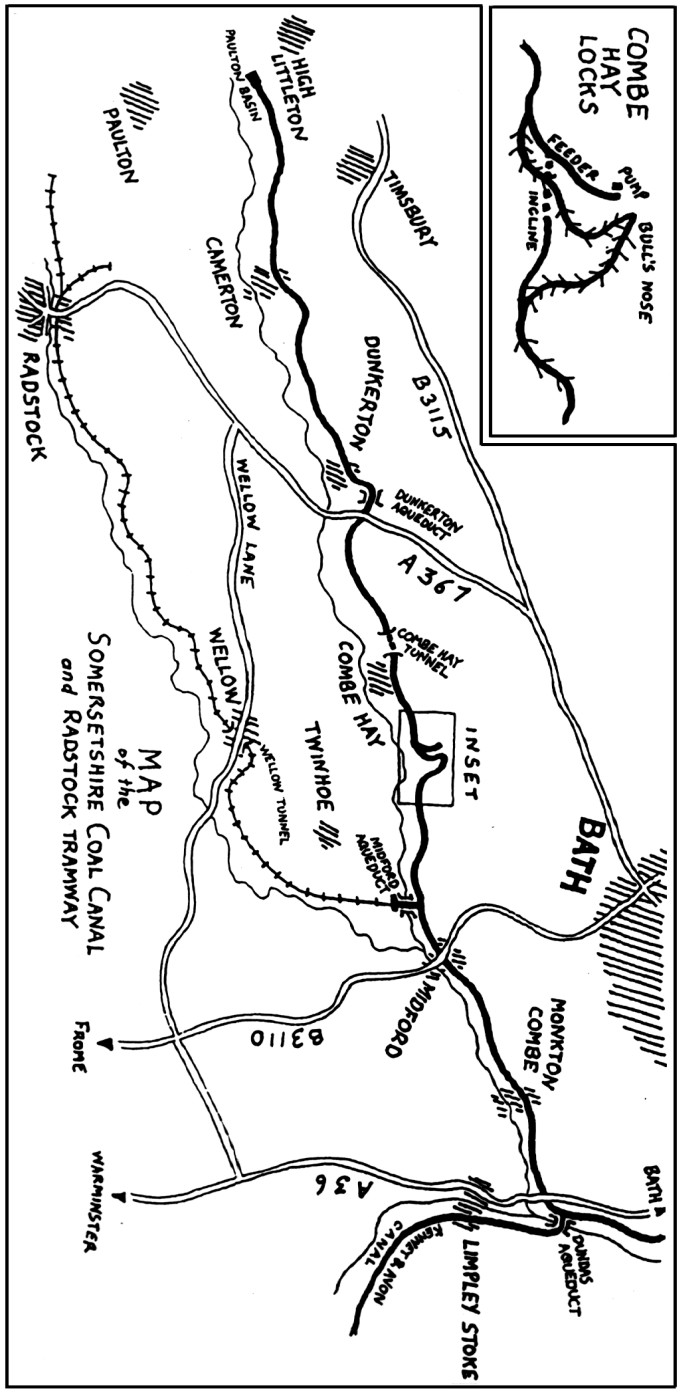


# WEIGH-HOUSE

## THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL SOCIETY

№ 48 OCTOBER 2007

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The Somersetshire Coal Canal Society was founded in January –1992 with the aim:

'TO FOCUS AN INTEREST ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE OLD SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL'

The Society is aimed at those people who are interested in finding out more about the history of the canal, preserving what is still there and walking the parts that are still accessible to the public.

The Society aims to preserve the remaining structures of the canal (Midford Aqueduct, Combe Hay Locks *etc*.) and to protect the line of the canal from decay, dereliction and vegetation.

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Membership Application Forms are available from
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IMA Transport Planning, 11 Kingsmead Square, Bath BA1 2AB
*E-mail:* PMoss@ima-tp.com

*Society Website:* **http://rtjhomepages.users.btopenworld.com/SCC2.html**

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THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OR CONVEY THOSE OF THE SOCIETY

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The Editor welcomes any letters, articles, photographs *etc* for inclusion in **WEIGH-HOUSE** and will try to include them in full, but reserves the right to shorten them if space is limited.
Please send articles and correspondence for the next edition of **WEIGH-HOUSE** to:
Adrian Tuddenham 88,Mount Road, Southdown, Bath BA2 1LH
☎ 01225 335974 *E-mail (not HTML):* **adrian@poppyrecords.co.uk**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WORK PARTIES
*Venues may change at short notice, always check with Bob Parnell before turning up.*

Sunday 21th October — 10:00
**WALK — DUNKERTON to CAMERTON (5 miles)**
Meet at Dunkerton layby on A367 (by telephone box).
For further details please contact:
*Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Sunday 4th November — 10:00
**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**
For further details please contact:
*Bob Parnell* ☎ 01225 428055

Sunday 18th November — 10:00
**WALK — COMBE HAY to DUNKERTON (4 miles)**
*Meet:* The Avenue, Combe Hay
For further details please contact:
*Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Sunday 2nd December — 10:00
**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**
For further details please contact:
*Bob Parnell* ☎ 01225 428055

Sunday 16th December — 10:00
**WALK — The TRAMWAYS of PAULTON (4 miles)**
*Meet:* Paulton Sewage Works
For further details please contact:
*Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

These are all circular walks unless otherwise noted. You only need to arrange your transport to and from the meeting point. Any marked † tend to be in the form of detailed explanations of short sections of the canal and its relationship with the locality; and, as such, are less suitable for young children.

Dogs are normally welcome (except where indicated) and must be kept on leads at all times.



# WEIGH - HOUSE Nº 48



## EDITOR'S NOTES

We are pleased to welcome Tim Lunt as a new contributor. On Pages 12 and 13, he describes his researches into a canalside rubbish dump: not the Corporation one near Midford Aqueduct, but a lesser-known one nearer Lock 22.

Also in this issue, Terry Paget, who is no stranger to these pages, has stepped away from his speciality interest in canal boat lifts and gives us, instead, a description of the walk from Single Hill to Radstock.

