

## Balsall Common Circular Heritage Trail

## Introduction

This website describes the walking trail around Balsall Common which enables residents and visitors to enjoy our countryside and view some of the many interesting old buildings we have in our village.

The website consists of three sections:

- A detailed description of the route to act as a guide, either printed out or used on a smart phone. This guide includes a to the more detailed descriptions for each site numbered on the map which are in section 3. These can also be accessed using the QR codes to be found on the metal plaques installed at each site.
- Information about the countryside surrounding the village.
- One web page of detailed information about each site collected from historical records and the owners of the sites concerned.

We would like to record our sincere thanks to site owners for their help in compiling this walk and providing invaluable knowledge about their properties. We would like this to be a live document and welcome further input to improve it in the future.

This should not be the end of the story. We hope that walkers will use this trail as a means of getting to know our area and explore the many other paths we have. We also hope extra funding will be made available to improve our trail particularly in terms of accessibility for wheelchairs and pushchairs.



26. The White Horse

Formerly a simple cottage selling local ale. This was replaced as business grew with the turnpike and later motor vehicle route. Venue of the old "Balsall Wake" festivities.

House created around 1900 in the style of the Arts and Crafts Movement with its distinctive exterior chimneys and stained glass. Private property, view from road only.

\*This was an English decorative arts movement of the second half of the 19th century. Arts and Craft style homes are typically made up of elements with traditional proportions. The pitched roof span is no greater than 4.5m to 6m with pitches of 47.5-55°. Eaves are low, often reaching down to first floor level in many parts, often with a catslide roof on at least one elevation.

Typically an important part of a building is the large chimney which is often tall and wide with ornately decorated stacks with traditional brickwork or stonework. The windows often consist of multiple, small panes set in hung casements which are usually timber or metal. The windows are usually centrally located in each bay.

## The Route



The route circles the village and as such can be done in either direction in one trip starting and ending at the same point. It is about 8 miles if alternative routes are included. Overall, the main route takes about 3 – 4 hours. It can also be accessed at any point from the village centre by walking along one of the spokes of the wheel – Station Road or the A452. Since it uses existing footpaths with kissing gates much of it is not suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs - apart from tarmac paths alongside roads. It is easy walking, but some parts can be muddy in wet conditions.

The main route is described in black – *alternative routes in blue.*

Please note that many of the buildings are private property – please respect the residents privacy.

Starting at the station and The Railway Inn (number 1) where refreshments are available to fortify you for the walk, carry on up Station Road. Passing The Brickmaker's Arms – (2) – a pub dating from 1680 and probably with the Saracen's Head, the oldest in the village, you will reach Ye Olde Village Store – (3) – no longer a store, now residential accommodation - at the junction of Station Road and Sunnyside Lane.

Proceeding in a clockwise direction the route is along Sunnyside Lane and Barratt's Lane, past Sunnyside House (4) , Sunnyside Farm (5a) and Pool Orchard (5b) .

The main route continues along Barratt's Lane and through the fields. The fields at each side of Barratt's Lane are designated for public open space in the Solihull Local Plan. This Central Park will be substantial additional open space between the existing and new communities and should help bring them together.

On the left is Barratt's Lane Farmhouse and Barn (6) . Please do not go down the lane to view these – they are private properties and should be respected. The best view is from the footpath across the fields looking back.



Barratt's Farm from the footpath in the field.

At the next junction on the footpath you can either turn right to meet Kelsey Lane by the bus stop and proceed left to Windmill Lane; or turn left, to pass through the medieval Ridge and Furrow field (7) , then turn right at Old Waste Lane next to the library in a telephone box, past the ring of stones which is a reproduction of Tingleston, turn right on Waste Lane and go along to Windmill Lane.



25. Crathie No.1 Turnpike Close

Lane, again to save the walk to Temple Balsall School. In 1911, the chapel was dedicated to St Peter and re-named St Peter's Church. Two years later, the school moved to new, larger buildings across the road on Balsall Street East. St Peter's finally became a parish church in 1959.

Further information : [www.spcbalsall.church/history/](http://www.spcbalsall.church/history/)

#### 24. St Peter's Church



Opened in 1871 as 'Balsall Street Chapel' ('of ease'), to save residents the journey to St Mary's Church, Temple Balsall. A small school (now demolished) opened in the end of Holly

