



Fig.15 "Boating on the canal, Leasowes circa 1935"



Fig.12 "Pottery Farm"



Fig.13 "Ancient Holloway" near Pottery Farm



Fig.14 "Ancient Pond at Coombeswood Wedge circa 1990"

"COUNTRYSIDE WALKS"

Guide No1 To The Footpaths around Coombeswood and Leasowes Park

Leaflet produced & published by Coombeswood Canal Trust © (2012)

Hawne Basin, Hereward Rise, Halesowen, West Midlands, B62 8AW. (0121) 550 1355
coombeswood@btconnect.com

www.hawnebasin.org.uk

Author - Roy Burgess

Typeset design - Sue Trezise (50p when sold)

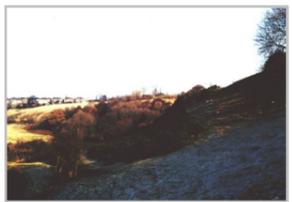


Fig.16 "Glacial Scarp" at Coombeswood

Photo credits: CCT & HAT archive

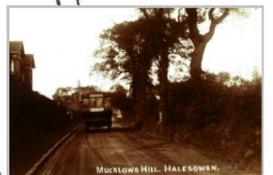
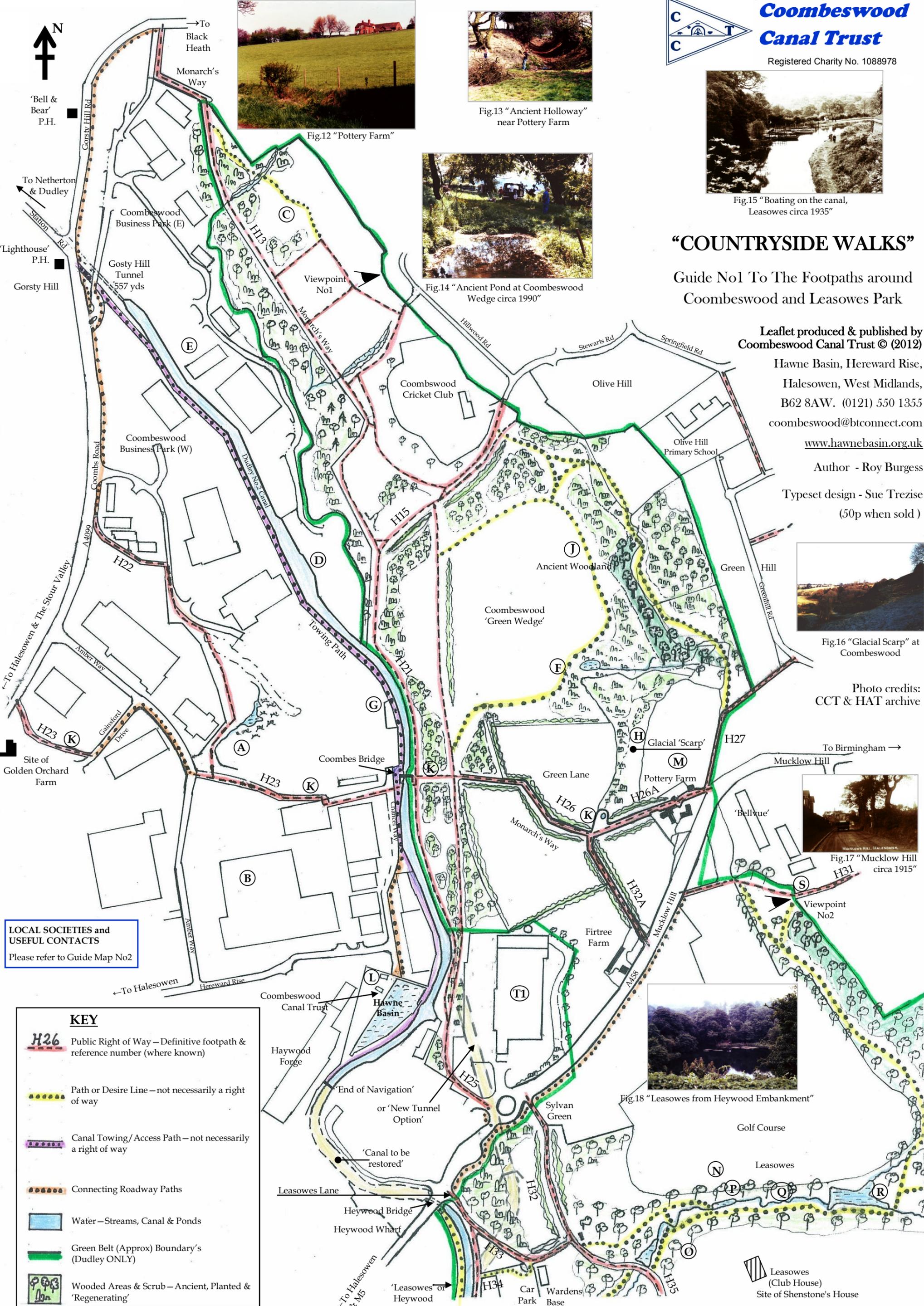


