

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

The Worcester & Birmingham Canal began construction in 1791 and was opened in 1815.

The Droitwich Barge Canal was opened in 1771 and the Junction Canal in 1854.

Here is a brief history of the Worcester & Birmingham Canal

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

The Worcester & Birmingham Canal was originally conceived as a broad waterway to transport river vessels from Worcester to Birmingham without the need for transshipment, but costs compelled the solution of a canal to take narrow boats. There was fierce opposition from existing canal operators but the necessary Act was passed in 1791. There were however a number of restrictions were imposed especially the infamous 'Worcester Bar', in Birmingham, which prevented Worcester traffic navigating directly into the existing canal system.

Progress was slow as costs constantly exceeded estimates. It had reached Selly Oak by 1795 and the temporary terminus at Hopwood Wharf in 1797. By 1807 it had passed through Alvechurch to Tardebigge. Finally in 1815 it joined the River Severn at Diglis Basin in Worcester.

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

The canal runs at one level from Birmingham to Tardebigge, thanks to the Wast Hill tunnel, which lies between Hopwood & Kings Norton. The tunnel is 2726 yards long, through which boats were originally 'legged'. Beyond Tardebigge there is a major flight of locks 'The Tardebigge Flight', which consists of 30 locks. There are 58 locks, in total, on the whole length of the canal.

The canal never achieved the expectations of its promoters, largely because of competition from the railways after 1840, but was of significant importance locally. A passenger boat service operated between Alvechurch and Birmingham around 1808 (taking about 3 hours) and wharves were built at Callow Hill and Scarfield for the delivery of coal and other commodities. Scarfield Brickworks used the canal for receipt of coal and despatching bricks and at one time night-soil' was brought, by canal, to Alvechurch for dumping.

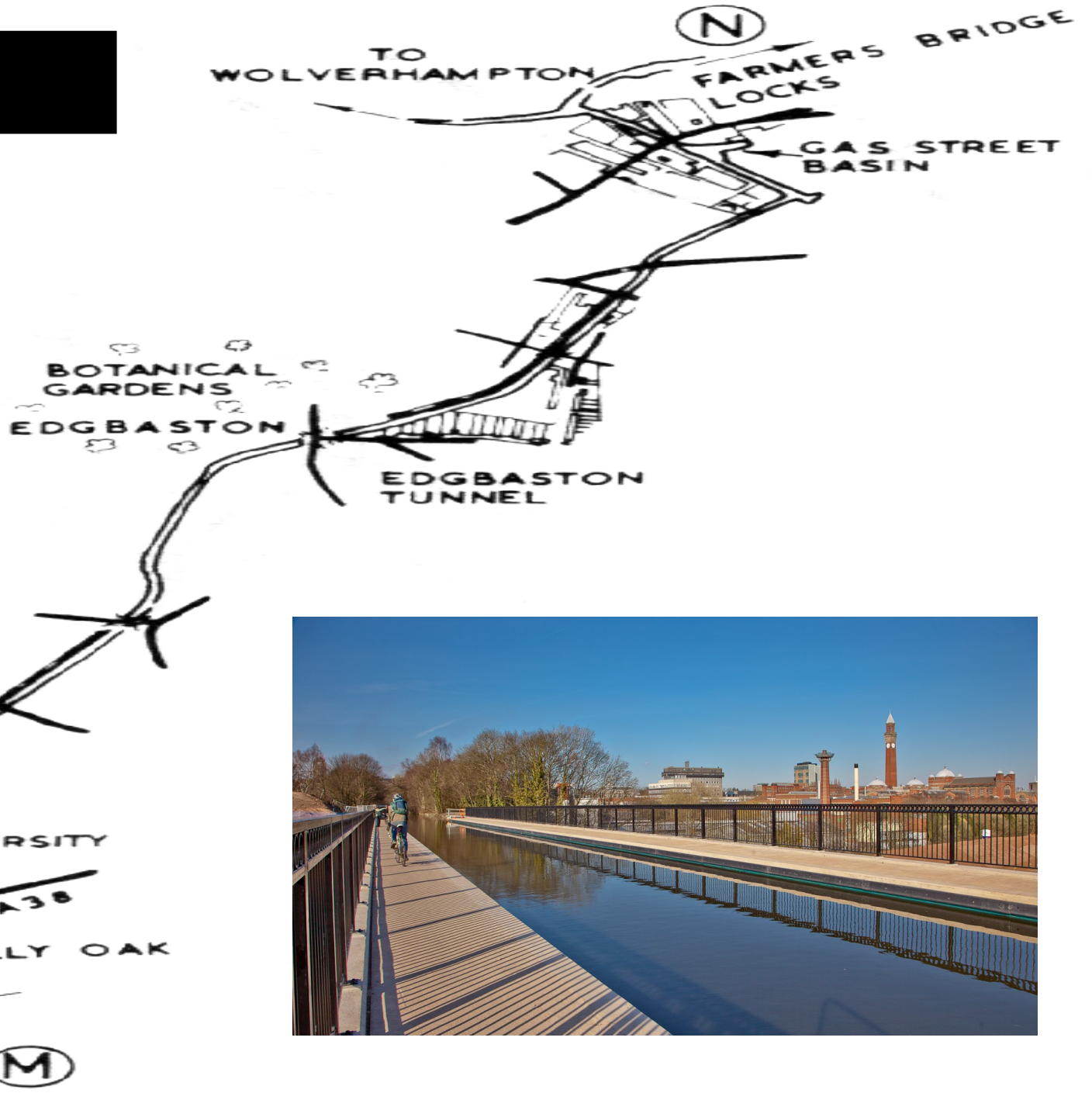
The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

These days the canal is used mostly by pleasure boats.