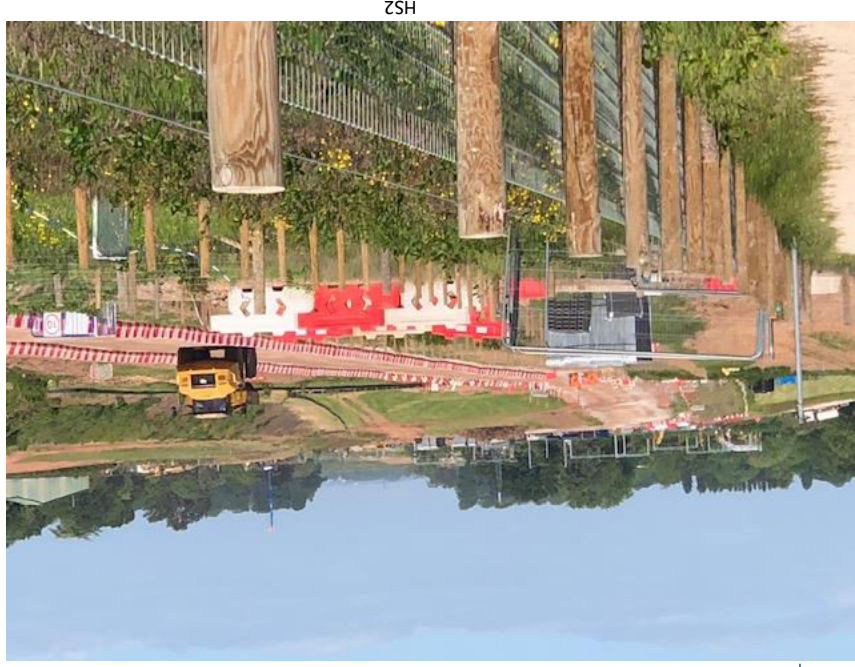


The library in a telephone box by the Ridge and Furrow field.



The reproduction Tingsted on Old Waste Lane.

*There is an alternate route starting at the end of the houses on Barratt's Lane. Turn left immediately before Pool Orchard and go down the field path to the temporary gateway;*



go right along the green way as far as the last kissing gate before the path meets waste lane: turn right and follow the path and old waste lane to re-join the main route by the library in a telephone box.

This gives excellent views of the HS2 works and the huge machines being used to move earth around – should you want to see them. The greenway path and the main route here form roughly the boundary of the housing development proposed in the Solihull Local Plan giving a very good understanding of the countryside lost and the size of the development.

HS2

Extensive fishing lakes and café.



### 23. Lavender Hall Fisheries



The countryside of Barratt's Farm.

Walk very cautiously along Windmill Lane. There is no footpath for much of the way and it can be a very busy rat-run at peak times. It had to be included in the trail because it allows us to include one the most important buildings in our village – the Berkswell Windmill (8) . The mill is open to the public on a few occasions in the year. If you want to visit you must check the web site and plan your walk accordingly. The land west of Windmill Lane is designated for housing in the Solihull Local Plan.



Opposite the Windmill the path turns right across the field. At the A452 turn right and cross the A452 at the gates which mark the entrance to Balsall Common. Again, take great care crossing this road which can be busy at peak times. Walk along the footpath and take the road down to Albany Meadows. Turn right at the finger post sign and keeping to the left walk through the fields and the small wood onto Goat Lane as far as the junction with Holly Lane.

*Close to the trail, but not actually on it, is St Peter's Church (24) . and the original Primary School. To see these, turn right on Holly Lane to the junction with Balsall*



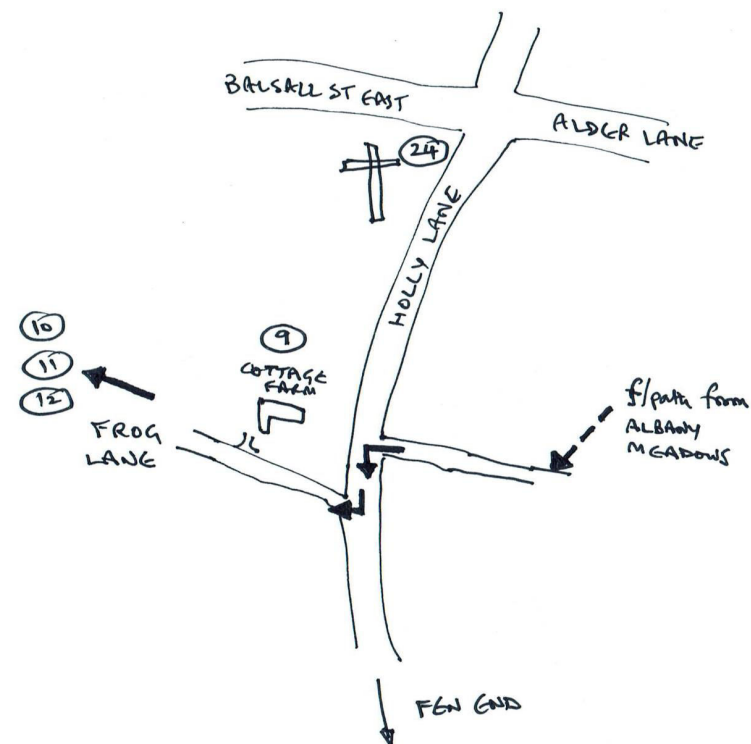
22. The George in the Tree

An example of a long-standing inn from at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but much altered. It took its name from the 4 Hanoverian King Georges. As it stood back from the road at the time, the sign was prominently hung on a large roadside elm, hence 'in the Tree'. It lay on the livestock drovers' route from Wales to London, and the drovers could enclose their animals overnight safely in its grounds, whilst they spent a comfortable night inside. Later as turnpike roads developed, it became a coaching inn.



