

Map 06: Lodge Hill and Low Wood Nature Reserve



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Above: Lodge Hill Bridge, one of the few canal structures along this stretch of the conservation area

Below: Lodge Hill Wood (across the canal) is an attractive, leafy 'wall' which enhances the tranquil character of this stretch of water.

Character of the Area

This section of the canal incorporates a widely varied setting. To the north of Lodge Hill the setting of the canal is open, being mainly comprised of an attractive pastoral landscape. To the northeast of Lodge Hill Bridge is an area of temporary moorings. At time of survey two boats were moored there, roped to wooden stakes set directly into the field alongside the water. The openness of the setting in this part of the canal facilitates good medium and long distance views to the both the east and west of the canal; those to the west across the Aire valley towards Keighley and those to the east across hilly fields and patches of woodland.

Beyond the bridge and Low Holden Farm the canal takes on a much more enclosed feel. The canal doglegs around Lodge Hill Wood.

The towpath runs along the opposite side of the canal and beyond the bridge has recently been upgraded. The path is wide, level and gravelled, providing easy and pleasant walking along this section.

Trees standing on the west/south side of the canal create an almost tunnel like feeling in the section beyond the bridge. The land to the west/south slopes downwards quite steeply though views away from the canal in this direction are blocked by the dense screen of vegetation. As a result, the feel of this section of canal is insular and peaceful.

On the east side of the canal, immediately beyond the quarries is the Low Wood Nature Reserve, another area of dense woodland with vegetation, mainly rhododendrons extending down to the water's edge.

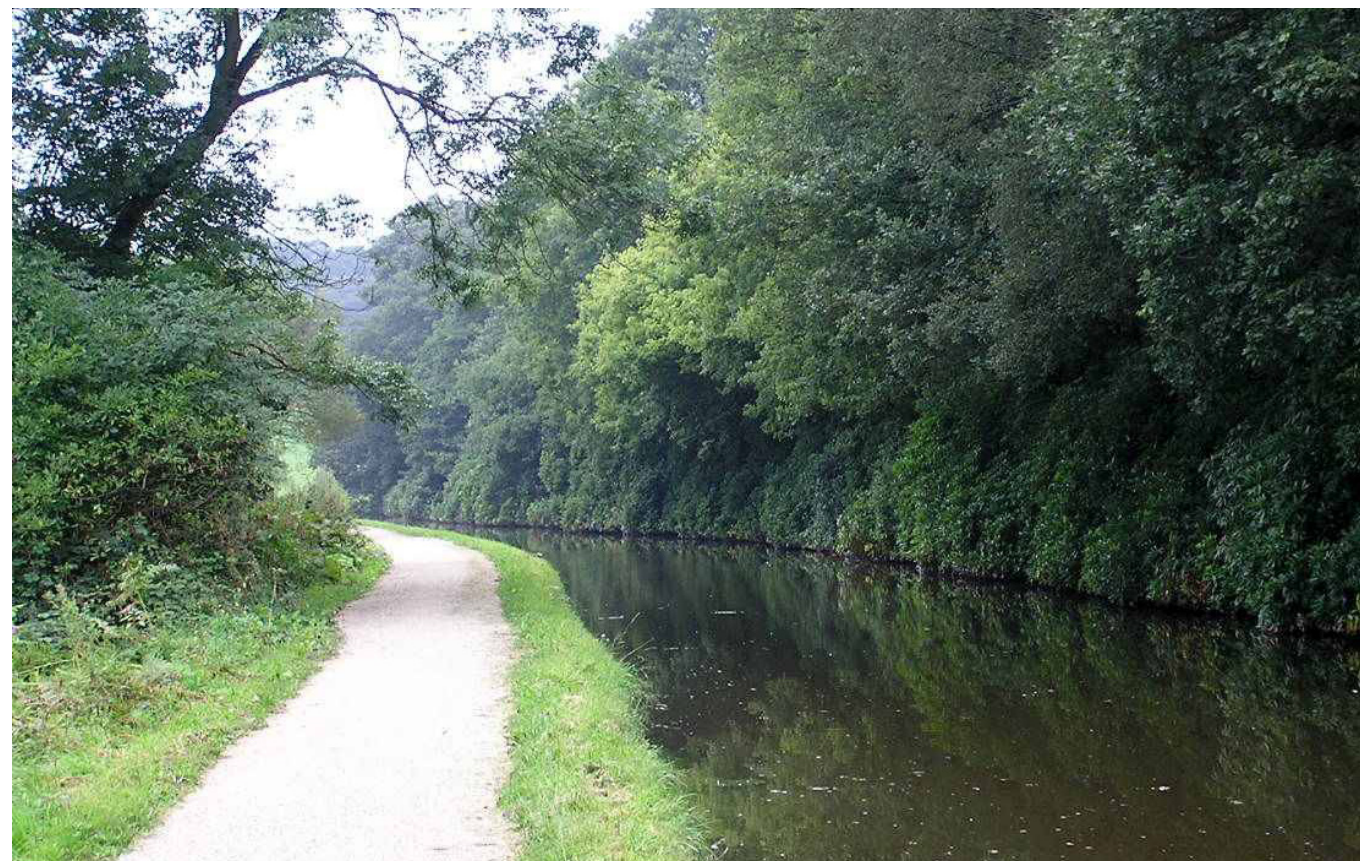
Features of the Area

1. Lodge Hill Bridge (194): Lodge Hill Bridge is a tall stone structure with high, deeply coursed abutments rising to a flat-topped timber deck. Atop the abutments is a deep stone parapet with stone corning and copings. The timber decking is supported by a metal base that has white painted timber handrails to either side. In fair condition, the bridge appears sparsely used but is an interesting contrast to the more modern metal swing bridges that are common on this stretch of the

canal. The date of construction of the bridge is difficult to estimate. It is shown on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map as a swing bridge and on the 1892 map as an unspecified crossing point serving the woods and Lodge Hill Quarry. The bridge may well date to the end of the 19th century though its flat topped deck is at odds with the more common vernacular style of the earlier arched stone bridges that were built along this section of the canal.

2. Low Holden Farm: Visible from the canal and Lodge Hill Bridge is Low Holden Farm, a group of traditional vernacular buildings set a little way to the northwest of the canal conservation area. The group consists of a farmhouse and barn, both of which are stone built and are roofed with blue and stone slate respectively. Though not included within the canal conservation area these buildings provide an interesting setting to the conservation area.

3. Lodge Hill Wood: Lodge Hill Wood consists of a rocky outcrop that is densely wooded with deciduous trees and contains a former stone quarry. The remaining outcrops of stone are still easily visible through the trees and the concrete moorings alongside this section of the canal indicate that stone was loaded directly onto the barges to be transported to its destination.



Issues

- ▶ Concrete copings alongside the quarry are an untraditional material that would be better replaced with stone
- ▶ Overgrown vegetation alongside Low Wood Nature Reserve, particularly the rhododendrons needs regular maintenance and cutting back to avoid damage to the banks of the canal.
- ▶ Better maintenance of shrubs and trees along the edge of the towpath, overhanging branches and creepers can be dangerous to walkers and cyclists.
- ▶ Lack of access onto and off canal towpath at Lodge Hill Bridge.
- ▶ Canal banks to northeast of Lodge Hill Bridge are in poor condition with slippage into the waterway apparent.