**Alvechurch has one of the largest Marinas
on The Midlands Canal system.**

**Maps on the following
slides show the routes.**

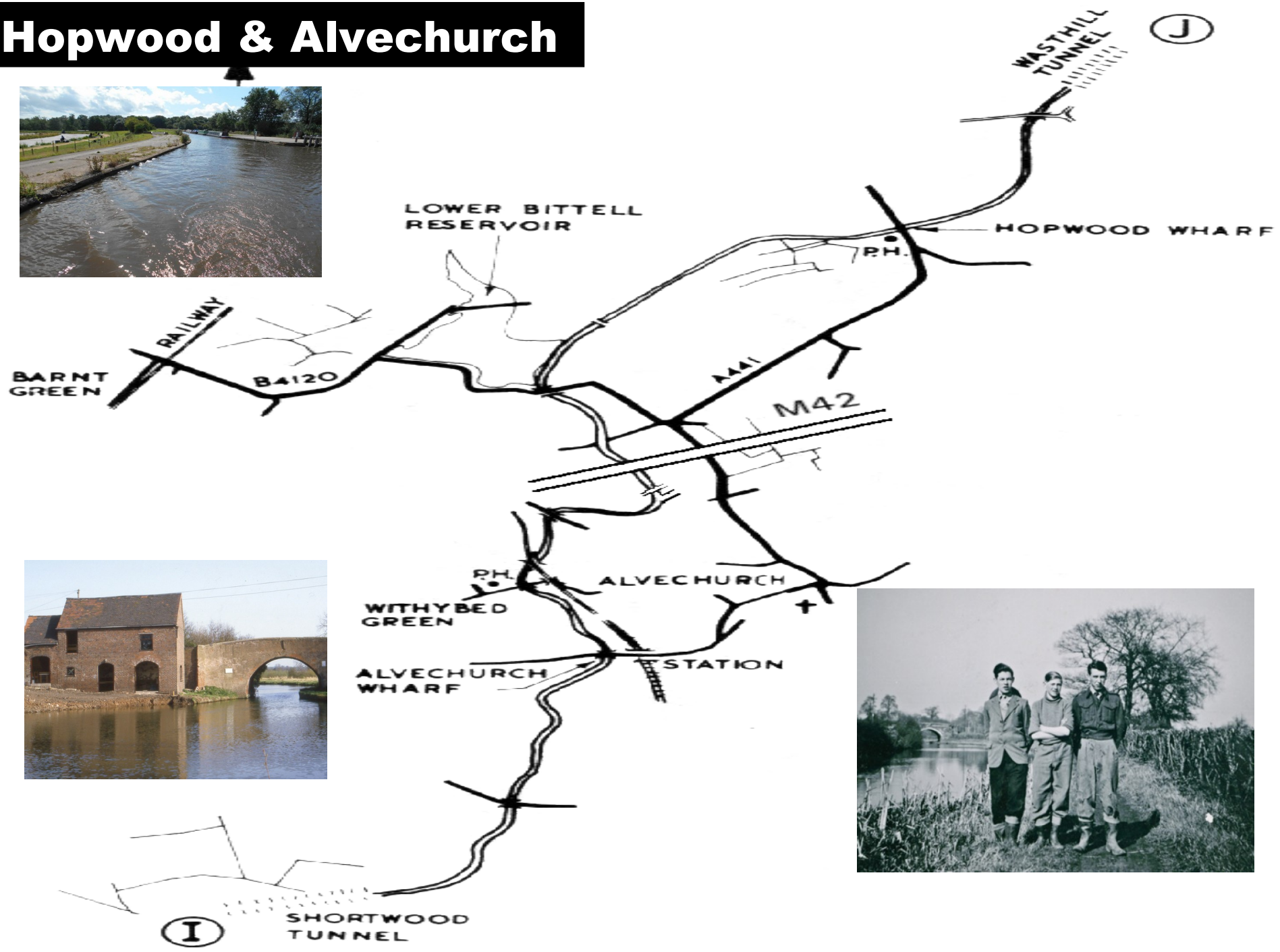
Birmingham to Selly Oak



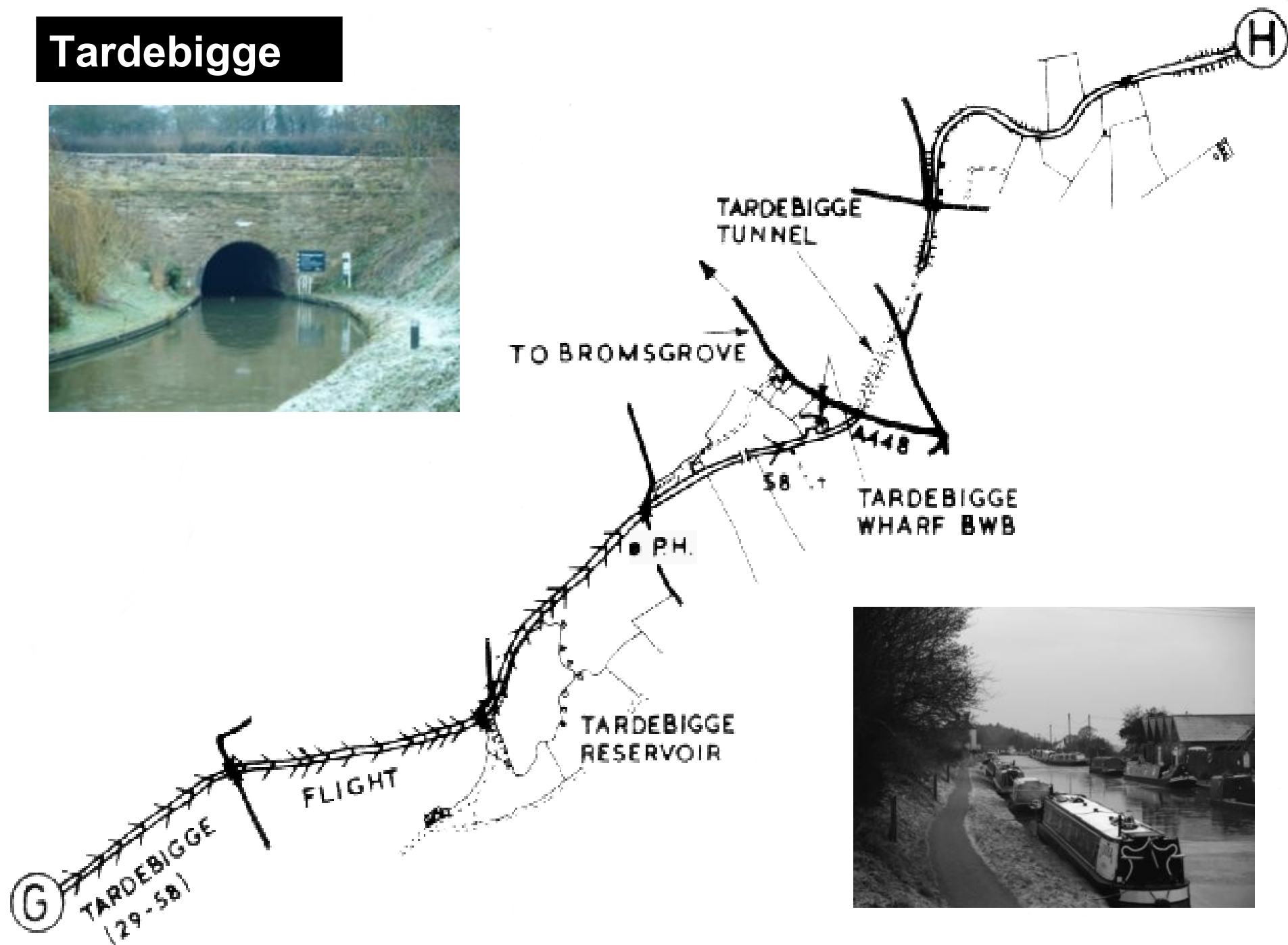