Other buildings of interest 100m along Wootton Lane are Brooklands Barn and Farmhouse, and Wootton Green Farm conversion

Street/Alder Lane.



Otherwise, turn left and almost immediately right onto Frog Lane. On the right is Cottage Farm (9) . This is private property and difficult to see especially when the leaves are on the trees – please respect the owner’s privacy and do not go up their drive.



Frog Lane gives excellent views to the south over fields now owned by Solihull Borough Council and which it is hoped will eventually be a publicly accessible wood.

Land to the north between Frog Lane and Balsall Street East is designated for housing in the Solihull Local Plan. Frog Lane passes Frogmore Grange (10) . Adjacent to it is The Grange that includes a Games themed cafe and amongst other things the Beatie Woods children's play area.

At the end of Frog Lane turn left onto Balsall Street East and take a good look at the commemorative wall at Frog Lane Cottage. Do not cross the road – stay on the footpath travelling west. You will pass five buildings of historic interest – Fernhill Court, (12) and on the other side of the road, Blacksmith's Corner - The Old Forge and Wheelwrights (11) ; Hobbe Cottage (13) ; Shenstone Grange (15) ; Wisteria Cottage (16) ; and have the opportunity for a break at Oakes Farm shop and café (14) up the drive to the left.



21. Blythe Prior, Wootton Lane

Listed, with timber frame, whitewashed brick nogging, thatched roof and lattice casement windows. Private property, view from road only. The Oak tree is said to be 500 years old.

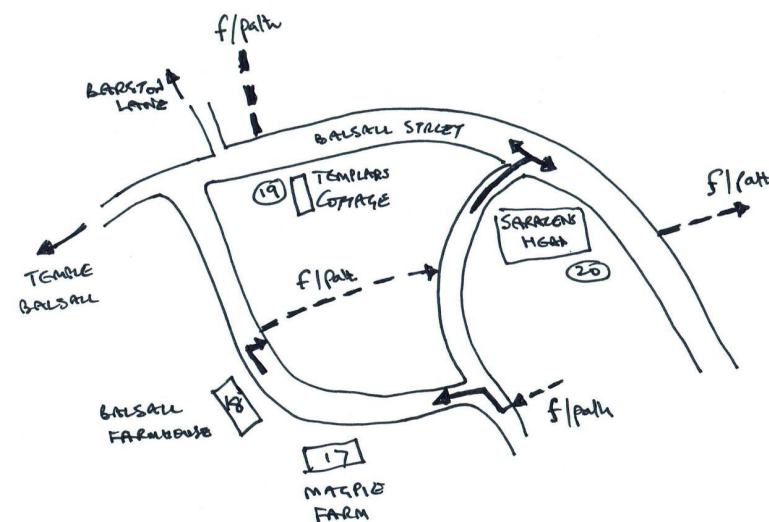
## 20. Saracen's Head



A listed building dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, when the Knights Templar resided at Temple Balsall and named after their foe, the Saracen. From around 1162, until the suppression of their order in 1312, the Knights Templar owned a preceptory at Temple Balsall. The main building is Elizabethan, and it was a coaching inn, although substantially altered in modern times.

Carry on towards the Saracen's Head pub but take the path at the finger post on the left before reaching Saracen Drive. Follow it along the board walk, and behind the houses to go down the steps to Long Brook Lane and then left onto Magpie Lane. There are two outstanding buildings here – the Elizabethan Magpie Farm (17) . and the later Baroque style Balsall Farmhouse (18) . - both easily viewed from the road without disturbing the residents.

Take the path to the right across fields to re-join Long Brook Lane down to the junction with Balsall Street. Turn right for the main trail to the Saracen's Head (20) . The Saracen's Head is not only a good place to take a break but has an extensive car park if you want to start the trail from here.



Alternatively, to walk the alternate trail, turn left at the junction with Balsall Street, passing Templars Cottage (19) .. carefully cross the B4101 and take the marked path across the fields of Grange Farm enjoying the wide views north. Turn left at the top of the field before Wootton Grange and go down the footpath to Wootton Lane. Immediately on the left are two interesting buildings – Brooklands Barn and Farmhouse. Turning right on Wootton Lane we pass Wootton Green Farm and then on to Blythe Prior – another attractive Elizabethan building (21) .. Continue on Wootton Lane and turn right up Wootton Green Lane before reaching the A452. Carry on up passing another alternate path coming in from the right, and take a marked path on the left to reach the car park of the George in the Tree (22) pub.

For the main trail, from the Saracen's Head, cross the B4101 to the finger post on the left and enter the fields. After about 300 metres the path splits; either go *straight on the alternate path up to Wobaton Green Lane*, or veer right down the main route to the brook and follow the path behind the houses at Needler's End. Cross the lane which leads to Grange Farm and go straight on across the fields to meet the A452 opposite the end of Lavender Hall Lane.

