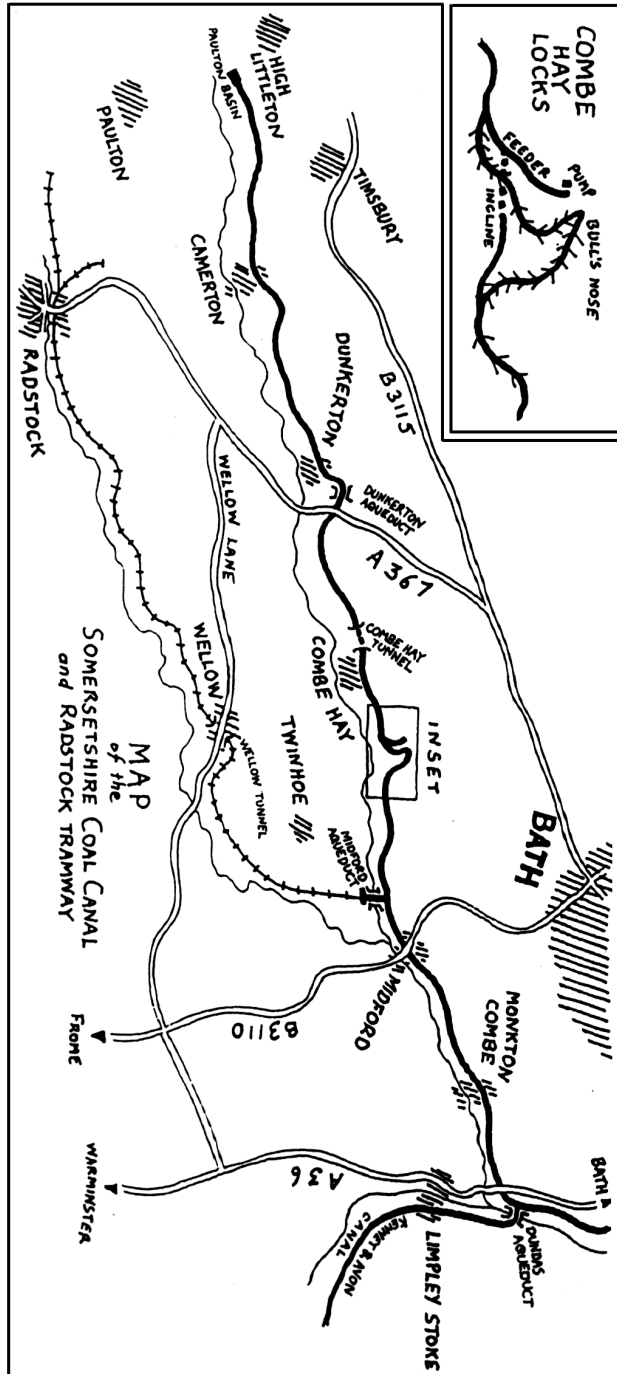


WEIGH-HOUSE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL SOCIETY



Website: <http://www.coalcanal.org>

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN – PATRICK MOSS

3, Beech Court, Stonebridge Drive, Frome, Somerset BA11 2TY
☎ 07736 859882 E-mail: lazydaysafloat@yahoo.co.uk

VICE CHAIRMAN – DERRICK HUNT

43, Greenland Mills, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1BL
☎ 01225 863066 E-mail: derrickjohnhunt@btinternet.com

SECRETARY – VACANT

TREASURER – DAVID CHALMERS

'Shalom' 40, Greenleaze, Knowle Park, Bristol BS4 2TL
☎ 0117 972 0423

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY – JOHN BISHOP

73, Holcombe Green, Upper Weston, Bath BA14HY
☎ 01225 428738 E-mail: cesjtb@bath.ac.uk

SECRETARY TO THE COMMITTEE – JOHN DITCHAM

8, Entry Rise, Combe Down, Bath BA2 5LR
☎ 01225 832441

WORK PARTY ADMINISTRATOR – DERRICK HUNT

43, Greenland Mills, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1BL
☎ 01225 863066 E-mail: derrickjohnhunt@btinternet.com