Kings Norton & Wast Hills Tunnel



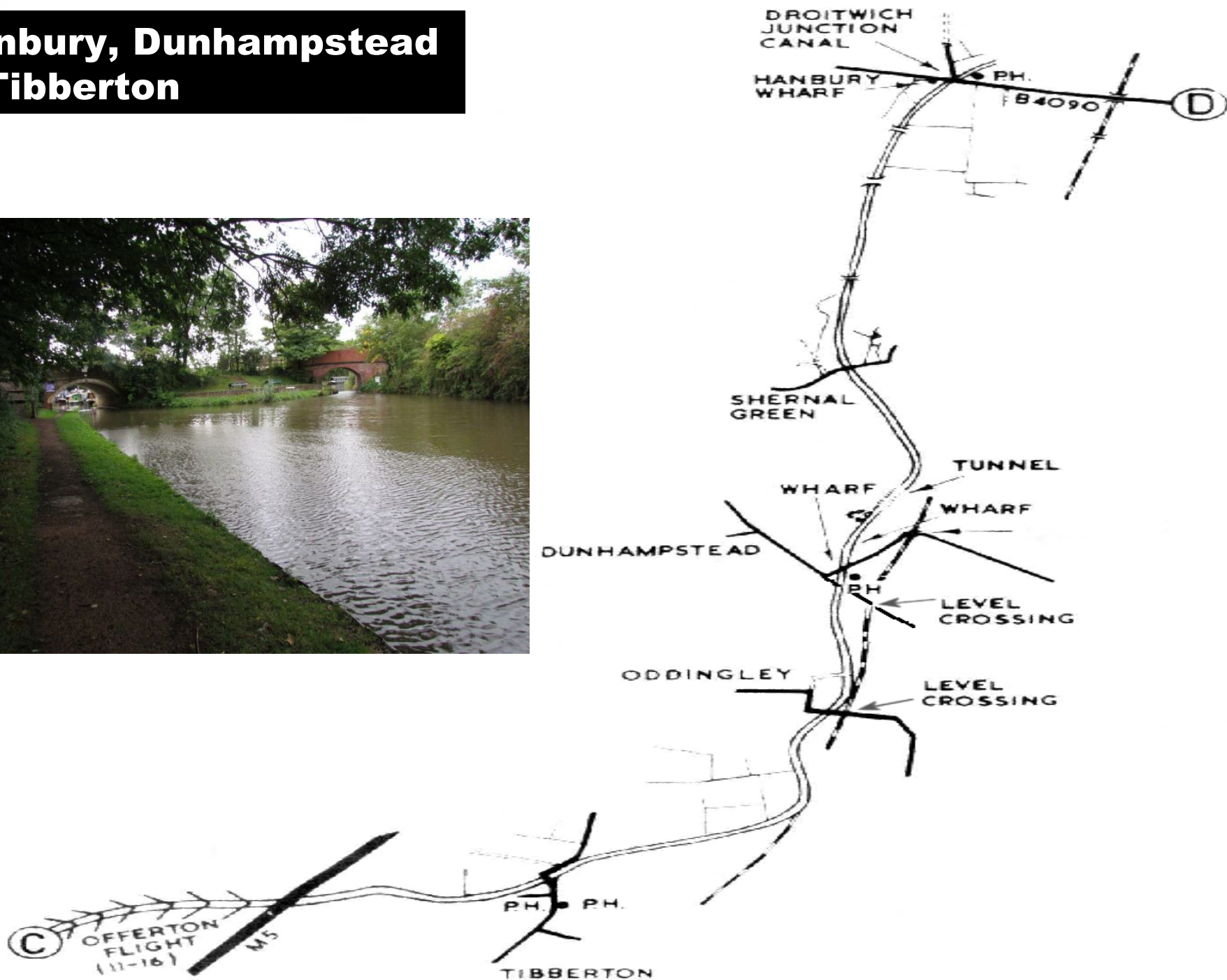
Hopwood & Alvechurch



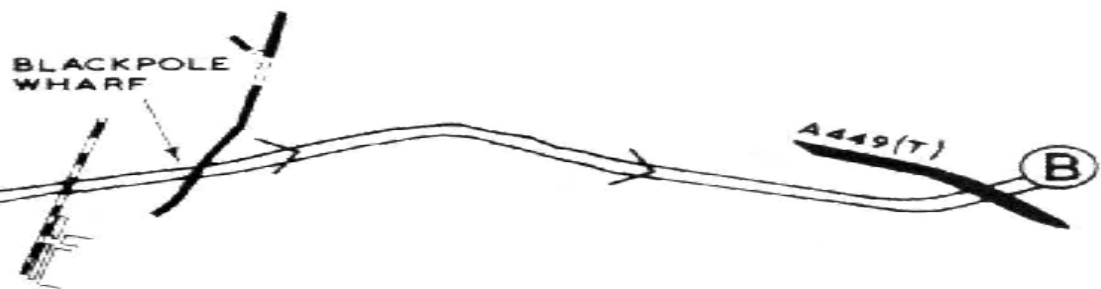
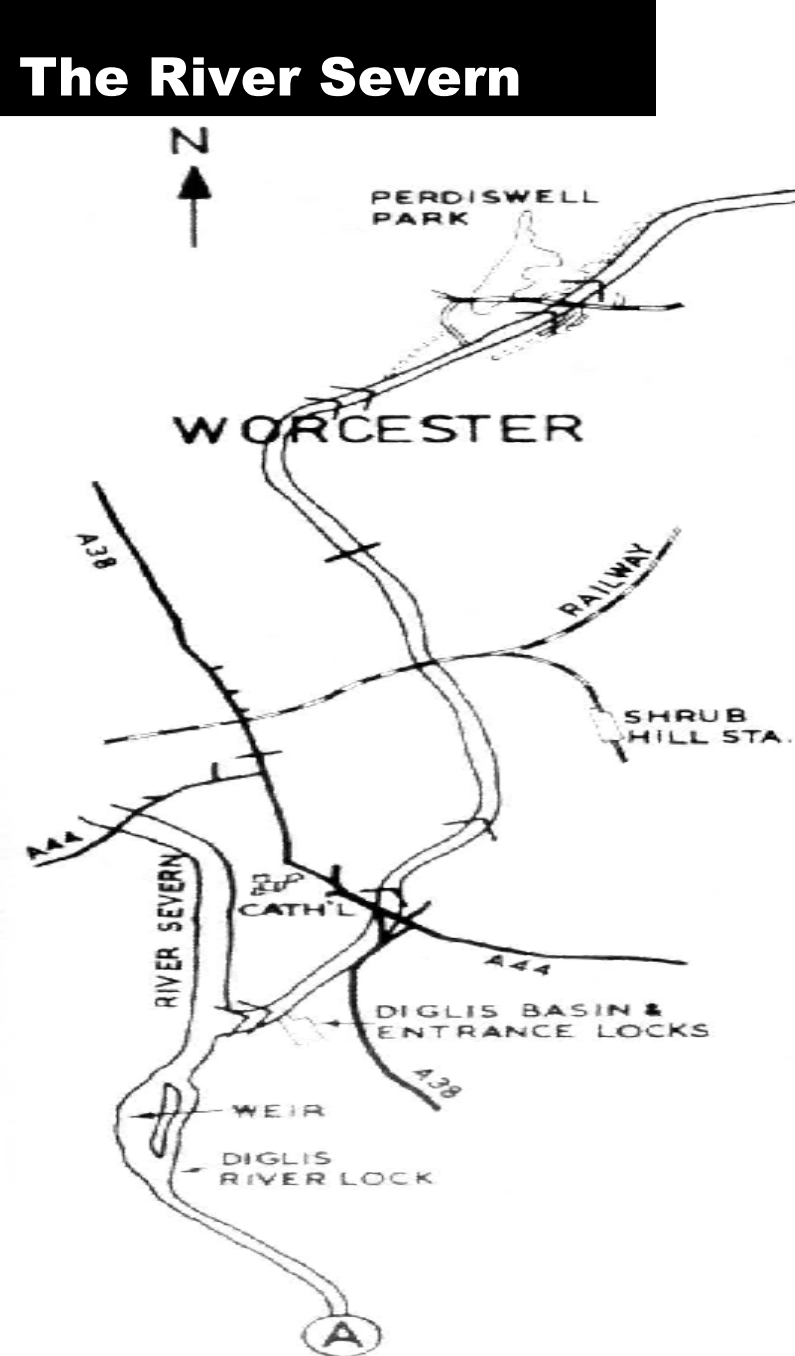
Tardebigge



