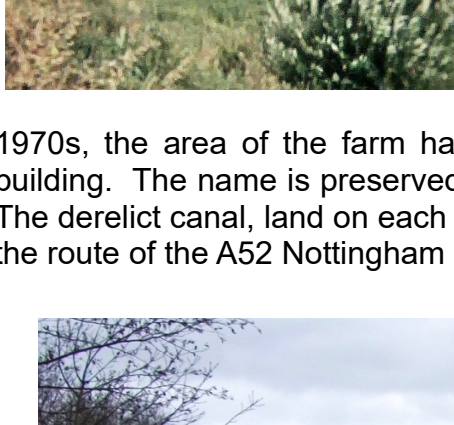


Meadow Lane Bridges

by Peter Barnes who also took the photographs except the first

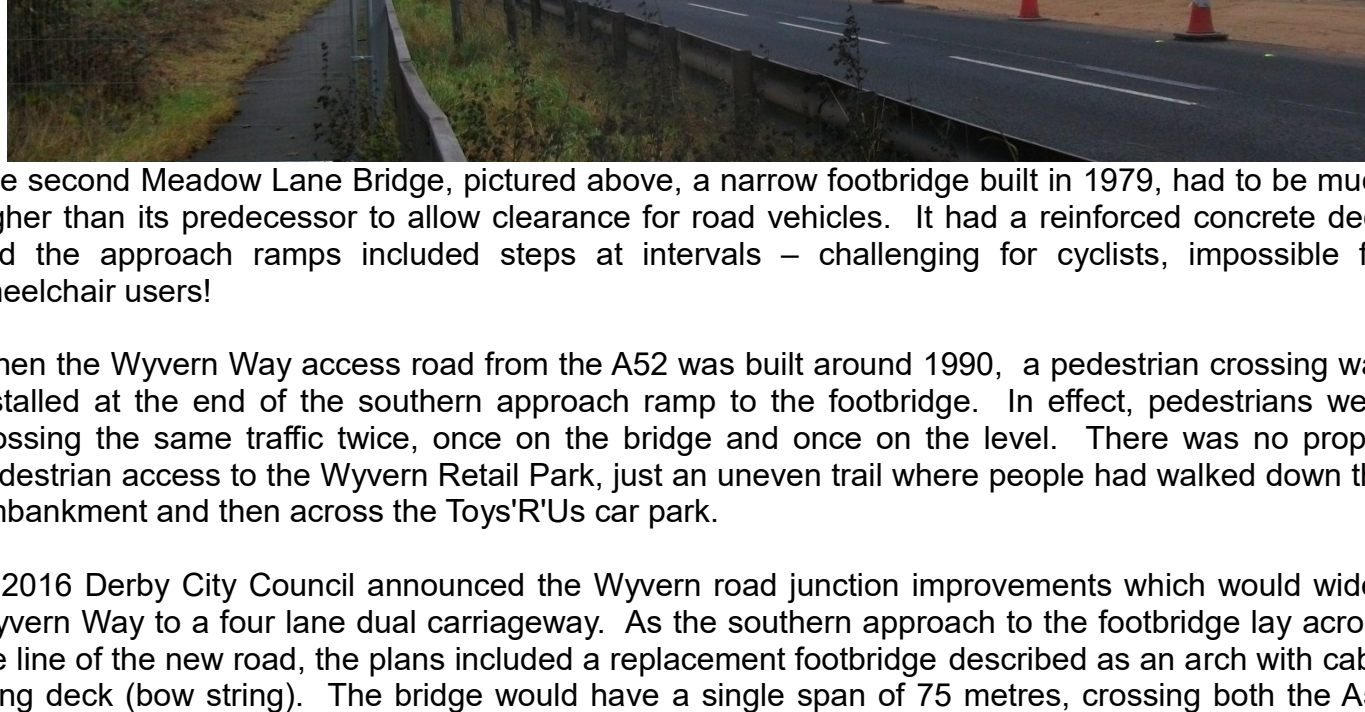
Meadow Lane is one of the oldest roads in Chaddesden and the only one to cross two bridges. The first bridge crosses the Chaddesden Brook at the junction with Autumn Grove. There was a bridge here in 1791 when the enclosure map named the road between Nottingham Road and the bridge as Bridge Green Lane. Beyond the bridge it was Meadow Road and finally Derwent Lane for the southern extremity that ended on what is now a building site between Wyvern Way and the railway. It is hard to believe that this most industrial part of Chaddesden was once meadows with grazing animals.