After reading Mike Chapman's description of a walk along the S.C.C. tramway to Welton, Gerald Quartley sent us some photographs of the area taken many years ago. Back in the 1960s, he and R.G.Gilson did a great deal of careful research into the courses of the various tramways associated with the canal, which culminated in an article on the subject for 'Industrial Archaeology' magazine. Although the article 'Some Technical Aspects of the Somerset Coal Canal Tramways' is still regarded as the definitive source of information on that aspect of the S.C.C., copies are nowadays difficult to obtain and very few people have access to them.

In view of this, Weigh-House is privileged to have been given permission by Gerald Quartley to reprint the article in full, and to include some extra pictures which were not in the original publication. The article begins on Page 14 of this issue and will be continue in the next two issues.

ADRIAN TUDDENHAM

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

*One of the benefits of conducting walks along the canal is the opportunity they provide to keep watch on changes occurring along its line. It is surprising how quickly things can happen, even in the countryside, so we are naturally concerned that these changes do not clash with the Society's constitutional aim, namely, 'the preservation of the Somersetshire Coal Canal and its structures for the benefit of the public'.*

Fortunately some protection for historical sites is afforded by the local authority as part of their policy to maintain the environment for the enjoyment of all. For instance, the more prominent visible structures belonging to the canal, such as the lock flight and aqueducts, are designated Listed Buildings, and the whole length of its line is included on their local Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

For the purposes of the SMR, which gathers data about any significant historical sites throughout the area, a detailed map and description of the canal and its remains was commissioned from your Chairman some years ago by the then Council Archaeologist. However, it should be remembered that these provisions are only intended as a guide. Many other environmental priorities are taken into account when applications are considered by the planning department, and only those sites that have been designated a Scheduled Monument can be regarded as having 'absolute' protection. This means that the Society must ensure that its interests are not overlooked by the local authority when applications come under review.

This question arose recently when an application was granted for alterations to the house on the site of the weigh-house at Midford, submitted by its new owner. When the initial application was viewed by Roger Halse, the plan did not shown any interference with the canal or weighing chamber buried under the lawn. However, it appeared quite otherwise when the work that was actually being carried out was seen during a walk along that section of the section of the canal. There was therefore some suspicion that the planning department had not taken the canal remains into consideration when the application was finally passed, particularly when we were informed that this occurred in the interval during a change-over in the officers concerned. As it turned out, on re-examining the final plan in detail, it was found that the new development narrowly avoided the canal remains, and although some additional work had indeed been done, this was of a superficial nature. In effect, it appears that the initial plan, presumably passed by the previous archaeological officer, had not been substantially altered.

Although this may be seen as an exceptional case, it well illustrates the kind of loophole that can occur even in the best run systems, and the only safe way to ensure that these are avoided is to view all planning applications that occur in the area. Once the application is granted and the work started, the process is irreversible. An even better method, perhaps, is to keep in touch with local landowners beforehand, to ensure that they are aware of, and interested in, the historical aspects of their property. Again, our walks play an important rôle in this respect, and this incident may well prove to be an opportunity to establish good relations with the new owner of the weigh-house site.

Mike Chapman
October 2007



# A WALK FROM SINGLE HILL TO RADSTOCK

19th August 2007

*A select band of six gathered at Shoscombe Village hall on a chilly but dry day to renew acquaintance with the western end of the Radstock arm. Our indefatigable leader Mike Chapman pointed out the interesting hamlet of Single Hill, mostly built on the bed of the canal, and including a Methodist church and the Magpie pub in a long line. West of the steep road down from the Village Hall were some modern larger properties near the site of the Somerset & Dorset railway Shoscombe & Single Hill halt, little of which now remains.*

We walked west along the route of the canal and railway, and soon found ourselves in Lower Shoscombe, containing old terraces, new terraces, and some interesting cottages, all with gardens incorporating canal and railway land.

We next reached Peglinch Farm, and saw the barn where the bodies had been laid out after the 1876 head-on train crash between two August bank holiday special trains. The building still stands, but has been extended and cleaned up, and a stone dated 1997 now appears above the porch, which may confuse folks in years to come.

The overgrown footpath that we walked along on earlier walks has now been transformed into a wide tarmacadam Sustrans cycleway, complete with cast iron artistically decorated totems and descriptive signboards. We understand that Sustrans aims to complete a cycleway all the way to Bath, passing through the Combe Down and Devonshire railway tunnels. If this is achieved, we look forward to doing future canal explorations on bicycles.

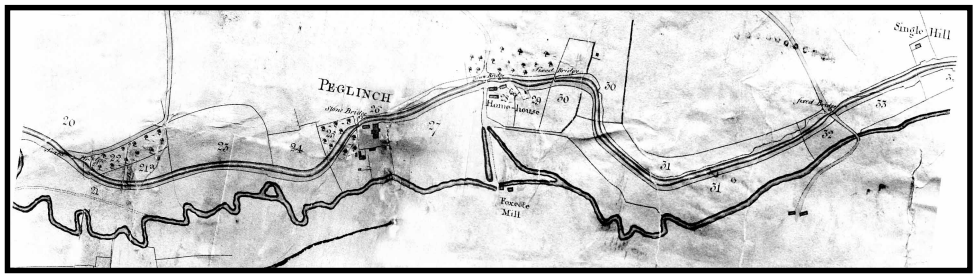
Steve Page, one of our members, had earlier found the exact spot where the trains collided, marking it with a cigarette packet. He told us there used to be a cairn of stones there, but it was no longer to be seen.

We proceeded west, past the sites of Writhlington, Braysdown and Woodborough collieries, as far as Whitelands, then left the cycleway to look for a canal reservoir or winding hole that should have been there. We did not find it, but we did discover a stream disappearing into a culvert and vanishing under some raised land, possibly a spoil heap of a colliery.

We then returned the way we had come to Single Hill Village Hall, thanked Mike for another excellent guided walk, and parted.

It struck me later that at no time on this walk had I set eyes on an obviously recognisable length of canal. There was precious little recognisable railway either, just the occasional bridge.

