

## NEWPORT BRANCH

Eventually the tub-boat canals lost their isolation. When the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal opened in 1835, a 10½ mile branch from Norbury connected with the network at Wappenshall. A short arm was also constructed to The Humbers where Lord Gower's son and successor, the Duke of Sutherland, established Lubstree Wharf.

The link with the national network provided the tub-boat system with a valuable new outlet and the B&LJ gained an important feeder. A problem arose, however, because the narrowboats used on the B&LJ and its Newport Branch were unable to pass the inclined planes and the tub-boat locks. Wappenshall subsequently became a very busy interchange point for the transfer of cargoes between the two types of boat. Anticipating the arrival of the Newport Branch, the Shrewsbury company had already agreed to widen the two locks at Eyton together with the bridges between Wappenshall and Shrewsbury. The result was that narrowboats as well as tub-boats could reach Shrewsbury. The town became an important outlet for the dairy produce of the area.



Wappenshall Junction with the Newport Branch passing under the bridge. The bridge to the right allowed boats to unload directly into the warehouse, which still stands today.



The remains of the second lock from Norbury on the Newport Branch in the mid 1960s.