It is the footbridge that most residents will think of when Meadow Lane Bridge is mentioned. There has been a bridge at this location since the Derby Canal Act 1793 authorised the construction of a canal across Chaddesden Meadow and required the Canal Company to provide and maintain bridges to carry "Common Highways, Bridle Ways and Foot Roads".



The canal between Sandiacre Junction and Derby opened in 1796. Meadow Farm house was built on the south side of the canal within a year or two of the opening, its location taking advantage of the new form of transport. The first bridge, farm house and abandoned canal are seen here as they were in 1968.

The last boat passed along the Derby Canal in 1946 although it was not until 3 December 1964 that the canal was officially abandoned. Meadow Farm house was demolished in the mid-1970s, the area of the farm having diminished since the 1930s as fields were sold off for house building. The name is preserved in nearby Meadow Farm School which opened in September 1968. The derelict canal, land on each side and Meadow Lane bridge were bought by Derby Corporation for the route of the A52 Nottingham Road Diversion which opened in May 1980.



The second Meadow Lane Bridge, pictured above, a narrow footbridge built in 1979, had to be much higher than its predecessor to allow clearance for road vehicles. It had a reinforced concrete deck and the approach ramps included steps at intervals – challenging for cyclists, impossible for wheelchair users!

When the Wyvern Way access road from the A52 was built around 1990, a pedestrian crossing was installed at the end of the southern approach ramp to the footbridge. In effect, pedestrians were crossing the same traffic twice, once on the bridge and once on the level. There was no proper pedestrian access to the Wyvern Retail Park, just an uneven trail where people had walked down the embankment and then across the Toys'R'Us car park.