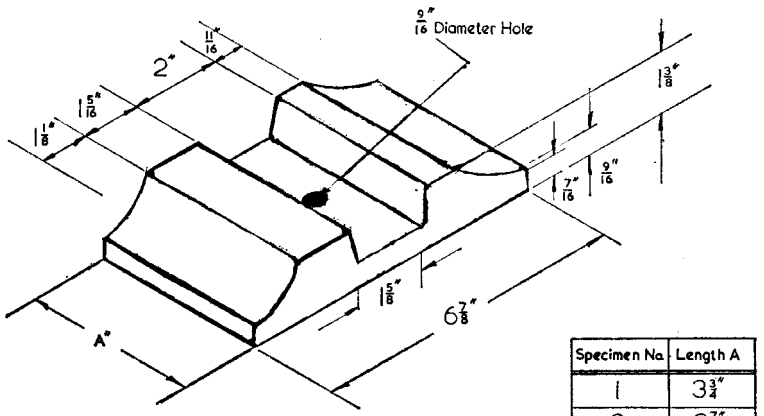
TERRY PAGET




**THE COURSE OF THE CANAL AT PEGLINCH — from the Cruse Map**

pegged into a double holed stone sleeper. At this point it was possible to measure four rails, which were 4 ft 5½ in., 8 ft 3 in., and 12 ft in length. An interesting point here is that where the line was relaid on wooden sleepers and used in the limited area around Radstock for colliery haulage, the gauge was narrowed to 3 ft 2 in. This undoubtedly was done after the major part of the track had been taken over and the standard-gauge railway laid in the 1870s. A further length can be seen on the surface in the British Rail goods yard, some 50 yd east of our excavations, at 690549.

Continuing east, sleepers can next be seen just before the colliery tip at Writhlington (703553), the line actually vanishing under the tip. Here we found a wrought-iron chair on a sleeper, and the distance between the double-hole sleepers indicated a rail length of 15 ft.




| Specimen No. | Length A |
|---|---|
| 1 | 3¾" |
| 2 | 3 7/8" |
| 3 | 4" |
| 4 | 4¼" |
| 5 | 6" |

**RAIL CHAIR** 2 HOLE TYPE

From this point much of the line has been destroyed by the later railway works, but sleepers are traceable at Single Hill (720562), and where a large loop of the former canal follows a contour south-east of Wellow (731514). An unusual feature here is that on the curve the sleepers are staggered; this is the only place at which we have found this: at all others the sleepers are placed regularly opposite one another. Most lengths of rail here were 15 ft long, but a few were 18 ft long, and the width between holes in sleepers, across the line, averaged 3 ft 8 in. as was usual for this line, giving a distance between rail flanges of 3 ft 5 in. to 3 ft 5¼ in.

*To be continued in the next issue*

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**This article first appeared in *Industrial Archaeology* magazine — 1968. *Vol* V. p.140 -161**

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*A map of the tramway layout in the Welton and Radstock area was included in Mike Chapman's article "A Walk Along the Line of the Welton Tramway" in Weigh-House 47, Page19.*



# NAVVYING NOTES

*Just for a change the work parties moved to the pound below Lock 19 for two months. We haven't done any work there before, so the nettles, brambles and thistles had really got a hold. We descended by ladder from the footpath into a most unfriendly environment, one which definitely ought not to be approached feet first. With thistles puncturing our trousers, socks and legs, we wondered if there might be some way of beating the area into submission from a distance - but common sense prevailed and , in any case we didn't have any petrol or Napalm with us.*

In the end, we achieved out aims by slow but sure methods, first clearing a space to stand, then extending it to make room for our kit. Another space was cleared for the bonfire, which was gradually built up larger and larger as the area around it was cleared. By the end of the day, most of the centre of the pound was free of vegetation, but the large mounds of brambles, we decided, could wait until the following month, when we had got our strength and enthusiasm back.

The next month saw the end of the brambles and also revealed some wooden rubbing strips on the wall and a drainage culvert. Sadly, where once the perfectly serviceable Southstoke Bridge had stood, there was now nothing but an ugly block of concrete and a drainage pipe.

We ended our second work party rather hurridly, as the heavens opened and threatened to wash us away downstream to Midford. However we left the pound in a tidy state and vowed to return fairly soon to extend the clearance area along the Lower Reach. Recently, after what has evidently been a couple of good growing months, we have looked in on the pound only to find that the nettles have again reached shoulder height.

**THE TOWPATH WALL BELOW LOCK 19 AND THE CONCRETE PIPE WHICH REPLACES SOUTHSTOKE BRIDGE**

# A VISIT TO THE INCLINED PLANES ALONG THE K&A CANAL BETWEEN DUNDAS AND AVONCLIFF

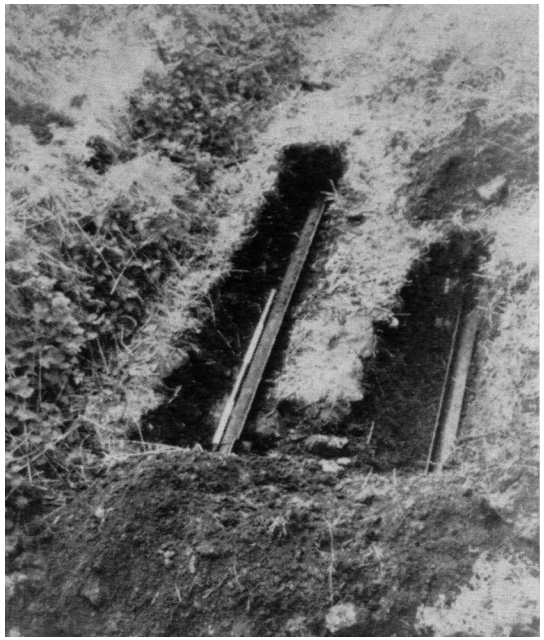
Sunday, 15 October 2006

*This walk was very much inspired by a study published in 1982 in the Journal of the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society by David Pollard under the title 'Bath Stone Quarry Railways 1795-1830'. The article not only covered William Smith's tramway (to the SCC) and the 'Dry Arch' tramway in Bathampton (to the K&A) - both the subject of earlier walks - but also two other quarry railways nearby in Winsley parish in the Lympley Stoke Valley. The latter, opened up during the building of the K&A canal, both belong to the same phase of development as the SCC tramways and therefore share certain similarities. Fortunately, remains of these have survived and, as is often the case, are still in use as public footpaths.*

The first quarry, Conkwell Quarry, was opened up by the K&A Company in 1799, and although an inclined plane was already in operation there by the following year, it did not last very long, and the sleepers and rope were sold off in 1812. The inclined plane, about 545 yards long, starts at the eastern end of the Dundas Aqueduct, where there was once a wharf, and climbs steeply in a straight line up the hill towards Conkwell. This area is now well wooded but at that time was relatively open. The line which was of double track is very clearly defined, and passes through various shallow cuttings - still →