*An alternative route is to turn right on the marked path in the fields after crossing the lane to Grange Farm, go down to Grange Park, and turn left to walk through the park up to the A452.*

Turn left towards the George in the Tree where there is another opportunity for a break and car parking.

Opposite the George in the Tree is a white cottage which may also be the site of the Tollhouse when this road was a drovers' turnpike. The trail takes the path immediately to the left of the cottage passing through a small, wooded area to enter the Horner's playing fields. Skirt the playing areas on the left to exit by the kissing gates, cross Lavender Hall Lane and enter Lavender Hall Park.

Turning right takes you on an alternate route through the park to the village centre. From the roundabout in the centre, two diversions are rewarding. North along the A452 is Crathle, number one Turnpike Close (25) an Arts and Crafts style house dating from 1902; South along the A452 is the White Horse pub (26) - originally the site of a cottage selling local ale.

The main trail goes down the left side of the park and exits onto Hall Meadow Road. Go right and cross when you see the kissing gate on the left side of the road. The path goes through the wood alongside the West Coast Main Line.

A worthwhile diversion is to cross the line at the bridge into the Lavender Hall Fisheries (23) where excellent breakfasts and other snacks are served until 1.00 pm. You can then take the path through the fisheries to the right between the lakes and the railway line emerging onto Truggist Lane near the station. The path joins Truggist Lane through a metal gate which is locked overnight. It is opened at 8.00 am and closed between 4.00 pm and 5.00 pm so do not use this path outside these hours. If arriving in the late afternoon, ask in the café if the gate is still open.

Listed with 15<sup>th</sup> century origins. Recorded in 1936 as three labourers' tenements before conversion to a single dwelling in 1948. View from road only.



19. Templars Cottage, Balsall Street

#### 18. Balsall Farmhouse, Magpie Lane



Listed, built in 1690 in a simple baroque style. By the early 1800s, records indicate that it was a mixed farm with livestock and crops and known as Balsall Street Farm. At that time, a non – conformist family, the Hoods, ran it but today it is no longer farmed. View from road only.

## Countryside

Historically, Balsall and Berkswell were situated in the Forest of Arden – a thickly wooded area extending from the River Avon to the River Thame. Deforestation and agriculture have left very little of the actual forest. However, the area remains largely rural, and pockets of trees, a few ancient woodlands, field boundaries and ancient oaks remain as the heritage of the once much larger forest.

The fields around Balsall Common are a prime example of Arden landscape and many of our ancient hedgerows shown on old maps still exist today. Similarly, our current road network can be found. For example, the Kenilworth Road - previously called Welsh Road – was a turnpike. Sunnyside Lane may appear now to be an access road for new housing but is shown identically on the Tithe map of 1802. Barratt's Lane is named after Catherine Barratt who owned the surrounding land in 1802. Meeting House Lane is named after the meeting house which can still be seen. We have attempted to design the trail to show these features although you will have to take a small diversion to see the meeting house.

The view north from Grange Farm fields.



An example of early Elizabethan architecture, with its original section dating back to 1560. This contains the central chimney stack. Formerly known as Churchfield Farm, its name was changed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to no doubt reflect its black and white facade. View from road only.