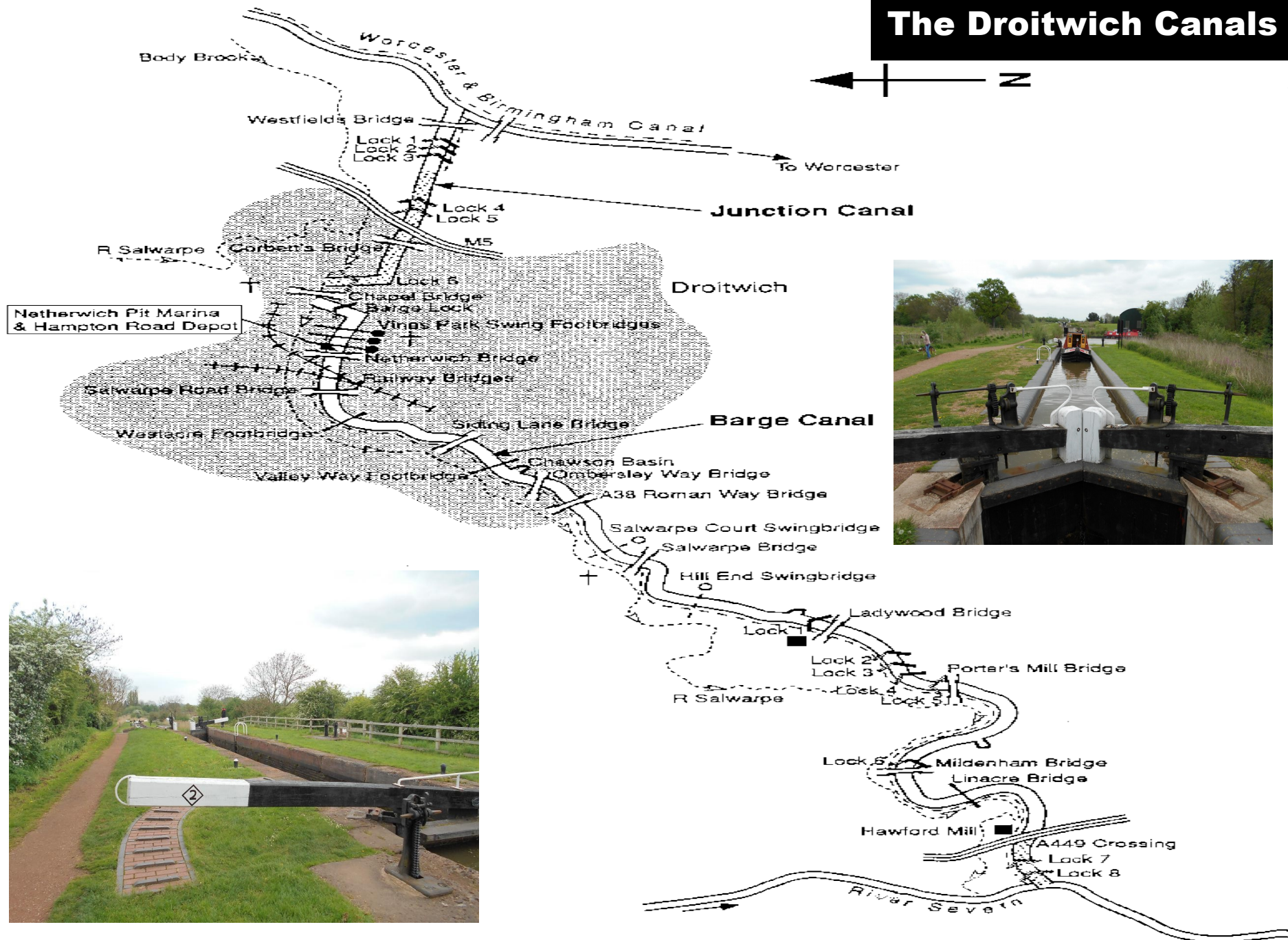
Hanbury, Dunhampstead & Tibberton



Worcester to The River Severn



The Droitwich Canals



The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

**In 2015 the Society Celebrated
200 years of Navigation on**

The Worcester & Birmingham Canal

1815 - 2015

2015 Bicentenary Activities

We held 4 Festivals:

- * Droitwich - St Richard's**
- * Alvechurch – Beer & Boat**
- * Worcester * Kings Norton**

and also

**Bell Ringing, Tardebigge Show,
Tardebigge School, Hanbury Show,
Commemorative Clothing.**

See our Facebook Page or Website for more details



DROITWICH SPA

Friday 1 - Monday 4 May 2015



CELEBRATING
200
YEARS
OF THE

BEERS
WINES
CIDERS
FOOD



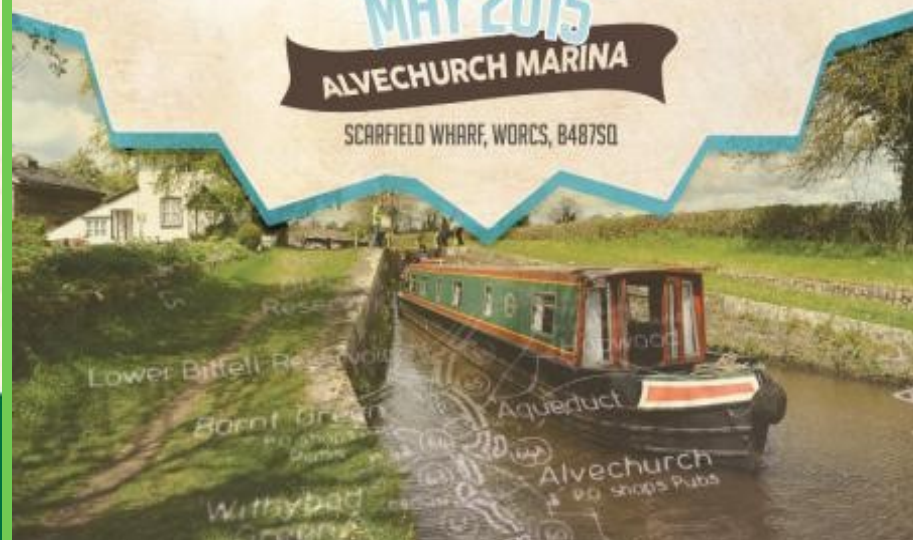
WORCS
&
B'HAM
CANAL

LIVE MUSIC
GAMES
BOAT TRIPS
MORE

15TH-17TH
MAY 2015

ALVECHURCH MARINA

SCARFIELD WHARF, WORCS, B487SD





Weekend 10—12 July 2015

KINGS NORTON CANAL FESTIVAL 2015



Follow @KNVF2015

Kings Norton Playing Fields and Village Green

Boating holiday prize raffle, crafts, stalls, small fair rides, games, history, walks, live music, bar, boat rides, pig roast, dry boat races, much more & lots of fun