**THE INCLINED PLANE LOOKING UPHILL TOWARDS CONKWELL QUARRY**





The next point of interest on the line is the subway under the road at Radstock. This was the level of the earlier canal basin, and the line from here followed the main railway. It was here that we did considerable excavation, finding lengths of rail in situ at a depth of about 18 in. This allowed us to check the gauge exactly, and to discover that this section of line, which had continued in use for colliery haulage up to the 1930s, had been relaid on wooden sleepers, with an odd assortment of spikes used to pin around the chairs as well as the pegs through rail and chair. Here we also found our only two-hole chair, used where two lengths of rail butted together, with a peg through each. In this case, the chairs were pegged to the wooden sleeper, but more usually they were →

***(Left)* WROUGHT IRON RAILS in situ at Radstock**

*Photograph:* R.G.Gilson

**LINE OF TRAMROAD AT RADSTOCK SOUTH — April 1967**

## The Radstock—Midford Tramway

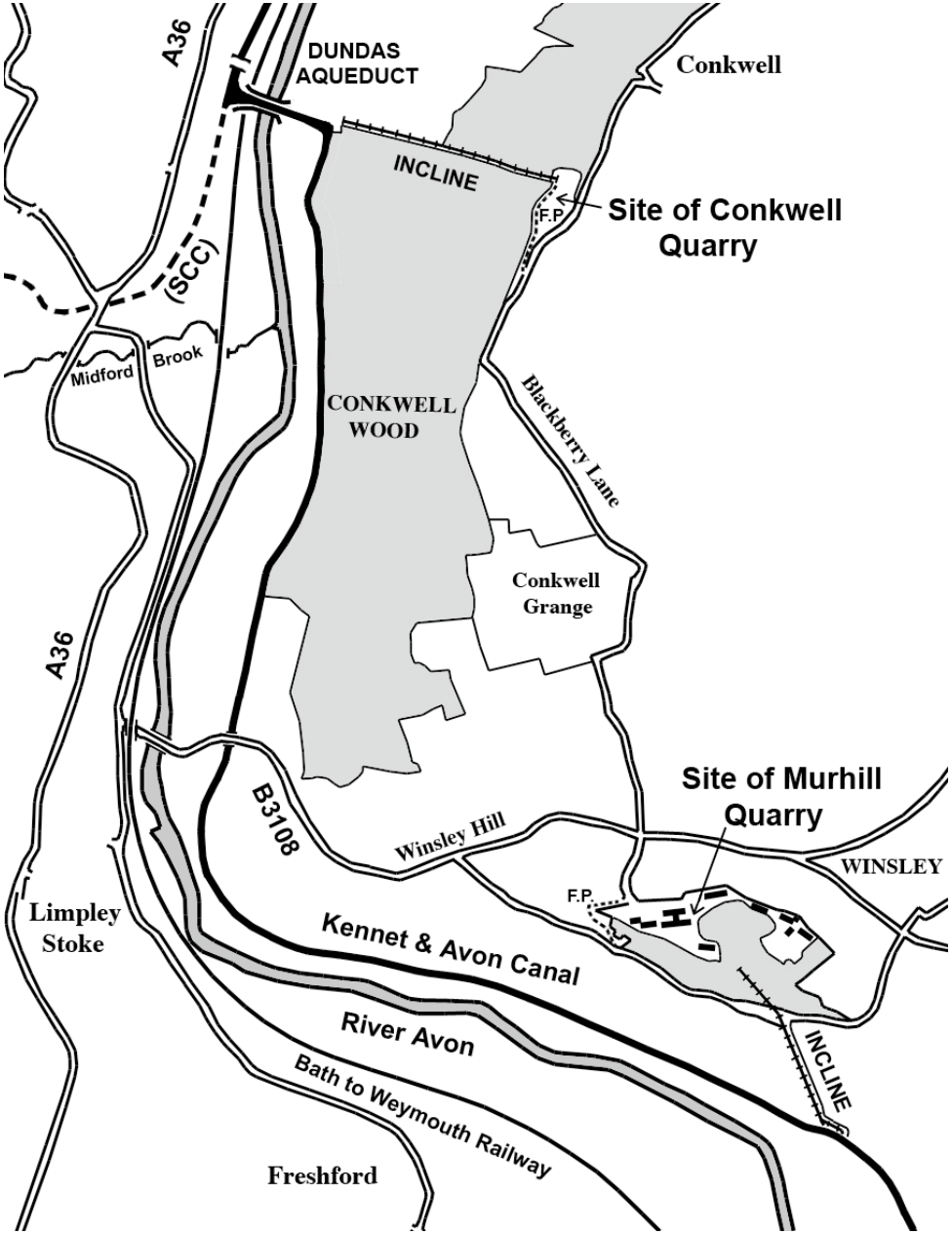
The first edition of the One Inch Ordnance Survey map, 1811, shows canal from Radstock to Twinhoe, with railroads at both ends, from Twinhoe to Midford, and from the basin at Radstock to a coal works at Welton. We started investigations further west than this point, at Welton Hill colliery, and found indications that a narrow lane serving a row of houses beside the tip was the line of the tramroad. We could not, however, determine its terminal point. There exists here a notice claiming the lane as railway property, and a few stone sleepers, none in their original positions. Travelling east the line runs beside a farmyard and across the field. Here we excavated in several places and found stone sleepers in position (671551, 673551).

The line goes under the modern railway at 674550 and then follows parallel to it on the south side, the embankment being clearly visible, until it reaches the five-arched viaduct upon which the Bath - Templecombe railway crosses the Frome - Bristol line, under the first arch of which it takes a sharp right hand turn, the stone sleepers here being on the surface and clearly visible. From here the line is well marked as a cutting or fenced area first on one side then the other of the main line, which it goes under. In the depths of the large pool, under the bridge at this point (687549), we found two lengths of the late type wrought-iron rail, complete with chairs, one straight piece being 10 ft 10 in long, and the curved one just under 15 ft long.