HISTORICAL ADVISOR – MIKE CHAPMAN

51, Newton Road, Twerton, Bath BA2 1RW
☎ 01225 426948 E-mail: mike@chapman76.fsnet.co.uk

ENGINEERING ADVISOR – RICHARD HIGNETT

7, Victory Row, Wootton Bassett, Swindon, Wiltshire SN4 7BE
☎ 01793 855631

MAGAZINE EDITOR – ADRIAN TUDDENHAM

88, Mount Road, Southdown, Bath BA2 1LH
☎ 01225 335974 E-mail (plain text only): adrian@poppyrecords.co.uk

ARCHIVIST – ROGER HALSE

4, Westminster Gardens, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 0DF
☎ 01249 652846 E-mail: roger.halse@btinternet.com

COMMITTEE MEMBER – DAVID FRY

14, Monkton Road, Hanham, Bristol BS15 3JG
☎ 0117 961 4687

**VACANCIES: PUBLICITY OFFICER, PROJECT OFFICER, EVENTS ORGANISER,
WORK PARTY ORGANISER.**

Website: <http://www.coalcanal.org>

The Somersetshire Coal Canal Society was founded in 1992 to:

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

The Society became a registered charity in 1995 and now has the
Objects:

- 1) To advance the education of the general public in the history of the Somersetshire Coal Canal
- 2) The preservation and restoration of the Somersetshire Coal Canal and its structures for the benefit of the public

Registered Charity N^o 1047303
Registered under the Data Protection Act 1984 N^o A2697068
Affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association N^o 0005276
Inland Revenue reference code for tax purposes: CAD72QG

MEMBERSHIP FEES

(as at 1st June 2003)

£7-50 (Family / Individual) £5-00 (Senior Citizen / Student)
£150-00 (Life) payable by lump sum or four annual instalments

Membership Application Forms are available from
the Membership Secretary, **John Bishop**
73, Holcombe Green, Upper Weston, Bath BA14HY
☎ 01225 428738 E-mail: cesjtb@bath.ac.uk

Society Website: <http://www.coalcanal.org>

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

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

Sunday 15th January — 10:00

WALK —THE LOCK FLIGHT AT WIDCOMBE

Meet: Darlington Wharf

For further details please see website or contact: *Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Sunday 5th Febuary — 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 16th February — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “COAL FROM CAMERTON”

by Neil McMillen.

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens' Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Patrick Moss* ☎ 07736 859882

Sunday 19th February — 10:00

WALK —CAMERTON COLLIERY AND CANAL

Meet: Durcott Lane

For further details please see website or contact: *Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Sunday 4th March — 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 15th March — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “THE KENNET AND AVON CANAL ARCHIVES”

by Elaine Kirby.

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens' Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Patrick Moss* ☎ 07736 859882

Sunday 18th March — 10:00

WALK —SAPPERTON TUNNEL

Meet: Tunnel House Inn, near Coates (Do not use pub car park unless you are a patron)

For further details please see website or contact: *Richard Hignett* ☎ 01793 855631

EXTRA WORK PARTIES

We are hoping to organise some extra work parties on Saturday mornings to undertake light work

Would anyone who can help at these please contact *Tony Yates* ☎ 07748 113832

Walks

These are all circular walks unless otherwise noted. You only need to arrange your transport to and from the meeting point. Any walks 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.

Check the website for any last minute changes: www.coalcanal.org

Sunday Work Parties

Venues are often arranged at short notice, always check with Derrick Hunt ☎ 01225 863066

WEIGH - HOUSE N^o 61

EDITOR'S NOTES	3
CHAIRMAN'S NOTES	4
NEW MEMBERS	4
DONATIONS	4
CANAL AND RIVER TRUST — The replacement for British Waterways ..	5
NEW BOOK — “The Somersetshire Coal Canal — A Second Pictorial Journey”	5
JOURNALS OF A SOMERSET RECTOR — Publications of Skinner's diaries	5
A VISIT TO THE SITE OF THE DUNKERTON PUMPING STATION by Robert Gardiner & Mike Chapman	6
A CHILDHOOD AT CANAL COTTAGE by Joy Everd — <i>Transcribed by Sue Langdon</i>	11
A PLAN OF CANAL COTTAGE by David Church	15
CANAL TRADERS' PERMITS AND TICKETS — Part 2 by Roger Halse.. .. .	16
HERITAGE OPEN DAYS by Derrick Hunt	19
OPEN DAY MAP OF COMBE HAY LOCKS	20
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY	21