Boat and stall booking information

Boats: email our harbour masters at nbrypeck@gmail.com

Stalls in KN playing fields or advertising space in programme download booking form at <http://wbdc.org.uk/forms/> or enquires to stalls@wbdc.org.uk

Craft stalls on the Village Green (Saturday 10am-2pm) enquire by email: fhknrafters@yahoo.co.uk or p.h.kempster@btopenworld.com

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

**Pictures and
memories from the
festivals that the
society jointly
organised**



St Richard's Festival



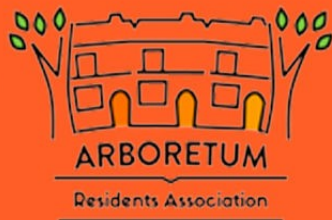


Alvechurch Beer & Boat Festival





**Worcester
Canal
Group**



Celebrating 200 years of Canal Navigation in Worcester

Friday 12th June to Sunday 14th

Lansdowne Park, Worcester WR3

Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Canal and benefiting
local charities and community groups.

Events include:

local bands, children's activities, school choirs, food
and craft stalls and traditional sideshow stalls in addition
to a gathering of narrow boats.

Free Admission

Hours: Fri 17:00 to 23:00

Sat 11:00 to 23:00

Sun 11:00 to 17:00

www.worcestercanalgroup.org.uk

www.wbdcs.org.uk

www.thearboretum.org.uk

Worcester, Birmingham & Droitwich Canal Society. Registered Charity no: 703072



Worcester Canal Festival



Kings Norton Festival



Volunteers help out at our society stall at a recent festival



2016

2 Festivals Planned

Droitwich - St Richard's

April 29th - May 2nd

Dudley - Parkhead

September 24th - 25th

**ALL WELCOME - FREE ADMISSION
FOR THE PUBLIC!**

See our Facebook Page or Website for Details

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society is now in its 47th year and has a very active membership. We hold regularly monthly meetings in the meeting room behind The Weighbridge Pub, Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch

The Society's main aim is to promote the upkeep of the canals and to ensure that the heritage is looked after for all to enjoy.

The Worcester & Birmingham Canal runs from Diglis Basin in Worcester to Gas Street Basin in Birmingham and passes through some of the most beautiful scenery in the Midlands along the way.

www.wbdcs.org.uk | Facebook | Twitter

The Worcester & Birmingham Canal was once a vital transport highway for company's such as Cadbury's at Bournville.

Milk, cocoa crumb, coal, limestone and salt out of Stoke Prior were typically transported down to the sea ports using the canal.

Hanbury is the start of the Droitwich Junction Canal leading to the Droitwich Barge Canal.

As with all canals they are now in a revival period playing host to the tourist industry forming part of the Stourport Ring, The Avon Ring and The Mid-Worcestershire Ring.

www.wbdcs.org.uk | Facebook | Twitter

**One of the many pubs along the canal
where food and drink can be enjoyed**

The Crown Inn, Alvechurch



**Pubs along the
canals include:**

**The Weighbridge at
Alvechurch.**

**The Hopwood Inn at
Hopwood.**

**The Boat & Railway at
Stoke Prior.**

**The Queens Head at
Stoke Pound.**

**The Eagle & Sun at
Hanbury.**

The Bridge at Tibberton.

**The Anchor at Diglis
Basin.**

**The Firs at
Dunhampstead.**

**The Gardeners Arms at
Droitwich.**

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society members gather in the meeting room at the rear of the Weighbridge Pub, Alvechurch Boat Centre at 7.45pm for an 8.00pm start on the first Tuesday of each month except July & August when Summer walks take place. www.wbdcs.org.uk



Committee

- The Society is run by an elected committee. It is a registered charity (500159) and is bound by its constitution. Monthly committee meetings are held.
- The AGM is held prior to the normal business at the September meeting.
- The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society would like to express its thanks to The Alvechurch Boat Centre for the use of its meeting room.

Cecilia

- This is the society's own narrow boat 'Cecilia'
70 ft., 8 berth vessel.
- Available for use by groups for a small
donation towards her upkeep and fuel costs.
- More information can be found on our
website: www.wbdcs.org.uk



Out and About with 'Cecilia'



