

6. EAST CANNOCK ROAD

The area in and around East Cannock Road has a rich and varied history. Over the years a colliery, a stables and a busy canal basin were all situated nearby.

The canal house

Tom Pearce, the canal toll-keeper, lived at the canal house with his wife Annie and their eleven children. It was built for him in 1905, at the site his wife chose.

“ One of Tom’s grand-daughters remembers: My grandfather’s job came with a house, which Birmingham Canal Navigation built for him... They were allowed to choose exactly where they wanted the house to be sited. My grandmother chose a spot a few yards from the cottage near to the railway bridge arches so that she could look through them and watch her children as they walked down the road to school. ”



The canal toll-keeper’s house.

The canal and its basin

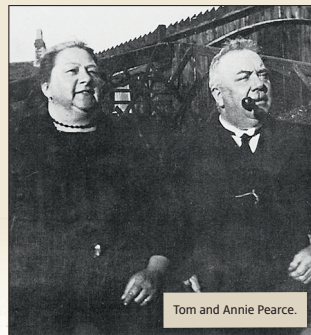
The Cannock extension of the Wyrley and Essington Canal terminated here at a large canal basin across the road. It was completed in 1863, at the close of the canalbuilding era, and was abandoned in 1963. It is said that there were once so many barges leaving the basin that at noon each day they created a small bore (a sort of tidal wave), which ran the length of the canal.

A tramway that became a railway brought coal to the three wharfs, where it was loaded into barges delivering to the Black Country. When horses pulled the barges they were stabled opposite the Globe Inn.



Annie Pearce, aged 32.

Tom and Annie lived in the house until Tom retired in the mid 1930s. In the 1960s the house was demolished when the canal was drained.



Tom and Annie Pearce.



Hednesford canal c1920.

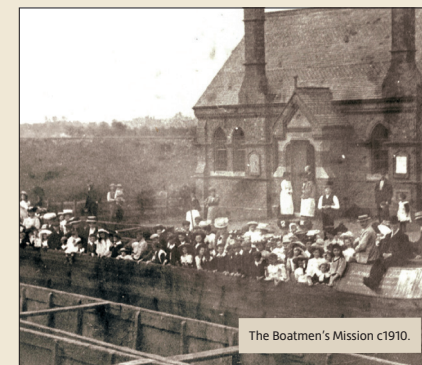
EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

The Boatmen’s Mission

In 1846 the Incorporated Seamen and Boatmen’s Friend Society was founded. It aimed to help improve the spiritual and physical lives of men and women working at sea and on canals, and had three Mission Halls in the Midlands. One was established in 1885, here at the Hednesford canal basin, where according to the 1871 Census there were around 56 people living on 18 boats.

A Mission at Hednesford had been proposed in 1883. It was to offer a suitable coffee and reading room, well supplied with local papers - where men and their wives may spend an enjoyable evening, and a comfortable Mission and schoolroom, where our friends may hear of Heaven and learn the Way.

The Mission opened in July 1885. Its staff served drinks and food and sold basic provisions. They helped illiterate boatmen by writing letters for them, and offered religious meetings, lectures and services.



The Boatmen’s Mission c1910.



This photograph was taken at the Boatmen’s Mission in the 1950s. Pictured are Rose Deavall’s sister Edna (on the left) with Edna’s daughter Veronica and their horse, Tommy.

The majority of the information about the Boatmen’s Mission has been kindly provided by Anthony Hunt.



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