***(Above)* THE SOMERSET & DORSET JOINT RAILWAY SIGN at Gladstone Street, Welton in the 1960s**

**(Right) SINGLE-HOLE STONE SLEEPERS excavated at Welton**






**THE KENNET AND AVON CANAL FROM DUNDAS TO AVONCLIFF**
**Showing the sites of Conkwell and Murhill quarries and their tramways**

lined in places with dry-stone walling. Several boundary stones belonging to the K&A were found beside the track, but no other indications of the railway itself.

However, pieces of broken rail have been found on previous occasions, being of cast-iron bar type with interlocking ends which would have been spiked directly to wooden sleepers. Rails of this type were first used by Thomas Dadford junior on the Beaufort and Blaenavon line in 1792, and were also used at one stage between the collieries around Timsbury and the SCC at Paulton Basin, but laid on stone sleeper blocks. At the top of the incline, about 325ft above the canal, remains of the quarry are still evident, although the working faces have been obscured by tipping.

**A K&A BOUNDARY STONE**
**(The lettering is just visible)**

A footpath then leads on up through the workings to Blackberry Lane, which runs above Conkwell Wood to Winsley Hill. Here it emerges into the main B3108 road to Bradford on Avon, just opposite the entrance drive to the former Winsley Chest Hospital. The old hospital, converted in 1993 to a residential complex known as the Avon Park Care Centre, was built in 1904 in the floor of the upper part of Murhill Quarry, and the face of the workings can still be seen opposite the main entrance

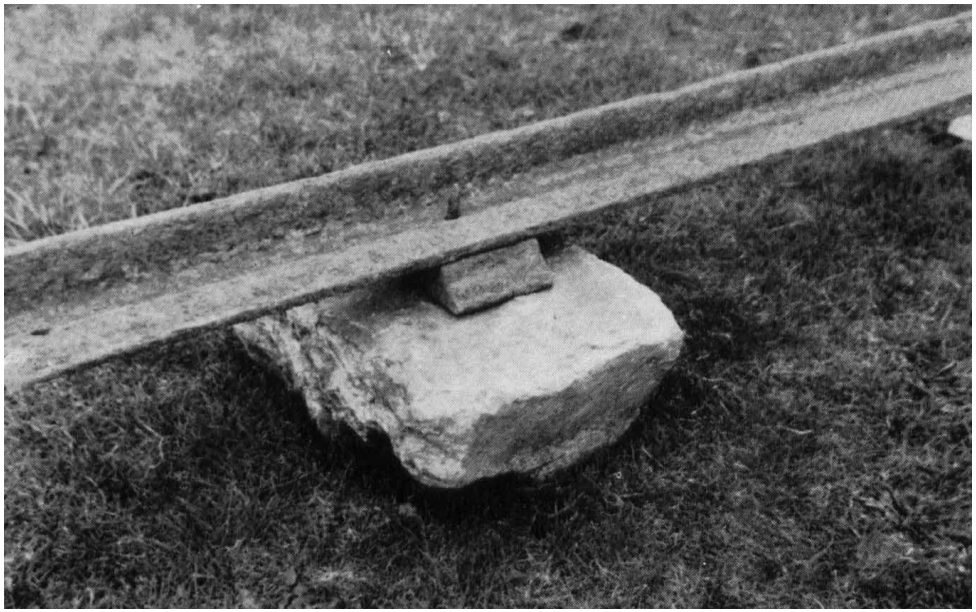
***(Above)*** **WINSLEY PARK CARE CENTRE**
**previously Winsley Chest Hospital**



