

Boyhood Memories of the Shrewsbury Canal

My name is George Lewis. I am now 82 and live in Wellington, but in my younger days I lived at 14 Lucerne Terrace, Hadley, about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the Shrewsbury Canal.

Many a fine day my mother would take my brothers and me a walk down to the canal as a day out with a packet of wine gums, a bean stick, cotton bent pin and a few worms to try our hand at a bit of fishing. I can't remember catching any but it was great fun.

The part of the canal we went, was from Hadley Park lock to the Wappenshall wide hole. Should it come on to rain we would fish under the arches of the old warehouse which are still there at Wappenshall. One could see plenty of fish there but they would not bite as I think they could see us as much as we could see them.

As I got older some of the lads and myself went to the stretch of the canal that ran at the back of Sankey's works in Hadley. It was there that I learned to swim as the water was always warm coming from the boilers as at that time the works generated their own electricity. Sometimes after we had a swim we would go for a walk past Trench Lock. The Trench pool would be on our left and the canal on our right with the incline just in front of us. They say it closed in 1921 but when I was there around 1932 I have a feeling we saw a barge on the way down, but then again I could be wrong.

I also went swimming at the Hadley Park Lock with the other lads on many occasion as it was only a short walk from Hadley. The lock was always full of water, and one thing we did was try swimming to the bottom of the lock and bring up some mud to prove that you had been to the bottom. I did it once but did not think I was going to see daylight again. It was such a long way back up.

But the best of all was the aqueduct at Longdon on Tern. I had a bicycle for my 14th birthday so I was able to go there often. It was good there as it was always clean and free of weeds. We had lots of races to see who could swim the length in the shortest time. I think the last time I was down to the canal was when I was a member of Hadley chapel gymnastic team. It was a nice summer evening and that evening the chapel was locked so the meeting was put off. Someone suggested we should go for a run so about 6 of us set off from Hadley, got on the canal towpath at Hadley Park lock and ran on to Wappenshall and back. I had a job to walk the next morning

George Lewis

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