Hopwood



Tardebigge



Interior View



Tardebigge

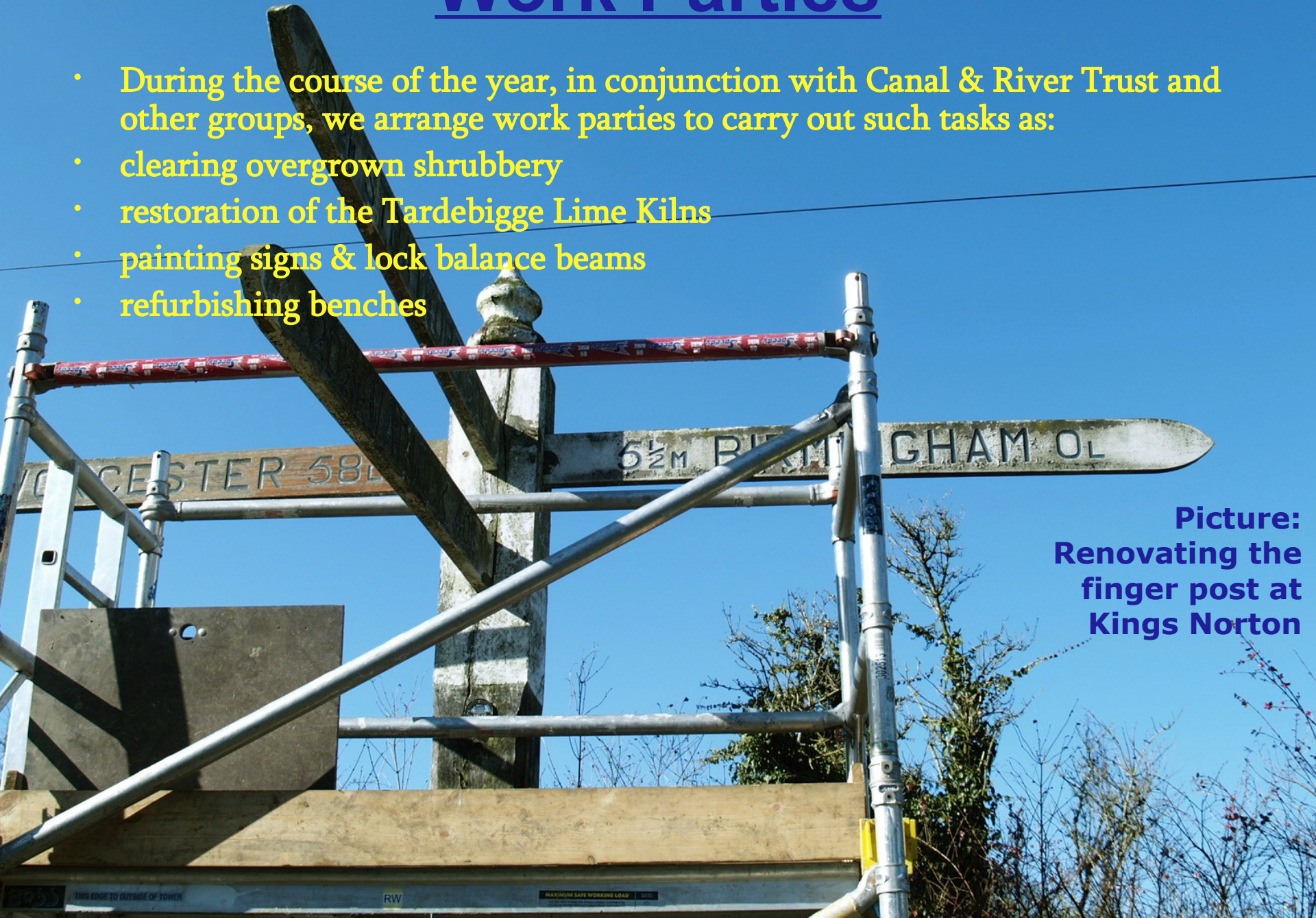
'Cecilia' on the W & B Canal



Work Parties

- During the course of the year, in conjunction with Canal & River Trust and other groups, we arrange work parties to carry out such tasks as:
- clearing overgrown shrubbery
- restoration of the Tardebigge Lime Kilns
- painting signs & lock balance beams
- refurbishing benches

**Picture:
Renovating the
finger post at
Kings Norton**



THE TARDEBIGGE LIME KILNS

In 2013 the society commenced the renovation of the Tardebigge Lime Kilns in conjunction with the Canal & River Trust (CRT).

Since work started it has been found that the Lime Kilns are more extensive than first thought and are the most comprehensive Lime Kilns in the Worcestershire area.

Much has been achieved since we first started but there is still a vast amount of work to be done. We hope to make the site a visitor attraction with a picnic area.

**Volunteers can help out at the kilns and dates for work parties can be found on our website or by contacting: Bill Lambert on
02476 726924.**

Whilst working at the Tardebigge Lime Kilns the kiln walls were revealed so that an archaeological survey could be carried out.

A heritage advisor from the CRT (Canal & River Trust), organised a trip for the volunteers to visit the lime kilns along the Monmouth & Brecon Canal. The idea being to try to understand what they may have looked like in the past.

Another project we are working on is to re-instatement the milestones along the Worcester & Birmingham Canal.

We have erected a finger post directing boats down the Droitwich Canals at Hanbury Junction.

The Lime Kilns at Goytre Wharf on the Monmouth & Brecon Canal



The Lime Kilns renovation at Tardebigge - before we started....





Left: one of the kiln entrances which needed careful excavation and brickwork making safe.

Right: one of the other entrances showing some of the spoil which needed removing. This included a large variety of old bottles.



An open day was held on January 2014 organised by CRT & WBDCS. Members of the public were taken down into Lock 58, which was fully drained, to see work that had been carried out.

There was also a tour of the Lime Kilns.

The aim now is to secure extra funding and talks are underway with Worcester County Council, Bromsgrove District Council and Avoncroft Museum.

All work carried out is on a voluntary basis.

Removing some of the vegetation



**This photo shows some of the
stone-work that had collapsed.**



View of the Lime Kilns at Tardebigge after initial clearance work



Recent work at the Lime Kilns site



The Tardebigge Lime Kilns and George Bate

George Bate lived close to the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at Tardebigge all of his life . His working life was mainly spent on the canal, helping to maintain it as well as in his retirement where he acted as a part time lengthsman.

He kept many records which have provided many details of a bygone age for which we are very grateful. George died in 1977 and is buried in Tardebigge Church Yard.

According to George's memoirs, there were 6 lime burning kilns alongside the canal basin at Tardebigge. The limestone was transported by narrowboat, from Dunhampstead, which is 42 locks lower down the Worcester and Birmingham Canal. The lime was apparently used in the building of the new hall at Hewell Grange and was calcined here at Tardebigge.

The lime kilns were managed by T & M Dixon's who leased the nearby stone warehouse on a 99 year basis. Corn grinding was also carried out here with a portable steam engine being the mills source of power.

Any further information available would be gratefully received by the Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society.

*The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society
is a Registered Charity (No. 500159).*

Website: www.wbdcs.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/wbdcs.org.uk

Twitter: @wbdcs58



Work on the Lime Kilns is being carried out by volunteers from
The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society



If you would like to get involved please contact:
volunteers@wbdcs.org.uk or visit our website.
You do not need to be a member!

The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society are very keen to introduce young people to the inland waterways system and associated historical structures.

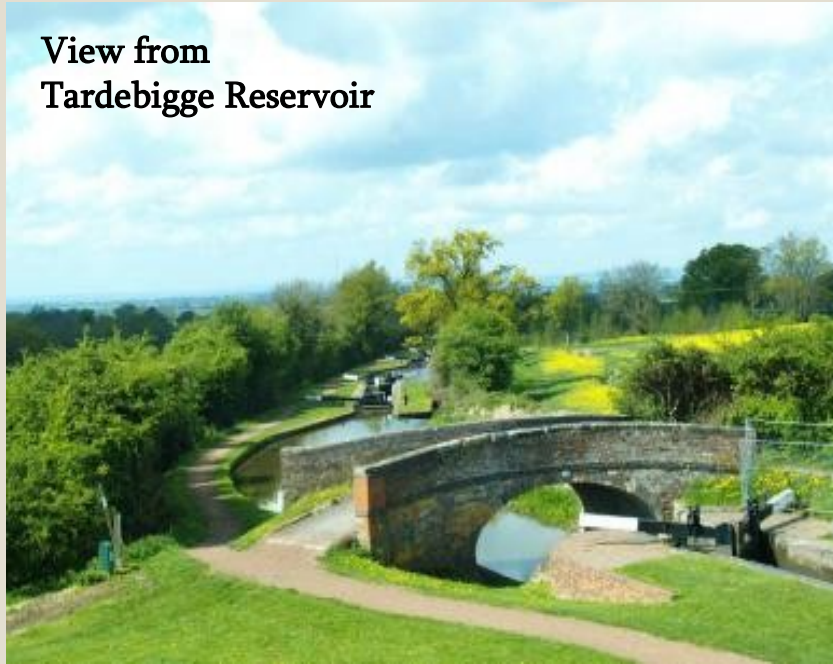
On one of our work parties we were joined by Katie who was volunteering with us as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

We wish her every success with the award!