***(Left)*** **THE QUARRY FACE**

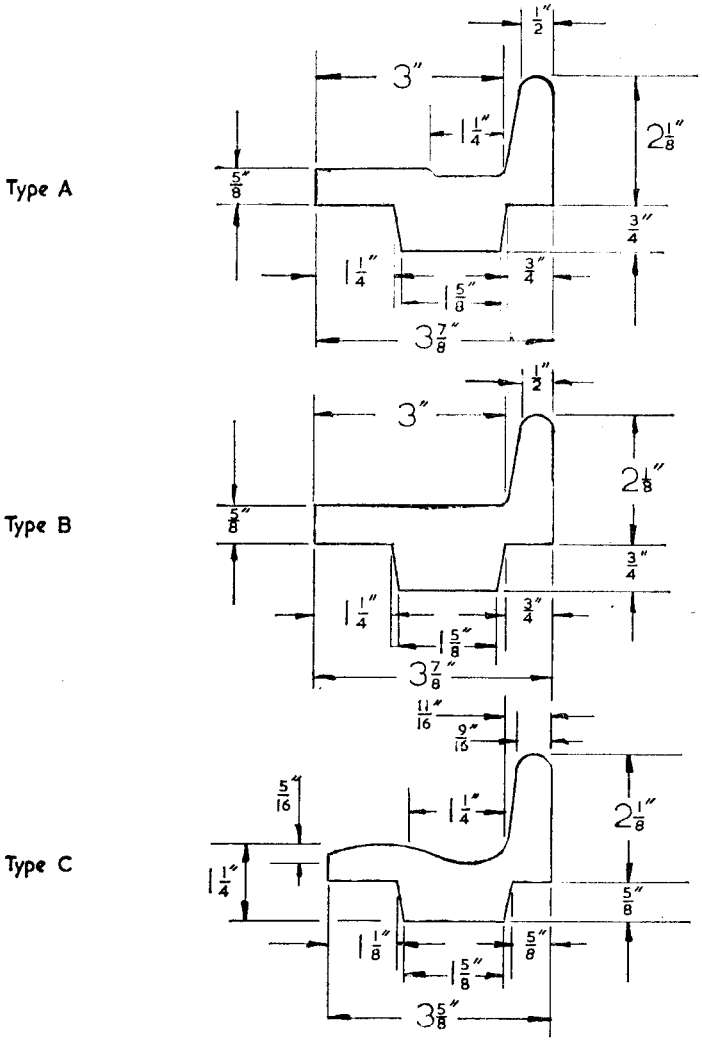


**CAST IRON PLATES WITH WEDGE ON TYPICAL SLEEPER BLOCK**



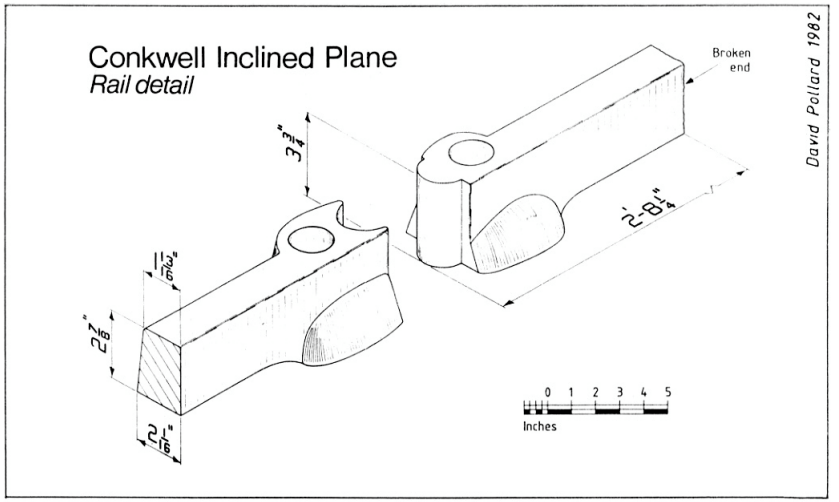
**WROUGHT IRON RAIL, CHAIR AND STONE SLEEPER BLOCK**

This of course was a somewhat crude track and was replaced in many places by wrought-iron rails in lengths up to 18 ft, when this material became more common. These rails were pegged down to similar stone blocks, in many cases the original ones, but had a cast-iron chair between rail and sleeper. The ends of the rail sat together in a special chair with two holes, and the corresponding two-hole sleepers can now be used to determine the lengths of rail used. During the last stages of its use some parts of the line were relaid using wooden sleepers instead of stone blocks, and the gauge was also altered to 3 ft 2 in, but the general construction remained the same. →




**WROUGHT IRON RAIL SECTIONS**



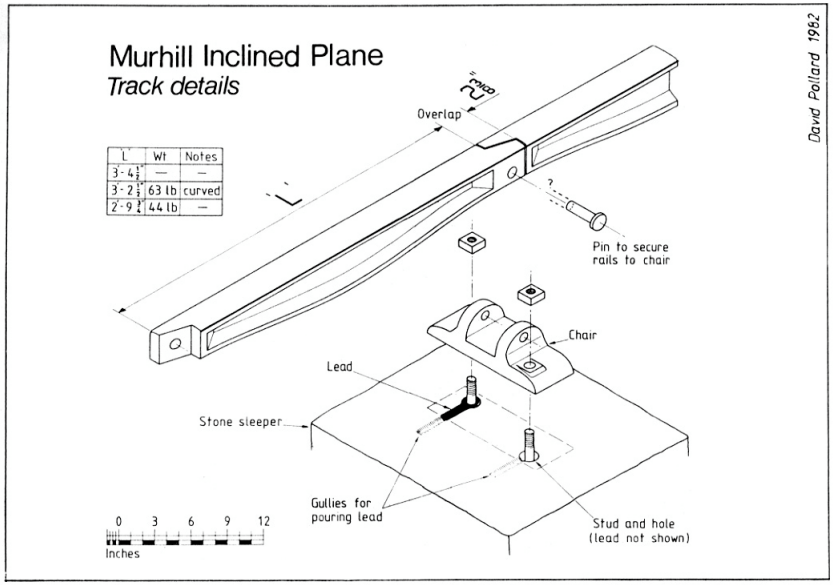



**THE SYSTEM OF RAILS USED ON THE CONKWELL INCLINED PLANE**

building. From here it is possible to skirt the west side of the complex via a public footpath which leads down through the wooded estate to Murhill Lane and the lower part of the quarry. At this point the track formation, which appears to have consisted of two inclined planes, can be clearly seen leading up into the quarry, almost 300ft above the canal. Nearby there are some spectacular mine entrances and what appears to be a large cistern cut into the cliff face. Besides the export of stone, the incline was →

**A MINE ENTRANCE NEAR MURHILL LANE**

used to bring up coal to feed a stone sawmill, steam engine and a limekiln which were also located at this point, but only a few remains of these seem to have survived. Stone sleeper blocks can however be still found near the top of the incline.



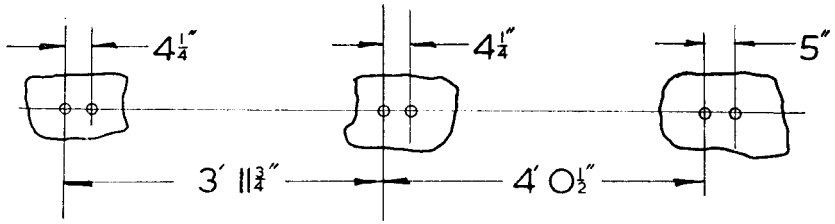

**THE SYSTEM OF RAILS USED ON THE MURHILL INCLINED PLANE**

**A MURHILL RAIL, STILL *IN SITU* - Showing the overlapped joint**

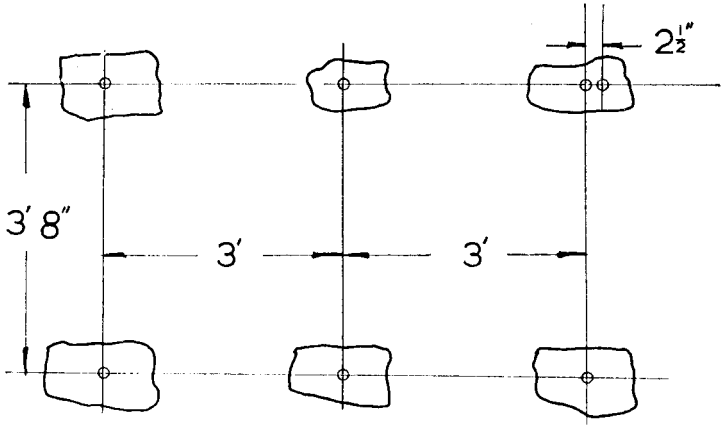
The railroad was built in 1803, not long after the opening of the quarry by the K&A Canal Company, and originally had wooden rails on a somewhat different alignment than can be seen today. This was changed (apparently on the advice of William Jessop) in 1826, when a new track was laid down with cast-iron rails - total length 330yds - together with the steam sawmill. The quarry seems to have continued in use until the mid-1870s, but by 1893 both the quarry and railway were reported to be long derelict. Below Murhill Lane the route of the incline now consists of an asphalt service road, still known as the