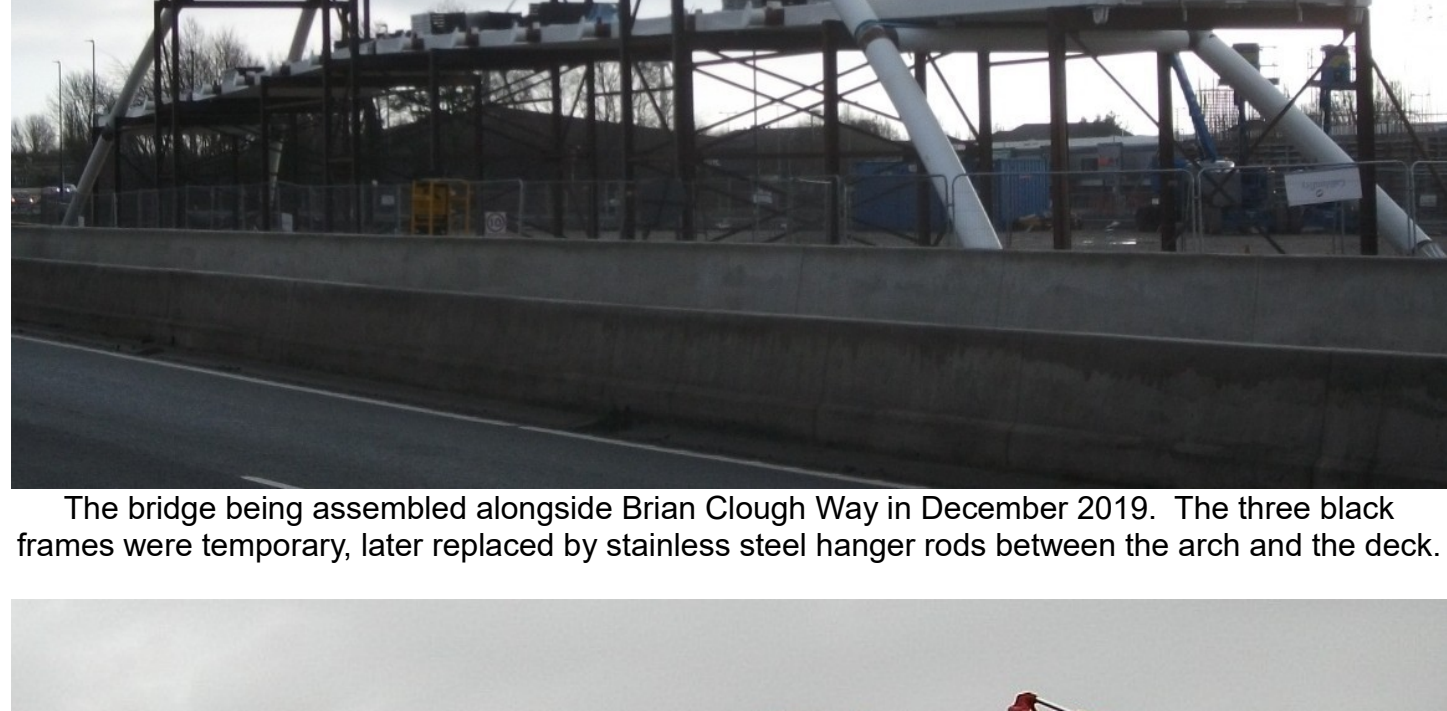
In 2016 Derby City Council announced the Wyvern road junction improvements which would widen Wyvern Way to a four lane dual carriageway. As the southern approach to the footbridge lay across the line of the new road, the plans included a replacement footbridge described as an arch with cable hung deck (bow string). The bridge would have a single span of 75 metres, crossing both the A52 and a realigned Wyvern Way. It would be 4 metres wide for shared use by pedestrians and cyclists, and provide step-free access on a gradient of 1 in 20 suitable for wheelchair users. The disadvantage of the easy access is the length of the approach embankments, 120 metres each side, giving a walking distance over 300 metres from beginning to end.

For the first few months of 2019 the southern approach to the bridge was diverted via a zig-zag route that took users close to the former railway wagon repair workshop. The bridge was closed from 29 April 2019, and demolished during the weekend of 18-19 May, Brian Clough Way being closed while demolition took place. From that date the only pedestrian access to the Wyvern Retail Park, and to Pride Park for football matches, was the sole remaining bridge at the end of Highfield Lane.

Construction of the New Bridge



The northern foundation makes an appearance – 15 August 2019. There is a similarly massive reinforced concrete structure on the south side. The remains of the wagon repair workshop, later a showroom for The Derby Fireplace Company, can be seen on the other side of the road.



The bridge being assembled alongside Brian Clough Way in December 2019. The three black frames were temporary, later replaced by stainless steel hanger rods between the arch and the deck.



Concrete being poured at the southern foundation – 19 December 2019



Pedestrians will have plenty of time to admire the view as they climb the southern approach. Seen nearly completed on 19 March 2020. It had been planned to lift the main span into place on the weekend of 18-19 April 2020, but the Covid-19 pandemic was at its height and the work was postponed until 30-31 May.



The crane was assembled on site after it arrived on 12 lorries on Tuesday 26 May. We have lift-off at 08:35 on the Saturday morning, a dry, sunny day with just a light breeze. The following weekend had been reserved as an alternative in case the weather was unsuitable.



08:45 – almost there with the bridge turned across Brian Clough Way.