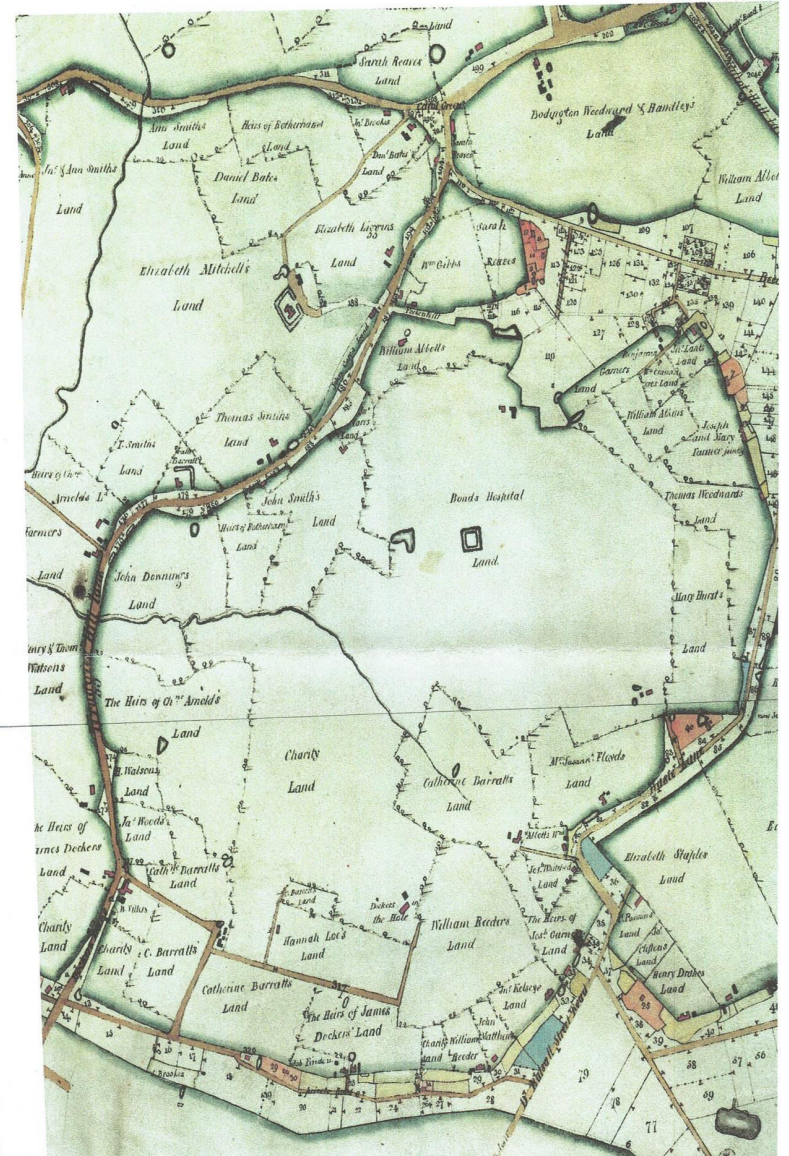


17. Magpie Farm

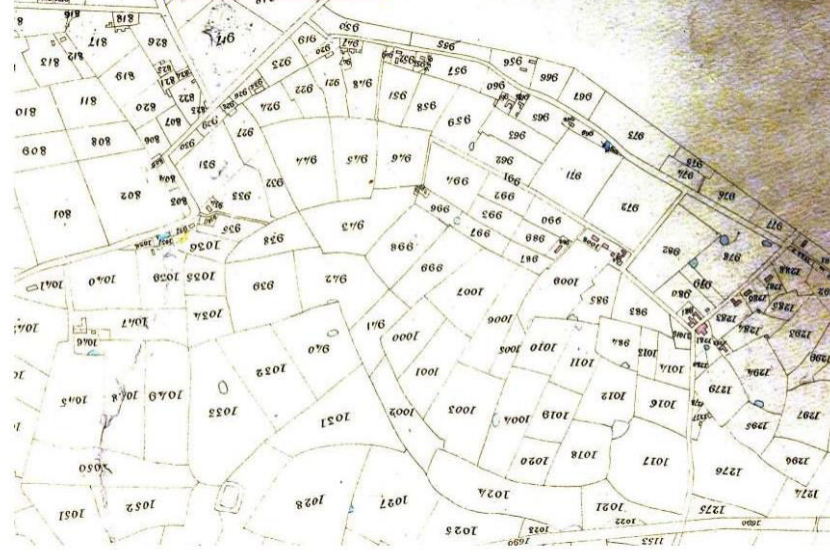
## 16. Wisteria Cottage



The foundations of this cottage are said to date back to King Henry VI. Original beams and wattle & daub walls have been discovered. The house is now listed, timber framed and redbrick circa 17<sup>th</sup> century. It takes its name from an ancient wisteria covering an outside wall. This used to be a farm too, with living quarters, cattle pen and barn all in the one building. View from road only.



Hampton in Arden tithe map 1802. Most of the hedge rows are identical today and the draft Solihull Local Plan commits to preserving them.



**1839 Balsall Common Tythe map** showing the old field structure mostly now in the Barratt's Farm site. The long thin strip at the top left is probably land reserved for the (now) West Coast Line. Meeting House Lane, Old Waste Lane, Sunnyside Lane and what is now Station Road can be seen.

from its northern end, which is a single large open space to the ground floor. A single storey sun room has also been added to the eastern end of the c.1901 extension. EXTERIOR: The main elevation facing the road (south elevation) consists of the gable end of the north-south range with an attached range of two bays under a pitched roof. The gable end has tripartite timber casements to the ground and first floor, and a two-pane fixed light to the attic, and the full height of the gable has decorative mock timber framing with roughcast render infill above a stone plinth. In the later range, the building is brick built in English bond to a string course, with moulded brick plinth, and mock timber framing with roughcast render infill panels to the ground floor is a gabled, glazed porch with mock timber framing above a moulded brick plinth, and a squared bay window with four paned timber casements with stained glass toplights. To the first floor, two gabled half-dormers, with three-light windows similar to that in the ground floor bay window. All the gables to this elevation have decorative bargeboards with pendant timbers and decorative finials to the roofs. The elevation to the west is entirely covered in roughcast render, and consists of three bays to the south which are the timber framed house, two bays further north, and a further two bays in a gabled extension, with brick plinth. The gabled extension has double garage up-and-over door to the ground floor with two modern three light timber casements with opening toplights above, similar to those on the south elevation, and is not of special interest. Similar windows are to be found in the two bays added in the C19, with an entrance door in the northern bay. The three bays of the timber framed range have irregular fenestration; that to the north has similar three light windows to those elsewhere in the house to ground and first floors; the central bay has an Edwardian window with stained glass toplights to the ground floor, at the site of the former entrance doorway, with a two-light timber casement offset to the first floor. To the southernmost bay the only window is a single, square fixed light to the ground floor.