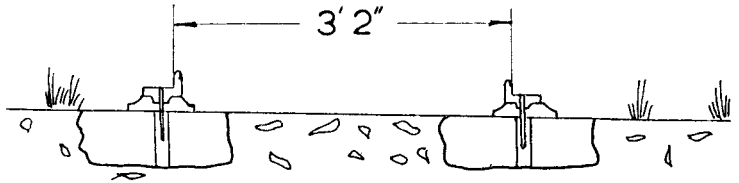
Felix Farley's Journal, of 3 June 1795, states that tenders were invited for 7 miles of track using '7,000 best oak sleepers 4 ft 6 in long, 8 in - 9 in broad and 3 in thick', and at the same time iron founders were asked to supply specifications and, where possible, models of suitable rails. This seems to indicate that the original plan was to use edge rails. Many tramroads of this period did this, then changed over to plateways later. Whether or not edge rail was actually laid we cannot ascertain, the earliest evidence we found being of a common type of plateway using cast-iron plates of about 3 ft length, fixed down to stone blocks. The ends of the plates were slotted, forming a rectangular tapered hole when two were butted together, into which a tapered square peg was fitted. This peg or wedge was driven into a wooden plug in a hole in the sleeper, the sleeper being usually about 15 in square, and 4 to 6 in thick. The distance across the track, from sleeper hole to sleeper hole, averages 3 ft 8 in, indicating a gauge of approximately 3 ft 5½ in. →




**STONE SLEEPER LAYOUT AT GROVE COALWORKS**
**(Half track only drawn)**




**TYPICAL STONE SLEEPER LAYOUT**
**Double-holed sleeper indicates end of rail and is only found where Wrought-iron rails have replaced the earlier Cast-iron type**



# SOME TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE SOMERSET COAL CANAL TRAMWAYS

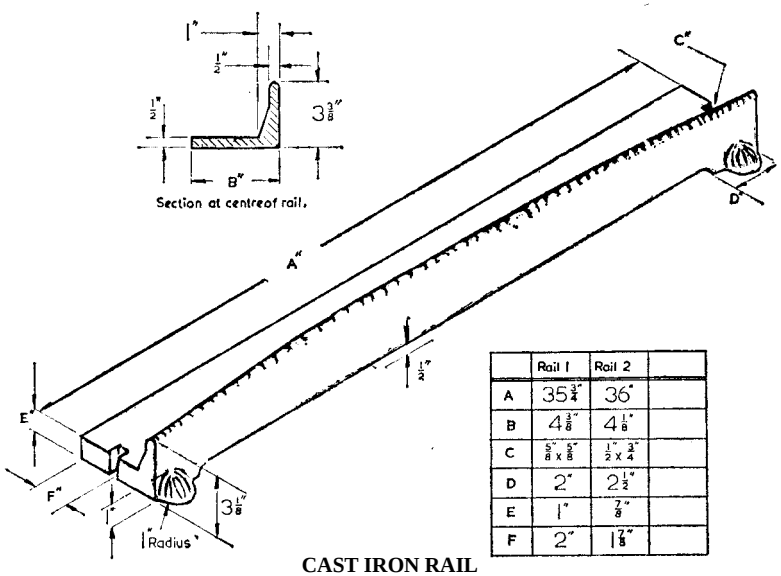
## *by* R.G. Gilson and G.W. Quartley — *Part 1*

*We have been working on this area for the past year [1966-67], stimulated originally by the information that no technical details of the early tram-roads were known, this view being confirmed by Baxter when his Stone Blocks and Iron Rails (David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1967) appeared in print. The history of the Radstock branch of the canal and tramroad has been the subject of an article in this journal, and a brief history will be sufficient for the purpose of this article.*

As originally planned the canal was to have had two branches, the main one, 10 miles long, being from a basin near Timsbury across through Camerton, Dunkerton, Combe Hay, Midford, etc. to join the Kennet & Avon Canal near John Rennie's Dundas Aqueduct at Limpley Stoke. The second was to leave the main branch at Midford and take a more southerly course to Radstock, through Wellow and Shoscombe, a distance of about 7 miles. The northern arm was moderately successful as a canal and carried traffic for many years from its opening in 1805 until it became derelict about the turn of the century, to be replaced over much of its course by a railway in 1910, which in turn was abandoned in the early 1950s.

The Radstock branch was never a success as a canal and in fact was never completed as such, and by 1815 a tramroad had been opened over its entire length, using the towing path. This was bought by the Somerset & Dorset Railway Company in 1871 and a standard-gauge railway constructed over the course, opening in 1874.

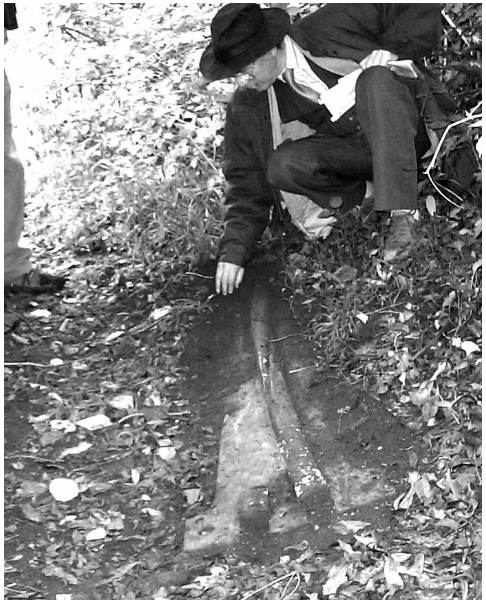
The deposited plan of 1793 now in the Somerset Record Office, shows some eighteen or more feeder tramroads from different coal works, but we believe that this plan was somewhat optimistic, as a study of the planned routes reveals that some of them were to cross almost impossible terrain, and many deviated from their planned route. Some, of course, were never built and others have vanished without trace, but we have positively identified many of these feeder tramroads.




| | Rail 1 | Rail 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 35¾" | 36" | |
| B | 4⅜" | 4⅛" | |
| C | ⅝" x ⅝" | ½" x ¾" | |
| D | 2" | 2½" | |
| E | 1" | ⅞" | |
| F | 2" | 1⅞" | |

**CAST IRON RAIL**





**MIKE CHAPMAN EXAMINING A SECTION OF THE MURHILL RAIL WHICH FORMED PART OF A SET OF POINTS**

'Trolley Road', to several houses nearby. Remarkably, remains of the rails (including a point section) can still be found partly buried in situ on the overgrown wharf and at its approach. They are of cast-iron 'I' section, fish-belly type, with ends of adjoining rails overlapping each other and pin-jointed through supporting cast-iron chairs. The chairs themselves are fixed to the stone sleeper blocks by iron studs set in lead-filled holes. The track gauge is about 48 to 49 inches. This type of rail, conforming to Losh and Stephenson's Patent of 1816, was quickly superseded in the late 1820s by the wrought-iron rail and is therefore a good example of the final phase of the cast-iron railway. For this reason the wharf site is scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

The wharf itself is in good condition, and the fixing for a crane is still visible in the curb. Conveniently, there is also a footpath along the bank here to a bridge leading over the canal to Freshford which enables the walker to return to Dundas Aqueduct along the towing path.

