

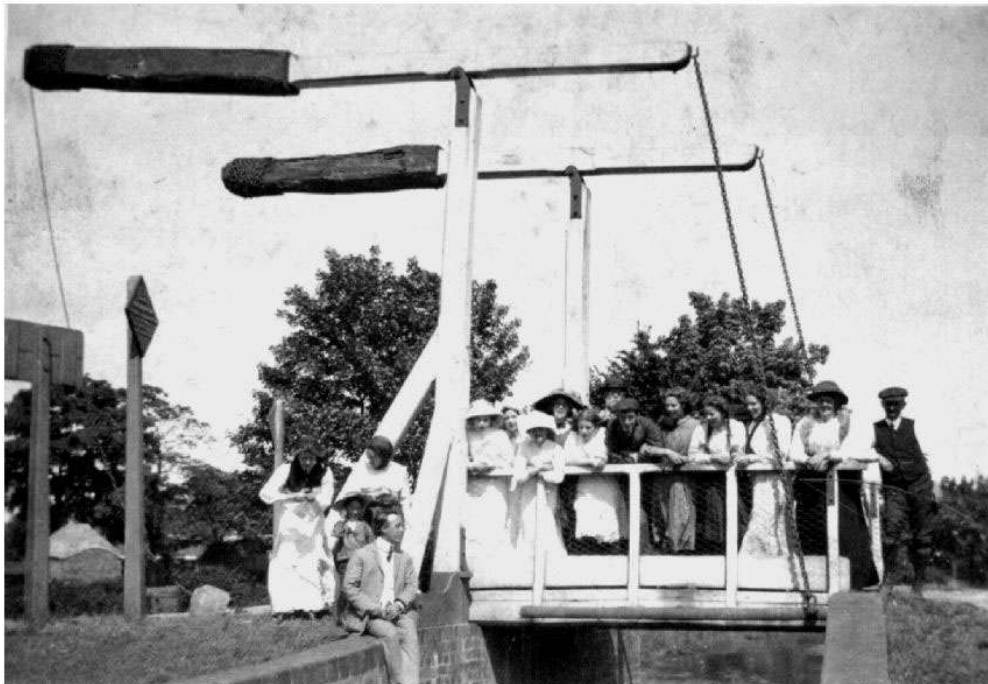
## Features of the Canal - Shrewsbury Canal Drawbridges

Between Wappenshall Junction and Shrewsbury there were 35 bridges to provide for roads and footpaths and to act as accommodation bridges to provide access between fields on farms.

Of these bridges 13 were “movable” bridges, and all but one of these were drawbridges. They were all on the length between Wappenshall and Withington. (in which length there were only 6 fixed bridges); the remaining length to Shrewsbury having only fixed bridges.

In drawbridges a deck hinged to one abutment is suspended at the far end from horizontally pivoted balance beams which have to be pulled down by the use of a rope or chain to raise the bridge. The hinge was placed on the side of the canal away from the towpath so as to provide an unobstructed course for the towlines of the horse drawn boats.

The advantage to the canal company of building drawbridges was that it was a far cheaper alternative. With the bridge just above water level the construction work saved was considerable. Materials were not required to build up approach embankments where the canal was on essentially flat land, as in this part of Shropshire, and the span was reduced by dispensing with the need to span the towpath as well as waterway.



Not all the bridges were of the same design, as can be seen from the difference between the above photograph of a bridge (probably) near Withington and that [below]of the bridge at Eyton.. The latter is very reminiscent of those to be found today on the Llangollen Canal with a quite substantial counterweight, whilst that above appears to be a much more rudimentary structure. With no cross member between the uprights it would also allow for agricultural wagons with a high load to cross.



**A Shrewsbury Canal lift bridge at Rodington**