EDITOR'S NOTES

I am sorry to say that two of our regular items, *Shareholders of the Somersetshire Coal Canal* and *Navying Notes*, have had to be held over to the next edition. This was, however, done in a good cause in order to make space for two articles of more topical interest.

The recent walk around the pumping engine site at Dunkerton raised a great many questions, which encouraged Robert Gardiner and Mike Chapman to collaborate in producing an article about the engine site. Drawing together many scattered and isolated facts, they have produced a comprehensive whole which is much greater than the sum of its parts and gives a clear picture of what a visitor to that part of the Cam Valley would have experienced 150 years ago.

Our other major article deals with another part of the Cam Valley and more recent times. Many people seeing photographs of the old cottage in Timsbury Basin must have wondered what it would have been like to live there. Thanks to the memories of Joy Everd and Dave Church, we now have a fascinating picture of their childhood and a feel for the hardships and pleasures of life in that idyllic valley in the late 1940s.

Adrian Tuddenham

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As the Autumn draws on, and we settle into our new home in Frome, the committee has remained very busy on several fronts.

On Saturday the 15th October, the canal and the society were subject of a feature length article in the Western Daily Press, arguably the best coverage we have had outside the waterways press. The article described the history of the canal and the rôle of the society and actively encouraged readers to join us; we are very grateful for such support. By coincidence the same day Amy Morris, a young photographer in Bath, was displaying her photographs of the coal canal at an exhibition in Midsomer Norton, which gave our canal another public airing.

We will also be very busy over the coming weeks with not just one, but two visits to Combe Hay by the Waterways Recovery Group. As I write I am waiting to meet the organiser for the London W.R.G. who are working on the locks this weekend, and a week later I will be meeting the leader of B.I.T.M. (Bit In The Middle) to arrange their work in November. These two work parties will take our efforts at Combe Hay so far forward that in the new year we are looking to start on a new site: Timsbury and Paulton Basins.

The coal canal has slept for over 100 years, it is now beginning to wake again.

Patrick Moss

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Ms. J. Crabb.	Shepton Mallett
Mrs. S. R. Brace.	Farmborough
Mr. A. R. Brace.	Farmborough
Mr. T. J. Venton.	Knowle

DONATIONS

The Society would like to thank the following:

Mr. S. Spurlock	Fairfield Park, Bath
Mr R. Marsh	Millmead Road Garage, Bath

for their generous donations of a tool kit and engine spares to assist with Allen Scythe repairs and maintenance.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

— 2011 —

Sunday 6th November— 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 17th November — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “THE HOUSE OF LORDS’ AND OTHER ARCHIVES — Part 1”

by Derrick Hunt and Roger Halse

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens’ Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Saturday & Sunday 19 - 20th November

WORK PARTY with “Bit in the Middle” Waterways Recovery Group

For further details please contact: *Patrick Moss* ☎ 07736 859882

Sunday 20th November — 10:00

WALK —WELLOW AREA, Fullers Earth & the Canal Tunnel

Meet: Wellow car park

For further details please see website or contact: *Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

Sunday 4th December— 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 15th December — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “THE SITES AND SIGHTS OF THE S.C.C.”

by Patrick Moss, Derrick Hunt, Roger Halse & Adrian Tuddenham.

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens’ Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Sunday 18th December — 10:00

WALK —RADSTOCK & WELTON

Meet: Radstock Public Car Park, Waterloo Road.

For further details please see website or contact: *Mike Chapman* ☎ 01225 426948

— 2012 —

Sunday 8th January — 10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 01225 863066

Thursday 19th January — 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — “THE INFLUENCE OF THE S.C.C. ON THE MON & BREC”

by Patrick Moss.

