

## Llangollen Canal (Prees Branch)

The Prees Branch leaves the main line between Whitchurch and Ellesmere. It was sometimes known as the Edstaston Branch but is more commonly known as the Prees Branch even though it never actually reached the town that gave it this name. At the junction with the main line there is a red brick cottage with stables at the back. The arm was about 5 miles long and started off by heading south eastwards.

The only part of the branch which is still navigable is the first half mile, this is said to be a beautiful stretch of canal which was still in use when other parts of the system were abandoned. This is because there were clay quarries at the end of the half mile and the clay was used to "puddle" other canals. The quarry is now a Hire Boat base which means the future of this stretch is secure and is used frequently by boats and anglers.

There are two "charming" lift bridges in the navigable stretch and a rare canal skew bridge though this isn't too surprising as the engineer, William Jessop, built the first ever skew bridges in the world (on the Rochdale Canal). Past the new marina, at the village of Dobson's Bridge, the arm is no longer navigable though it does hold water for another mile or so. There are some houses on its banks and the tow path is in very good condition. This area is very popular with naturalists because of its interesting plant life.

At the village of Waterloo there is an accommodation bridge and then, near to the road T-junction (sign posted Wem and Whixall) there is a brick canal bridge (No.5). Edstaston is just another mile away but by the time the canal reaches the village it is completely dry. The road bridge is now blocked but, as the line turns north east, there is still a canal warehouse and a wharf.

Three quarters of a mile further on the cut reaches the B5476 at Quina Brook (6 miles south of Whitchurch). There used to be lime kilns here to the west of the road, in fact, there still is but they are now a pig sty - literally! Construction ended here at Quina Brook; 2 miles short of Prees which is situated to the east.