now situated in the village but still surrounded by a large landholding, was substantially extended, creating a new main range fronting the road, comparable in size to the original range. By the later C20, having become surrounded by modern suburban houses, and its land having dwindled to around half an acre, Shenstone Grange was extended again, creating a second storey at the rear of the timber framed range, and further increasing the overall volume of the building. The building is mentioned in the Victoria County History (though not by name) as a C17 house.

Of interest is the timber used is probably French oak as used in the construction of the Spanish Armada with many timbers showing prior uses in ship construction.

**INTERIOR:** The timber framed house is much more evident in the interior of the building. Ground floor: the original house was of lobby entry design, with a heated room either side of the central stack, which at ground floor level is built of sandstone. The kitchen, the northern room, has a very large chamfered beam running north south, with exposed ceiling joists across the entire room, with chamfers and stepped stops. The door to the lobby is set in its original frame, and has an early, if not original, plank and batten door with the remains of its C17 latch serving as a handle. The framing continues along the lobby and into the living room to the south, which has the same arrangement of very large beam and exposed ceiling joists with chamfers and stepped stops. The fireplace is of sandstone, recently infilled with brick, with a massive bressumer beam with a very shallow four centred arch. The Edwardian range has a large staircase hall and drawing room to the front of the ground floor, with cloakroom and ancillary rooms to the rear. First floor: a single large bedroom in the Edwardian wing. In the timber framed range, the visible decorations are now all late C20, but a timber doorway remains in the landing at the point where the timber wing meets the later extension to the north. The southernmost bedroom retains its original ceiling, visible from the attic space above. Attic: the Edwardian range has an entirely C20 roof structure, but the timber framing of the roof in the original range remains almost entirely intact, having been encapsulated below the new roof. The trusses are formed from principal rafters with tie beams, collar and diagonal struts supporting the collars, with single trenched purlins; the ridge purlin is set diagonally and supported by crossed principal rafters. A few curved wind braces remain in situ and the majority of the common rafters are also original. One mid-truss retains all but one panel of wattle and daub infill, and others are infilled with brick. The chimney stack has been rebuilt in brick at this level.

A detached house dating from the C17, with extensive additions dating to c.1901.

**MATERIALS:** the original range is a two-storey, three bay timber framed house, with clay pantile roof and brick stack, now entirely covered in roughcast render; the Edwardian range of brick, with roughcast render and applied mock timber framing, plain clay tiled roof with moulded finials and rolled ridge tiles, and brick stack. The later C19 crosswing to the rear is of brick, with roughcast render to unify the appearance of the entire house. **PLAN:** the three-bay timber framed house appears to have been a lobby entry house with a single room to either side of the stack and lobby, orientated north-south with its gable end to the road. The Edwardian wing, which is single depth, runs east-west along the road front, adjoining the timber framed house on the eastern side; and the extension to the rear is a two bay room extending the timber framed building with a cross wing running eastwards



1886 map showing the West Coast Main Line and the line to Kenilworth.

# The Buildings

1. The Railway Inn



Following the arrival of the railway in 1838, a station opened in 1853 to serve the local community and passenger traffic. The Inn was built in the 1850's and is a typical building of the time.

15. Shenstone Grange, Balsall Street



Listed detached house dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century with extensive Edwardian additions in the early 1900s. Private property – view from road only.

Shenstone Grange – History

The original building at Shenstone Grange was a two-storey, three-bay timber framed house, dating from the C17, and was probably a farmstead at this date, in an isolated situation in open countryside alongside the main road access to Balsall Common. By the mid C19 the farming use had presumably ceased: the tithe map shows the timber range and an extension to the north, described as three tenements; by 1887, the main range has an additional bay to the north and a single storey cross wing to the rear; and c.1901, the house,

#### **14. Oakes Farm**



A modern farm shop and café owned and run by the descendants of Mr Vic Oakes who was the last farmer where Fernhill Court is sited.