Meet: The Radstock Working Mens’ Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Patrick Moss* ☎ 07736 859882

THE CANAL AND RIVER TRUST



Canal & River Trust

From next April there will be the biggest shake-up of the waterways since nationalisation. The UK Government intends to transfer British Waterways' 2,000 mile network of rivers and canals in England and Wales to a new, independent charity. At the same time joining forces with The Waterways Trust.

The new charity will be called the 'Canal & River Trust' (or 'Glandwr Cymru' in Wales) and its new symbol will soon become familiar to all waterways users.

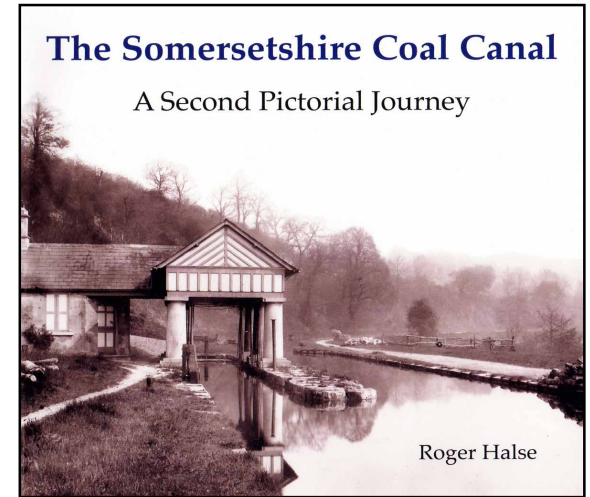
NEW BOOK

Roger Halse's long-awaited second book of historic photographs of the S.C.C. has just been completed and should be available in the shops by the time you receive this.

We hope to include more information and a review of the book in the next edition of Weigh-House.