**Some pictures of
The Worcester &
Birmingham
Canal**

View from
Tardebigge Reservoir



Modern construction
techniques on the canal



Near the Halfway
House on the
Tardebigge Flight

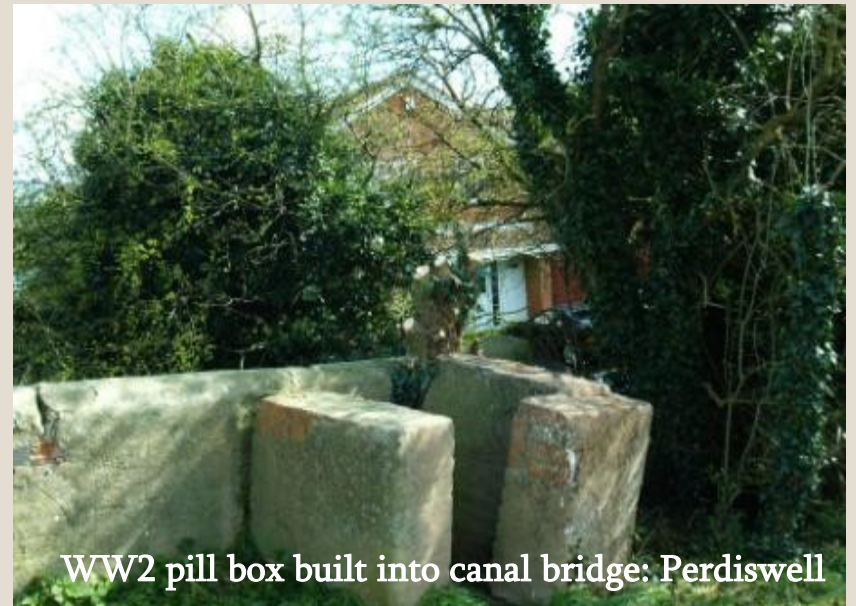


Lock on the
Tardebigge Flight





Shortwood Tunnel



WW2 pill box built into canal bridge: Perdiswell



Tardebigge New Wharf Basin



Grade 1 listed guillotine lock at Kings Norton



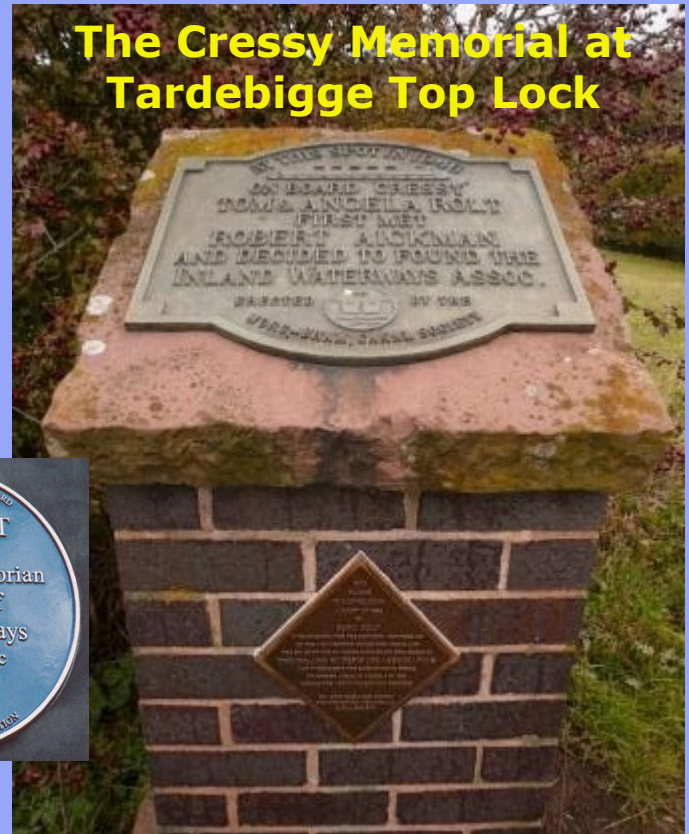
The Queen's Head at Stoke Pound c1990s

Reeds alongside the Worcester & Birmingham Canal in Autumn



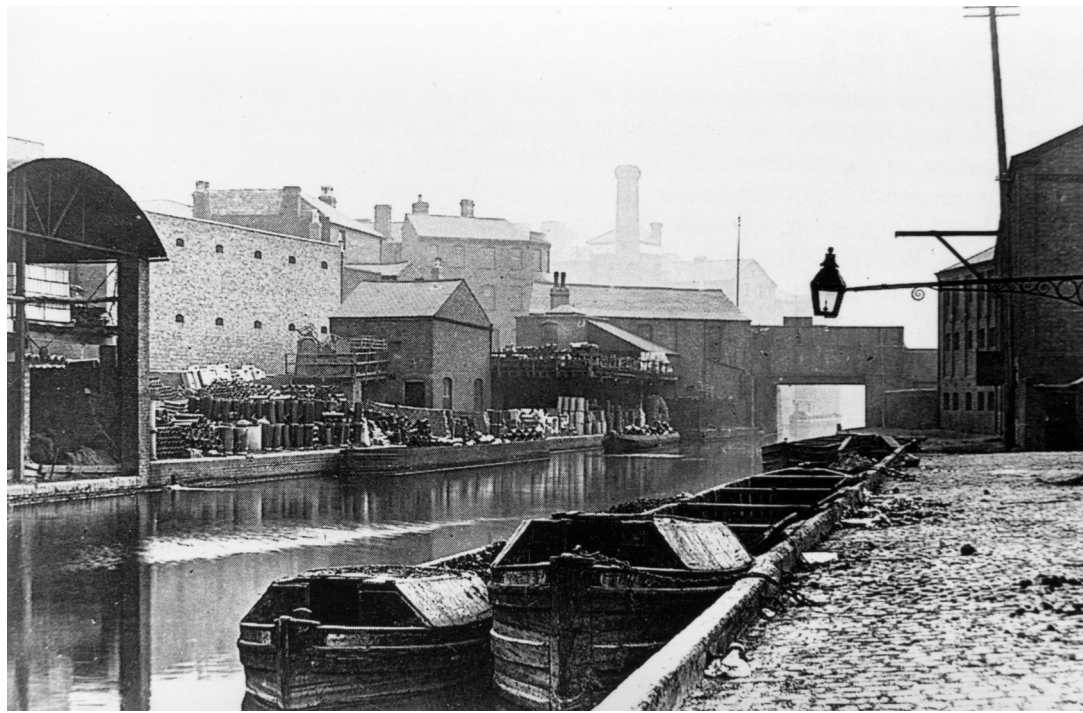
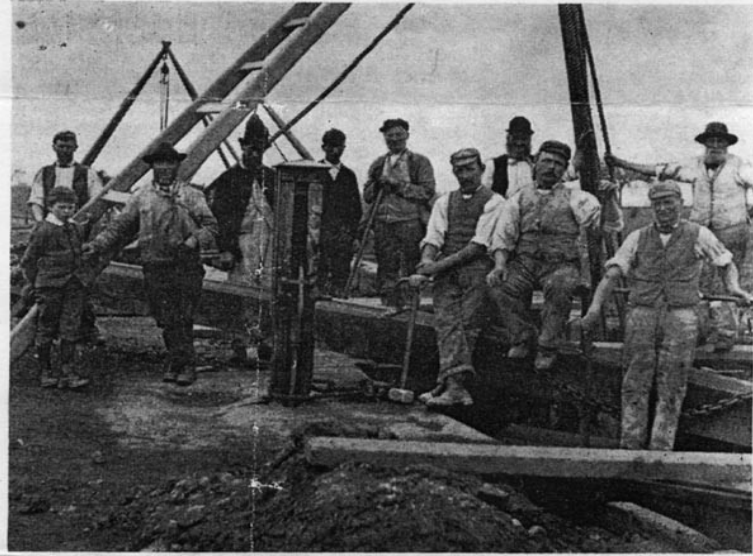
Locks on the Tardebigge Flight