#### **2. The Brickmakers Arms**

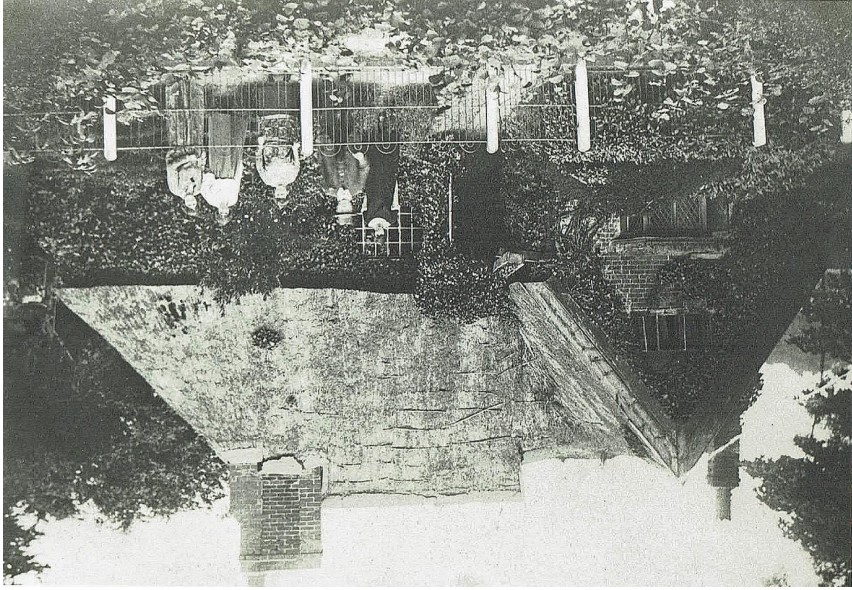
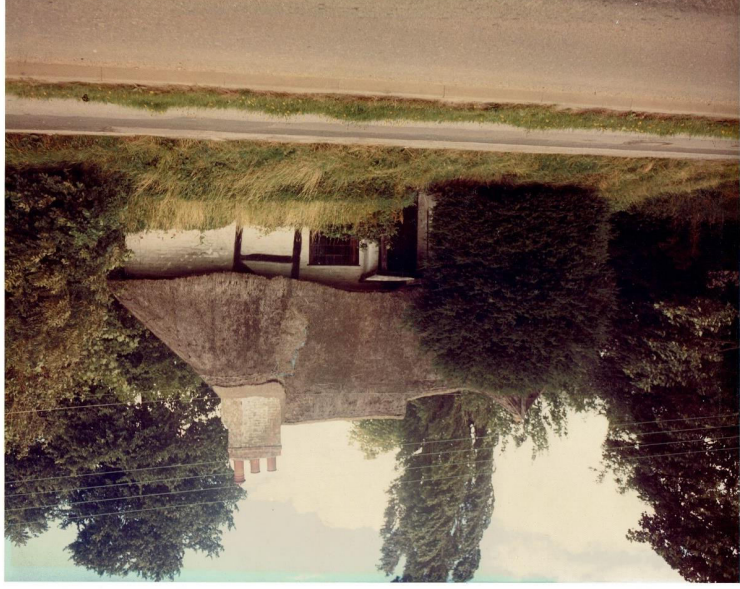


Dating from c.1680 and listed, it was once the home of the Watson Family, who were weavers & farmers. Evidence of brickmaking was visible in fields below and opposite the property, known as 'Sandpits Fields'. When the property became a public house in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it assumed the name 'The Brickmakers Arms'.



This former shop is in an early Victorian centre of life at this end of the village, albeit over the boundary in Berkswell Parish. "At this location, there was a general grocery store and bakery. To the left there was a sweet shop later becoming a butcher's shop and abattoir. View from road only."

3. Ye Olde Berkswell Stores



### 13. Hobbe Cottage



This listed thatched cottage was built in 1585 on a site mentioned in the Domesday Book. It was once the home of Mr Thompson, the village wheelwright who worked at Blacksmith's corner. Working with wood, he was also the undertaker because he made coffins as well as wheels, carts, shafts, wagons, and wheelbarrows. View from road only.

#### **Occupiers 19<sup>th</sup> /20<sup>th</sup> century - Hobbe Cottage**

1850 Richard Holmes Thompson (wheelwright) and wife Hannah

c1905 Percy Faulconbridge [wheelwright and farmer, Parish Councillor]

c1927-1930 Penn family, Mrs. Penn, Ken, Eric, Queenie (the lady in the dark dress in the old photo of Hobbe Cottage is Queenie Penn)

Mid to late 1930s. Mrs. Louise Bennett - local residents remembered her from their childhood. She had an Austin car and used to drive to the "Case is Altered" pub at 11pm and stay till 3am. As children they thought she was a witch as she had lots of cats. [c1950/60s].

### 4.Sunnyside House



This house was built in 1732 by a local Berkswell carpenter - William Thompson, and later by the Barratt family. In 1845 it was owned by a single, 60-year-old man named Thomas Tranter. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1845, he was found brutally murdered with a shattered skull, and the house ransacked. A local man – James Read - was charged with his murder but was acquitted. He was re-arrested two weeks later charged with stealing Tranter's clothing and pawning it! He was found guilty of larceny. The judge was non-committal regarding the murder but clearly thought Read was guilty and sentenced him to 7 years transportation to Tasmania although he spent the first 5 years in prison in Gibraltar. He was released in 1852 but his whereabouts after that is not known. View from road only.