Fig.17 "Mucklow Hill circa 1915"



Fig.18 "Leasowes from Heywood Embankment"



N
↑
'Bell & Bear' P.H.
To Netherton & Dudley
Station Rd
'Lighthouse' P.H.
Gorsty Hill
To Black Heath
Monarch's Way

Site of Golden Orchard Farm

LOCAL SOCIETIES and USEFUL CONTACTS
Please refer to Guide Map No2

KEY

- H26** Public Right of Way – Definitive footpath & reference number (where known)
- Path or Desire Line – not necessarily a right of way
- Canal Towing/ Access Path – not necessarily a right of way
- Connecting Roadway Paths
- Water – Streams, Canal & Ponds
- Green Belt (Approx) Boundary's (Dudley ONLY)
- Wooded Areas & Scrub – Ancient, Planted & 'Regenerating'

Leasowes (Club House)
Site of Shenstone's House

SOME SITES OF INTEREST

- GUIDE MAP No1 -

A - Approximate Site of Coombes Corn Mill - Situated on the now culverted Coombes Brook (mentioned in the 13thC Abbey Court Rolls)

B - Approximate Site of Coombeswood Colliery - Originally owned by Hingleys of Netherton (Titanic anchor fame) - closed in 1953

C - Conjectural site of Very early coal mining in Coombeswood - The Abbey Court Rolls of 1281 refer to five cartloads of 'sea coal' being mined at 'La Combes' (possibly where the seams of coal appear at the surface)

D - Dudley No2 Canal - Commissioned in 1793 to link the Dudley No1 Canal at Park Head, near Netherton, with the Worcester and Birmingham Canal at Selly Oak. Originally about 11 miles long, now only approximately 5½ miles are fully navigable. From Hawne Basin, in Halesowen, to Selly Oak, the canal is derelict, but hopefully full restoration will be achieved in the not too distant future.

E - Site of Coombeswood Tube Works - Established in 1860 by Abraham Barnsley, and operated from 1903 by Stewarts & Lloyds, as to be the largest tube works in England. The site is now occupied by a modern business park following dismantling of the original works during the 1990's.

M - Pottery Farm - The last surviving Hill Farm in the West Midlands, taking its name from the now defunct "Bellevue Potteries" which had kilns in the adjacent field. The barns are thought to be on Saxon Foundations, which possible ties in with the dating of the 1,000 year old green lane that passes through the farm.

N - Leasowes Historic Landscape And Nature Reserve - Originally designed by the Writer, Poet and Gardener, William Shenstone (1714-1763). The lane known as 'Sylvan Green' leading to Shenstone's House, was an original 'loop' of a Turnpike Road, straightened out by the canal builders at Heywood Bridge. Records show that it was in the 18th Century, one of the most visited Gardens in the Country, and was noted as a "Must Visit" attraction, on the then "Grand Tour of Europe". In 2008 Dudley M.B. Council, commenced on a programme of restoration works with the aid of a Lottery Grant.



Fig.20. "The Leasowes taken from an old 18th Century painting"

F - Coombes Brook (site of) - Now culverted over, but prior to this area being land filled, the now large 'flat' area was originally a very deep water eroded valley. The name 'Coombe' ("a small water eroded valley on the side of a hill") is thought to be Celtic in origin.

G - Coombes Brook Canal "Embankment" - It is hard to imagine now but prior to land filling operations in the 1960's, the canal at this point was carried over the brook valley on an embankment.

H - Glacial Scarp - The River Stour rising in the Clent Hills, and discharging into the Severn at Stourport, has a valley that was originally carved out by the action of Glaciers some 8-10,000 years ago. The sharp steep slope at this point is an indication of the power of Glacial Ice as it cuts out the valley sides.

