offside bank there is currently a Christmas tree plantation with distant Oaks along the field boundary, extending the setting.

The eye is led on to the ribbon development on this part of the A3400, owing to the absence of hedgerows. The canal bends round to the South, possibly to avoid sandy material in what is known as Sands farm, the outbuildings of which appear above the towpath hedge.

On the offside of the curve there is a reed margin, and Swallow cruisers moorings with views through to Nuthurst and the cottages at the Wharf Lane.



The paraphernalia associated with permanent moorings is largely concealed by the boats and the hedgerow behind. Boat servicing includes a fabric covered yard and large metal workshop.



Next to the boatyard is a white painted Waterside house which has been extended including a large conservatory. Bridge 27 has a high arch, carrying Wharf Lane with a winding hole beyond, which is all that remains of the arm that followed the line of Wharf Lane to the West.



An old sign under the bridge records this as the boundary between the Severn River Authority and the Trent River Authority.



At this point the canal is at grade with paddocks beyond the towpath hedge and temporary moorings down the towpath.



Swallow Cruisers moorings continue on the offside to bridge 28 and Lapworth church is visible in the distance to the South. The towpath hedgerow includes a lot of mature trees.





Bridge 28, an oxford style lift bridge provides the access to Drawbridge farm and enables a connection to the towpath from the Old Warwick Road, as well as the millennium way footpath.



Cottages behind the towpath hedge have gardens sandwiched between the towpath and the road, and beyond the vista extends to ornamental trees. The roadside dwellings back onto the canal where a balcony provides a sunny sitting area above the towpath.

A residential mooring on the offside is the precursor to bridge 29.



The setting includes individual houses which appear to have had money spent on them and this reflects the attractiveness of the setting.



Bridge house appears to have been extended to the rear, It is stucco fronted with conservatory and sits behind an incongruous wall on the lockside.



Lapworth top lock, lock no 2 on the canal, is 10 miles from the guillotine lock at Kings Norton, with a single top gate and a pair at the bottom. There are stone copings to the lock chamber with blue diamond brick copings on both the offside and towpath side. Access to the towpath is by the CRT compound, just west of the lock itself.



Church Lane connects the canal to the historic core of Lapworth and the fine church. The bridge itself has had a 1920's style stone parapet added above the metal beam.





Immediately below the lock on the towpath side is Canal Cottage, whose outdoor terrace sits at the back of the towpath.

Lapworth church meadows lie immediately to the south west of the navigation. The existing conservation area is immediately around the listed St Mary's church and rectory and Broomfield house(1969-extended 2001) would thus now overlap with the canal CA setting.



The spillweir to Lock 3 on the offside and the vista extends to the woodland, ponds, and meadow to the south. The narrow strip of land between the towpath and the road contains a timber yard, set against the towpath abutment but open to the passing traffic and is a distinctive element of the area, a reminder of when timber and stone wharves were much more open, without recourse to extensive perimeter fencing for security. The offside is a gorse bund. Much of the activity is hidden from the canal.



a gap in the neatly hedged garden strip exposes and modern home office building with a single house beyond.



Leading up to Lock 4 there are a series of small dwellings with garden fences backing onto the towpath.



Lock 4 has brick copings and the heelgrip quadrants are in poor condition.





Jubilee cottage is largely hidden at road level and behind a generous hedge.

The turnover bridge has a footpath off to the South west that skirts the village cricket ground.



The elegant bridge curves on plan as well as elevation. The bridge appears to have had a concrete saddle to reinforce the deck. The copings sweep up to smooth the passage of the tow ropes over the saddleback copings as the towpath changes sides..



On what is now the offside, a red brick barn and house has been extended with terrace oriented towards the canal, whilst Ladysmith cottage beyond has been given a contemporary feel with waterside dining area.



In contrasts at lock 5 an apparently new building has been constructed, which fails to respond to the setting and relies on a close boarded fence to separate it from the back of the lock.





Below the lock the waterway wall on both sides is concrete piling, in some places with substantial trees growth out of it and as this is above the roadway will need renewing to keep the water in and can be treated in a more sensitive manner.



The towpath and canal are on embankment with intermittent views south through the hedgerow of parkland beyond leading up to bridge 31.



Pinner's cottage; brick with a slate roof and conservatory extensions, together with its outbuildings of roughly the same age but with a tiled roof are let down by unfortunate fake lead double glazing. The garden is screened by a substantial laurel and conifer hedge. The canal sweeps around the property to pass North East under the Old Warwick Road at its junction with Packwood Lane and Lapworth Street. The Grand Union canal is nearby. located where the Packwood House estate met the Baddesley Clinton estate to the east, prior to the railway passing through the gap. There are a number of substantial houses to the north of the canal here.



Lapworth Street travels south broadly parallel to the canal to rejoin it again at Lowsonford. It contains a number of listed buildings such as Tudor Farm, Catesby Farmhouse, and High Chimneys, all of which are between 600-800 metres west of the South Stratford Canal. There may be further buildings worth investigating for local listing along this attractive length of countryside,

edged by Bushwood – a line of ancient woodland with a moated farmhouse – Bushwood hall.