One of the locks between Tardebigge and Stoke Prior under repair in 1894. All these men worked with George H. Bate and some of them with his father, John. They are (left to right): Harry Colley, James Waldron, Edward Crumpton, James Bishop, George Woodward, Phillip Veale, Fred Warren, William Harris, Nathan Blunn and John Tallis. The young boy is James Waldron's son





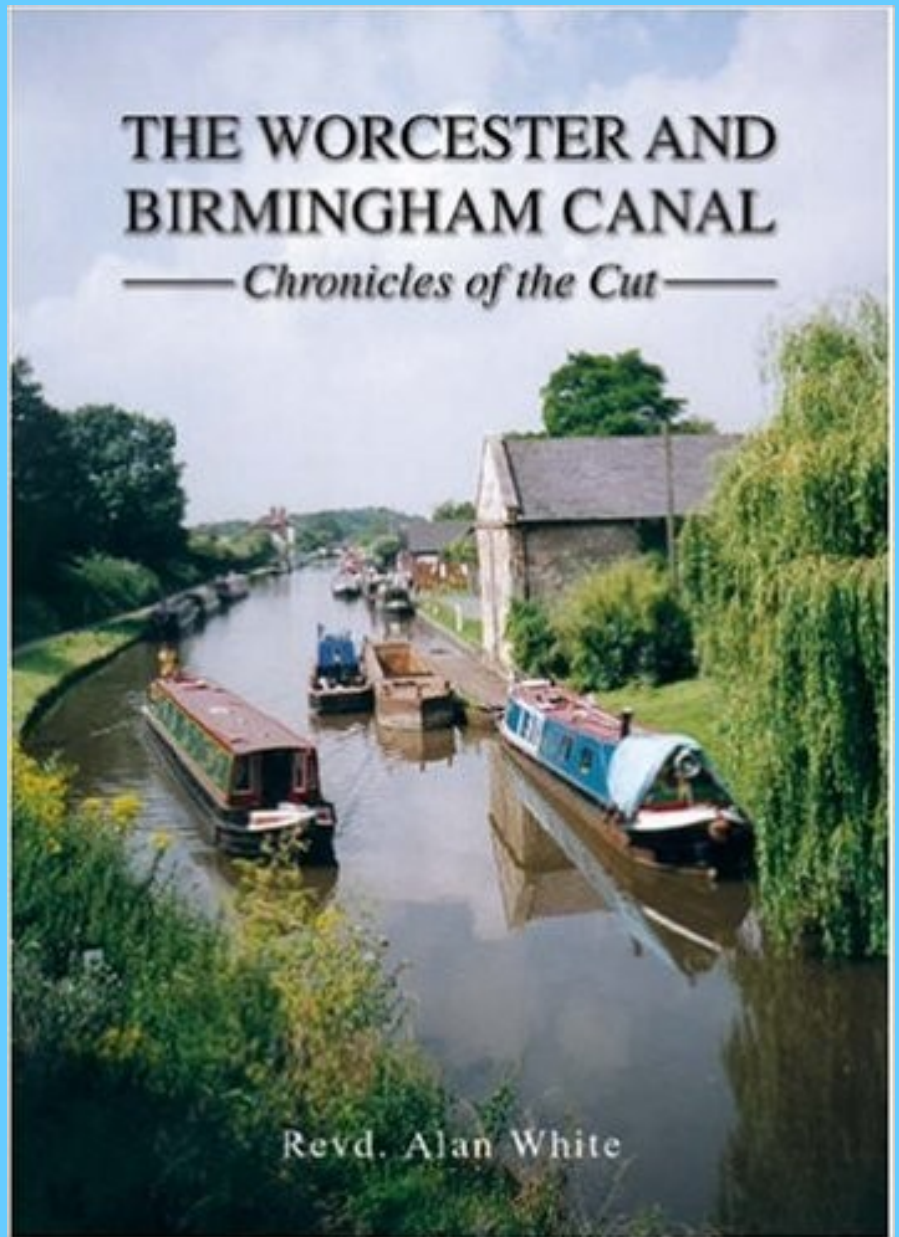








**Rev'd Alan White
published a book
in 2005 titled:
'The Worcester
And Birmingham
Canal 'Chronicles
of the Cut'.
This book is
currently out of
print. Second
hand copies can
be bought but
are quite rare
fetching over
£60 a copy!**



The Lapal Canal

The Lapal Canal is going through an incremental restoration process from the Worcester-Birmingham Canal in Selly Oak through to Harborne Wharf in the first instance. It is hoped that this will eventually re-connect with the Dudley No. 2 Canal in Halesowen.

www.lapal.org







74. Harborne Lane (July 10th, 1929). These men would seem to be rebuilding the side of the Dudley canal. This photograph was taken from the footbridge at the Harborne Lane entrance to Selly Oak Park looking south towards the Bristol Road.



75. Harborne Lane/Canal (Dowling, 1987).



**We hope you enjoyed
this presentation.
To find out more please
visit our website
www.wbdcs.org.uk or
Facebook page.**

Why Not Join The Worcester-Birmingham & Droitwich Canals Society

- Membership is open to all - you do not need to be a boat owner.
- Membership fees have not risen since 2012!
- We actively encourage people of all ages to join so they can gain an interest in the canal system and go on to become custodians of the future.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the history of the canals and rivers.
- Included in the annual membership are 10 copies of the full colour society magazine “58” which has information, articles and photos of the canals and all the society activities.
- Monthly Meetings and Presentations.
- Society Summer Walks.
- Use of the Society’s Narrowboat “Cecilia”.

**END OF
SLIDESHOW**