J - Ancient Woodland - Remnants of woodland that originally covered most of Britain, since the last Ice Age. Important today for wildlife with plants such as blue bell, wood anemone, wood-sorrell, and a natural habitat for birds and mammals.

K - Green Lane or Holloway - From Birmingham heading westward to Wales, via Pottery Farm, crossing the canal

Fig 19 "Coombes Bridge, re-erected 1993" by the HalesOwen Abbey Trust



O - Virgils Grove - A wooded vale, with a pool and where nearby once stood an obelisk dedicated to Virgil, the Roman Poet. This area epitomised Shenstone's philosophy of picturesque gardening and was intended to be a melancholic place; often referred to by the locals, as the "Dark half hour".

P - Cascade - The original dam and pool with a magnificent cascade in a stone grotto were long in disrepair, but have been fully restored in recent times to as near as possible to Shenstone's original design.

Q - "Chalybeate" Spring - There are many wells and springs in the Stour Valley, that emerge from iron rich rocks, as a bright orange colour. Considered by the Celtic people as sacred places, and where votive offerings could be made. Shenstone's Chalbeate Spring was a notable feature on his circuit walk.

R - Lovers Walk and Beechwater Pool - The two small streams that run into the Beechwater Pool, pass the site of a stone seat, and lead to 'Lovers Walk', and the site of an Urn dedicated to Shenstone's Cousin, Maria Dolman, who tragically died of Small Pox at the age of 21.

S - Site of the Temple of Pan - Nothing remains of Shenstone's temple, however from a nearby seat at Viewpoint No2.....

past the site of Golden Orchard Farm, and down the Stour Valley, is possibly the route of a very ancient "drovers road". The hedgerows to either side of this old green lane have been dated as being at least 1,000 years in origin. The very deep and rocky cutting, with its overhanging Beech trees is well worth a visit. (Just below Pottery Farm). (Footpath No. H26A)

L - Hawne Basin - It is thought that the name of 'Hawne Basin' was derived from the earliest 18th Century Coal Mine in the district, know as 'Old Hawne Colliery' - situated near Haysech in the Stour Valley. The 1884 Tithe Map shows the line of a horse drawn tramway linking the pithead with the Basin. By 1883 the mine had already closed. The Great Western Railway, on 1st March, 1878, opened it's line to Halesowen, and around 1902 a branch to Hawne Basin and Haywood Forge was constructed by means of a Loop Line and Sidings. The rail/canal Interchange at Hawne Basin was used mainly to collect steel tubes, which were ferried by Boat from Stewart & Lloyds Works, up to 1967, when the railway finally closed. Since 1977 the Basin has been regenerated and managed by the Coombeswood Canal Trust. In the summer of 2007, the Trust was able to purchase the Freehold of the Basin, thereby securing it's future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- We wish to thank Dudley MBC (Highways) for their kind permission to use their base maps which were used to prepare this leaflet.

T1 - Site of the 'Lion' Brickworks - Numerous Potteries and Brickworks were established in the vicinity of the canal, exploiting the many deposits of the Etruria Clay. The Lion brickworks at this location had made an extremely deep marl hole that resembled the inside of a volcanic crater! Following closure of this site, the whole area was cleared and land filled around the 1960's, and is now occupied by a new D.I.Y. Warehouse and store.

➤ **Viewpoint no 1 - "Coombeswood"**

"The Friends of Coombeswood Wedge" are hoping to install a "Toposcope" at this point sometime in the near future. On a clear day there are stunning panoramic views of the hills in the distance. Starting from the South heading West are, Frankley, Lickey, Romsley, Walton, Clent and Wychbury. In the far West we have the Clees, the Long Mynd, with the Wrekin to the North West.

➤ **Viewpoint no 2 - "Leasowes"**

There are panoramic views over the Stour Valley, with the Church of Saint John at the centre of Halesowen, and on the distant skyline on a clear day from left to right are the Hills of Romsley, Walton, Clent and Wychbury, with the Clee Hills to the distant West. The Long Mynd is to the North West in Shropshire,

DISCLAIMER • The majority of the land indicated is in private ownership and the representation on this leaflet of any road, track or path is no evidence of the existence of a right of way. • This leaflet is only a guide and is in no way intended for use with concern to boundaries and ownerships whatsoever. • "Walk at your own risk". Coombeswood Canal Trust will not be responsible for any claims for any damage or injury to persons or property however sustained. i.e. "Enter and walk at your own risk".