The Somersetshire Coal Canal

A Second Pictorial Journey



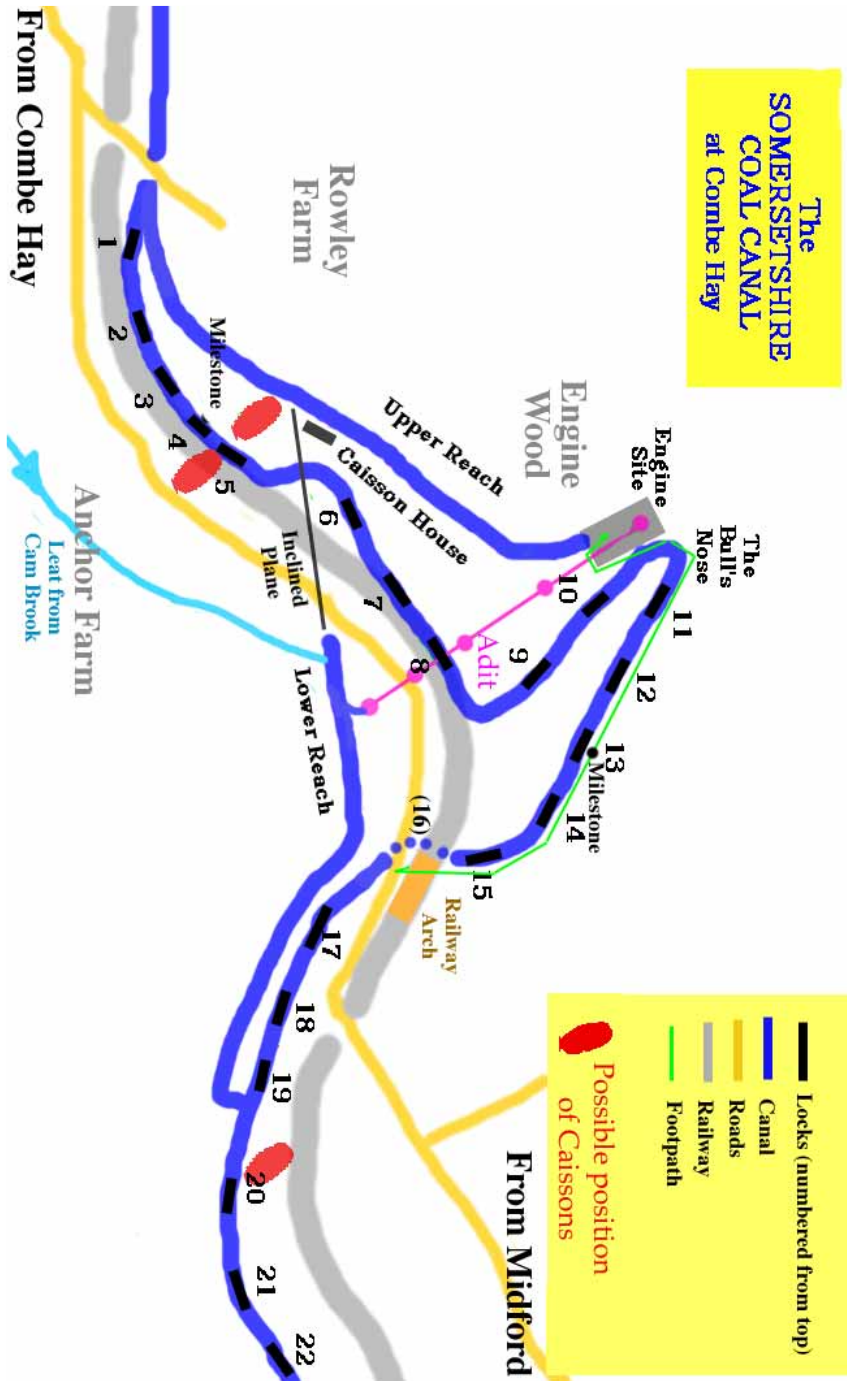
Roger Halse

JOURNALS OF A SOMERSET RECTOR

Mr Martin Coombs has contacted us to point out that more of the Rev John Skinner's written work has been re-published than we realised. His great-uncle, Howard Coombs, collaborated with Rev Arthur N. Bax M.A. in 1930 to produce a volume entitled "*Journal of a Somerset Rector;: John Skinner A.M. Antiquary 1772 - 1839. Parochial affairs of the Parish of Camerton 1822 - 1832*" This is now long out of print and is a very rare book, but the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution has one copy.

Somewhat better-known is "*Journal of a Somerset Rector 1803 - 1834*" (1972 Kingswood Press) which was produced by his father, also named Howard Coombs, and his uncle, Peter Coombs. This was reprinted with many additions in 1984 by the Oxford Paperbacks and is still available from secondhand book dealers.

The
SOMERSETSHIRE
COAL CANAL
at Combe Hay



HERITAGE OPEN DAYS MAP

A VISIT TO THE SITE OF THE DUNKERTON PUMPING STATION

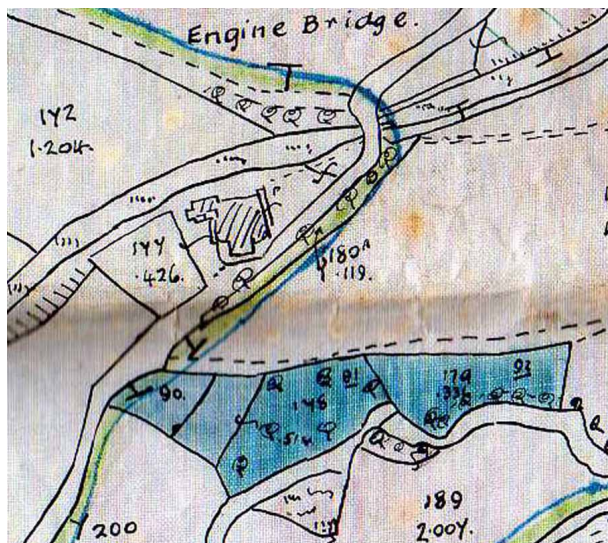
It was decided that the walk on the 19th June, at Dunkerton, should concentrate on the small area around the site of the Dunkerton Pumping Station near Withyditch. Armed with pictures of the engines and maps of the site at various dates, we set about reconstructing the history of the area.

