

QUARRYMAN'S WALK

Ground breaking

You might think that the landscape you can see in this area today is natural but the shape of the land has gone through many changes, largely because of quarrying.

Why are the quarries here?

Between Nuneaton and Atherstone the ground is made up of layers of different rock, slate and shale. On this side of Hartshill village is a band of quartzite, which has been quarried since the 16th century for use as a local building material, for road building and railway ballast.

By the 19th century there were three main quarries in this area known as Jees, Alkins and Ables. Each quarry had an impact on what you can see around you today.

Holes, hills and waterways

The most obvious man-made features are the huge holes in the ground created as the stone was removed. Then there are the heaps of waste material, which are a landmark for travellers by rail, canal and along the A5.

The canal was built in 1773 so that stone could be transported by narrow boats to markets in Birmingham, Coventry and London. In the early days the stone was carried to the canal by horses and wagons.

Hanging around

It was a precarious life as a quarryman, suspended on a rope hacking at the rock face. Hand tools were used until the early 1900s when explosives were introduced to open up the rock face.

Rails and Roads

In 1847 the railway arrived in the area and trains were increasingly used for transport as they could usually offer a cheaper, faster service than the canals.

The demand for stone rose with the invention of the motor car in the late 1800s and the consequent need for stronger road surfaces. During the early 1900s the number of cars and lorries steadily increased and the railway network grew. More and more stone was needed for road building and railway ballast and the local quarries thrived.

Lorries began to replace the horses and carts at the quarries and local lanes were widened to take the traffic.

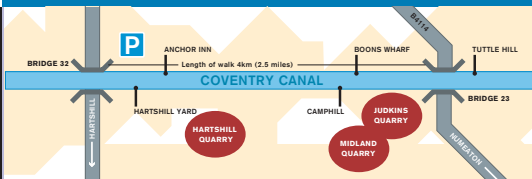


Bridges, wharves and conveyor belts were constructed to support the booming quarrying industry. You will see the remains of some of these along the Quarryman's Walk, including Hartshill wharf, which is on the opposite bank. Notice the horses and the loco. Imagine how different the scene would have been here 200 years ago.



WALK THE QUARRYMAN'S WAY

The Quarryman's Way follows the towpath from Hartshill Yard to Tuttle Hill on the B4114. The route passes Midland and Judkins quarries. At Hartshill you can see the yard where the narrow boats were repaired.



Always remember to stay SAFE near water – Stay Away From the Edge

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