There is a ramped access on the west side.

Bridge 31 was widened on the West side where it has a concrete face and polychromatic parapet to both sides. The east side is red brick below the parapet with a keystone at the centre of a gracious arch.







Passing under the bridge you enter a wooded cutting, with temporary moorings as the canal begins to curve back through 90 degrees. The curve takes the eye around the corner. At Lock 6 Lapworth Farm, a simple collection of red brick with slate and tile roofs, is nearby with more extensive vistas to the North and north west to the mature trees within the original Packwood estate.



The lock chamber has mixed stone and brick copings and the chamber is deformed in alignment, with metal heel gates.

Lock seven is an ensemble with a split bridge at the heel and a red brick cottage with slate roof that includes a false window painted on the west elevation. The garden sits on the offside and the conifer hedge and close board fence, crowd the lock chamber.



The chamber itself has a mixture of blue brick copings and a timber bollard, particular to this part of the canal. The cottage itself faces down the lockflight to the South East, with a tiled porch and extension.



This is the first of the cast iron split heel bridges on the canal and as this is a turnover bridge it includes a spindle to avoid the towrope becoming tangled in the structure.



Descending from lock 7 the canal turns back to the South east and the flight of the next seven listed locks is laid out before you. Lock eight has a side pond above it and the pounds are brick edged, some of which are failing. The side pounds to the south are wooded and enclose the view, whereas to the north and east views extend far into the distance.

Lock nine -the copings are a mixture of bricks and some convenient robust seats have been introduced facing the water. The towpath is surfaced with limestone. The heel quadrants will need to be reinstated in the medium term and could possibly be more sympathetically done without the contrasting brick colours and to minimise the trip hazards that have arisen from settlement. Lock 10 has large brick copings on the towpath side and smaller brick copings on the offside, as does lock 11.

Lock 12 has the larger blue copings with diamond anti-slip tread. those on Lock 13 identify W.Bennitt form Oldbury as the manufacturer.

The pound between Lock 12 and 13 has moored craft and includes an upright lock cottage, in need of care. A bridge over the bywash connects to a small shop and café on the offside. The much more commercial facility of the Boot inn with its extensive grounds and car park is fortunately not visible from the canalside. What does impact on the view is the twin pipe crossing belonging to Severn Trent below Lock 14., with pump chambers bookending it and what appear to be the remains of other structural bases around the Southern landing. unfortunately, this distracts from the original turnover bridge with its sweeping brick parapets and cast iron split structure. On the approach to the bridge is a diamond weight restriction plaque, the remnants of the Great Western Railway's ownership of the canal prior to nationalisation in 1948.



Listed buildings Mill House to the north East and Packwood grange to the South are visible from the canal and there are long views to a wooded skyline to the north East towards Baddesley Clinton. The canal and road briefly meet before dividing again and the resulting piece land has been infilled with new housing to extend the Old bakehouse plot. A 1.8m brick boundary wall runs along a rear access lane from the parking to gardens. The external spaces do not really benefit from their waterside location and the elevated parking areas intrudes on the canal.

Mill lane bridge -bridge 34, unfortunately has pipes attached on the west face. the bridge as originally red brick but the parapets have been rebuilt with red bricks with blue header bricks every alternate course and a stone coping. Kingswood hollow, a traditional red brick house with clay tile roof and tile hung lean too side extension, is set in generous grounds and is possibly worth local listing. Mill Lane runs down to Mill House and Yew Tree cottage which has nice outbuildings with clay tiled roof is a tall dwelling, one room deep that has been extended. A deep plan dwelling at the back of the towpath below the bridge with a municipal post and chain boundary seems out of scale with the surrounding settlement.

Lock 15 still has late 20<sup>th</sup> hydraulic paddles whereas most of the paddles have been restored. There is a Stop plank frame at the head of the lock and a groove to allow de-watering. The lockside is all brick paved and the towing path here has been surfaced by volunteers with materials provided by Warwick District Council. This is a popular place to walk. The brick walls to the pounds are needing repair. There are filtered views through the trees that border the side pounds. Lock 16 returns to grass lockside and normal mechanical ground paddles. Some of the boundary treatment to the back of the towpath could do with improvement. At Lock 17 there are a mixture of copings including the forest of dean stone and concrete planks to the pound below. The hedgerow on the towpath side is dense containing views. The bridge cottage is no longer a lock keepers residence and the grounds have had additional housing built in them.



1910 LOCK COTTAGE AND LOCK 17 AHEAD. WARE COLLECTION. THE HOUSE,HAS SINCE BEEN ENLARGED, IT HAS DOUBLED IN PRICE IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, NOW VALUED AT OVER £520K.



Bridge 35 which carries the Old Warwick Road over the canal has had a overly fussy footpath bridge added on the North side together with pipes. The south side of the bridge is equally damaged with pipe crossings outside of the structure which obscure the stone keystone to the arch and very poor patching to the brickwork. Alternative options are available for people with limited walking abilities and wheel chairs given the incline.