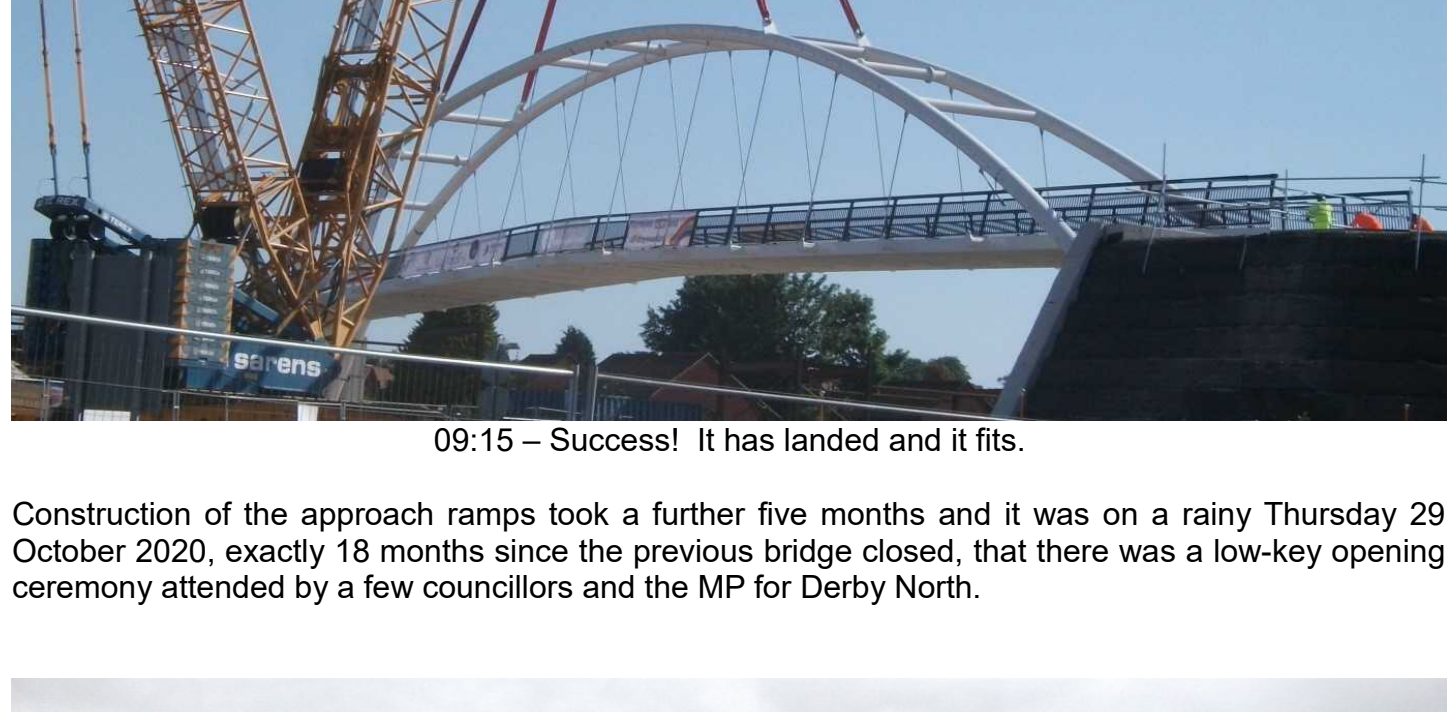


08:50 – being lowered onto its permanent foundations. Hope it is the right length!



09:15 – Success! It has landed and it fits.

Construction of the approach ramps took a further five months and it was on a rainy Thursday 29 October 2020, exactly 18 months since the previous bridge closed, that there was a low-key opening ceremony attended by a few councillors and the MP for Derby North.



Not a camera fault! The northern approach ramp has an undulating profile with frequent changes of gradient.



The bridge deck is not level, but has a distinct summit at mid-span which will aid drainage. Note the non-slip surface.



The longer southern approach ramp features a straight section with undulating slope, the same as the northern approach, as well as a curved section.



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