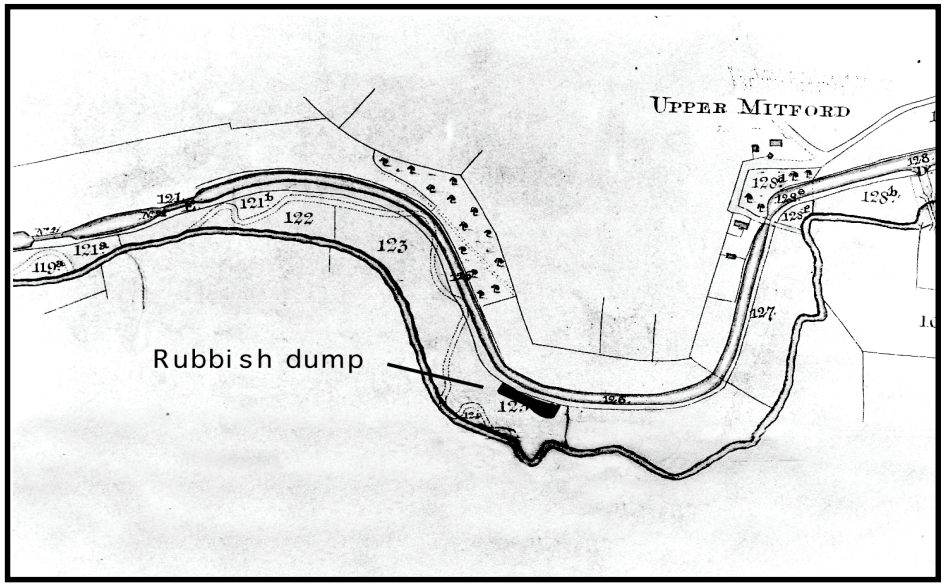
MIKE CHAPMAN

**THE WHARF ON THE K&A CANAL BELOW MURHILL QUARRIES**

# A RUBBISH DUMP BY THE CANAL NEAR MIDFORD

Although the Somersetshire Coal Canal (SCC) was relatively short at 18 miles long, the 22 locks at Combe Hay meant that at least half a day was required to pass between the lower and upper reaches of the canal. A site in the Cam Brook valley west of Midford suggests that boats often moored up overnight before, or after, the lock passage.

A few hundred metres beyond the bottom lock and approximately halfway to Midford, the canal follows a long bend in the valley and passes at its closest point to the Cam Brook. Here there are low grassy mounds containing coal ash and other rubbish adjacent to the towpath.




**THE POSITION OF THE RUBBISH DUMP — shown superimposed on the Cruse Map of c.1810**

Surface examination and light excavation shows the following items :

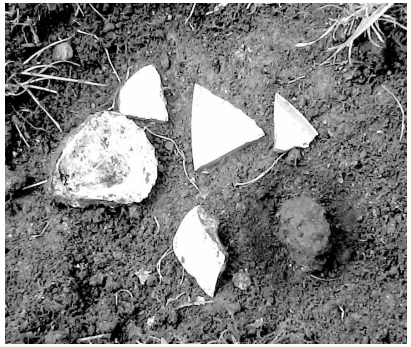
*Ash and pieces of unburnt coal :* 99% of the tip content is ash and coal. It is presumably coal from Somerset and easily obtainable from an SCC canal boat hold.

*Pottery :* Victorian, blue willow and plainer patterns.

*Oyster shells :* oysters were a cheap and plentiful food in the 19th century until typhoid outbreaks from pollution reduced their appeal.

*Glass :* very small clear pieces, most likely broken drinking glasses.

*Clay pipe stems and bowls :* broken pieces.



**Oyster shell, broken pottery and a lump of coal**
**Typical finds amongst the ash in the tip**



An irregular rubbish dump in the middle of a field is unlikely to be associated with the large amounts of waste known to have been transferred from Bath around 1900 (Weigh-House Nos 20,21) to infill the basin at nearby Midford Aqueduct. Cursory comparison of that site suggests the type and variety of rubbish is very different. It also seems doubtful that it might be connected with the contractor's light railway which ran along the towpath during the construction of the Camerton and Limpley Stoke Railway in 1907 (Weigh-House No 33). Early maps mark two stones at the site but it is not clear if they are boundary or large field stones now gone or possibly buried.

**LOOKING EASTWARDS IN THE DIRECTION OF MIDFORD,**
**The rubbish mounds extend along the towpath for about 75 yards**

This point on the SCC appears to have been a boat mooring in a quiet spot below the locks. Here crews could spend the night, easily collect water, provide for the horse and it seems, throw out the rubbish. Other diversions were close by at The Hope & Anchor pub in Midford and in the opposite direction, now long gone, the Anchor Inn near Lock 16.

As with archaeological midden, this rubbish tip provides an insight into the past and the boat crews on the SCC while the canal was in operation between circa 1800 and 1900. There is no indication of consumer items other than the pipes, pots and glass of everyday life. Diet also shows limited variety with oyster shells but little evidence of meat bones which were more expensive.

The contents of the tip appear similar in all exposed places but it is possible that a chronology exists with the tippings closest and deepest to the towpath being the oldest.

The mounds cover an area of approximately 575 square metres and are 1.2 metres deep. Total volume of rubbish therefore amounts to about 690 cubic metres. Estimating the daily ash bucket contents of a boat to be, say 0.01 cubic metres, the tip could represent 69000 overnight stays or two boats every night for the complete life of the canal !

TIM LUNT