Sa Sunnyside Farmhouse

According to the 1841 tithe map, the farm consisted of 27 acres, was owned by the trustees of Thomas Tidmarsh and farmed by Henry Raven. In the 1900s, the farm was run as a dairy farm and had 2 carthorses, a pony & trap, and poultry. It has been claimed that the main beams in the living rooms came from Kenilworth Castle. View from road only.

12. Fernhill Court



On the south side of the road is Fernhill Court, a former farm and now home to several businesses. The earliest record of any deed is 26<sup>th</sup> October 1736 and owned by the Governors of the Hospital of Lady Katherine Leveson. A sale catalogue from 1863 describes a substantial farmhouse, barn, cow pens, stabling, piggeries, rickyard, orchard, garden and pastureland'.

The thatched barn is a listed building.

Mr Thompson employed three men and was himself the undertaker. In those days an oak coffin could be had for fourteen shillings and an elm for thirteen shillings.

The last farm cart they made cost £14. This was a worry as Glovers in Warwick were making them at the same time for £9. However the last cart, which was bought by John Hurst of Fernhill Farm, was still in use by his son in 1953.

Tyres for the wheels were made by Riley, local blacksmiths. He had a tyre bender so they could fit them on to any wheel.

One night the fence was not put up round the sawpit and the farmer's cob, "Merriman", fell in. By backing him up and putting boltons of straw under him, they finally got him out.

On the south side of the road, the garden wall of Frog Lane Cottage shows a wheel in its brickwork, as well as a memorial of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

#### 5b Pool Orchard



Listed building, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century with a sandstone base and timber frame. On the 1841 tithe map, it had 10 acres and was originally bought by Thomas Docker in 1768. By the 1890s, it was owned by Charles Satchwell who was a carrier of goods and people. His business was a forerunner of Satchwell's Transport, which was located at the site of today's Rose Court. View from road only.



6. Barratt's Lane Farm House and Barn.

The house and barns are listed and believed to have been built in 1570. The land was originally owned by Berkswell Charities. In 1772, the tenant was James Docker, farmer and weaver. By 1815, it was leased by William Rymell, with the description "the property consists of a farmhouse, outbuildings and over 13 acres called Old or Hole Farm". View from footpath in fields.



11 Blacksmith's Corner - Old Forge and Old Wheelwrights.

The end of Balsall Street and Station Road has been referred to in the past as 'Blacksmith's Corner' and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was a centre of village life. With several homesteads and the Saracen's Head pub, the smithy, foundry, sawmill, and wheelwright's shop were a hive of rural industry. The blacksmith's cottage and former forge remain but have been thoroughly modernised and have nothing to do with their former life. There is nothing left of the wheelwright's shop. [Nothing of this remains today.]

**The Wheelwrights Shop - some background information.**

Mr Thompson, the wheelwright, lived in the thatched cottage further west on Balsall Street. He bought six oaks and six ashes and six elms every year and the best sawyers in the county, Smiths of Burton Green, came to saw them up.

The sawn planks were stored in the big barn of Street Farm, just beyond the sawpit and the wheelwright's shop and there they stayed for seven years before they were used to make coffins, wagons, carts, shafts, wheels and wheelbarrows.

#### 10. Frogmore Grange, Frog Lane



Listed, red brick and tile house circa 1810. The earliest parts date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century with significant additions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and with stables next door early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was formerly Balsall House – the official residence of the Squire of Balsall. Private properties, view from road, with a games themed café and other activities in Beatles woods adjacent to the left.

#### 7. Medieval furrowed field

‘Ridge and furrow’ is an archaeological pattern of ridges and troughs (‘furrows’), created by ploughing in the Middle Ages. This was typical of the ‘Open Field System’ where families managed one or more strips within a large open field. The strips allowed good and poor land to be shared out fairly. Over time, the single sided plough piled up the soil to form the ‘ridge’, with the ‘furrow’ acting as a drainage channel to protect the crop from waterlogging. The ridges and furrows are not obvious when the grass and rushes are long. They are most clearly seen in winter during early morning or late afternoon sun.

Note the reproduction “Tingsted” nearby on Old Waste Lane.

**8. Berkswell Windmill**

Originally a post mill dating from 1706 and is listed. It is now a four bladed Tower Mill constructed in 1826. The windmill is built in brick with a wooden boat shaped cap and is turned by an endless chain winding mechanism. It was historically used to grind flour and animal feeds and in 1927 the milling wheels were adapted to run via a diesel engine, not reliant upon the variable nature of the wind. It was used for grinding corn by the Hammond family until 1948.

This windmill is an excellent example of a Warwickshire tower mill still in existence and is open to the public on specific days of the year.

**9. Cottage Farmhouse, Frog Lane**

Cottage farm is a grade 2 listed building with a plaque over the original front door dating it from 1744 and giving the initials – PLC – of the first owner. It has no foundations – built on a base of sandstone blocks – and has a stained-glass window.