When the initial survey of the canal was planned, it was proposed to build it close to, and following, the River Cam. It was realised that there would be a problem supplying the canal with enough water to operate locks near the Paulton end, so the route was changed to its present higher level, moving the locks further East where water was available — although it would require pumping up from the river. So, the canal company then decided to buy out the mill at Dunkerton to gain its water, and this is where we started our walk.

The mill was situated on an oxbow on the Cam which served as the mill pond, and above the oxbow we found the remains of the weir which was there to divert surplus water along a bypass channel. The whole site is clearly shown on a 1760 map together with, we think, the millers cottage, but all that is left of the oxbow is a round pond kept for nature conservation.

From the mill, the canal company tunnelled an adit towards the newly built canal, approximately 100 yards north of the mill site. By the side of the canal, they sank a well to meet the adit, and at the top built a pumping house which contained an atmospheric steam engine. This was later joined by a second engine, made by Boulton and Watt, which had initially stood at Combe Hay, to pump back water lost through the locks. The water from the mill pond ran into the adit leading to the well, where it was then pumped up by the steam engines to feed the canal — a very simple system, as the coal needed by the engines was brought in by boats along the canal.

The pumping station was a major engineering endeavour, with the Engineer's cottage, engine houses, boilers and stores, all on one site. Alas, all the remains of this were destroyed when the railway came through the valley in the early 1900s. However the adit is still there, now acting as a drain which supplies water to the round pond, and is a testimonial to the clever engineers of over 200 years ago. The walk was only a matter of 250 yards or so, but covered so much of interest in a small area.



A PLAN OF THE ENGINE SITE AND MILL SITE —
from Robert Gardiner's deeds

Historical Notes

Dunkerton Mill

The distinctive outlines of this old site which probably date back to the Domesday survey, with its unusual ox-bow (filled in some 40 years ago) and bypass channel (now the main course of the river), is visible on the earliest maps, and can still be traced as a depression across the surface of the meadow. Presumably the engine adit still fills up with enough water percolating through the surrounding strata to back up and overflow through the drain into the remnant of the millpond that formerly supplied it, similar to the pump engine adit found at Combe Hay. One might therefore expect a sump or well buried somewhere behind the drain, sited

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Our first participation in Heritage Open Days was a great success. The number of visitors on Saturday was not as great as we had expected, but that gave our team of volunteer guides time to refine their technique in readiness for the much greater numbers who turned up on Sunday. In total we must have shown at least 70 people around the site at Rowley Bottom.

The tour began at the railway arch opposite Bridge Farm, where extra parking space had been made available by the landowner. In the area by the arch, Roger Halse had mounted an exhibition of photographs and maps of the Combe Hay area including some of the earliest maps of the canal. This excellent exhibition drew many compliments from the visitors both during the event and in conversations afterwards.

Following the footpath up the lock flight, enquiring visitors were assisted by interpretation boards at each point of interest. In addition volunteers gave guided tours at hourly intervals. The high point of the tour, geographically as well as metaphorically, was the pumping engine site in Engine Wood, which generated great interest and numerous questions.

For those who were unable to attend on the day, a copy of the guide map is reproduced overleaf to enable you to visit the site when you are next in the area. Copies of the interpretation signs are available by e-mail from: derrickjohnhunt@btinternet.com

We shall be running a similar event, organised by Tony Yates, on the 8th and 9th September next year, so put this date in your diary and come along and see how the canal you have helped to conserve is making progress.

A big thank-you to all our members who to acted as voluntary guides during the weekend.

Derrick Hunt



Photograph: David Jessep

MARNIE JESSEP ENJOYING ONE OF THE HERITAGE OPEN DAYS —
Exploring the foundation arch of the pumping engine chimney in Engine Wood



Doug Small / Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

DAUNTSEY LOCK c.1880

1860

Trade of Coal & Coke to Dauntsey from Semington: 2,962 tons.
 Trade of Coal & Coke passing through Semington from K&A: 40,861 tons.

Week ending Saturday May 26th 1860
 Monday May 21st (date of Paulton Engine Coal-Works permit)
 Tuesday May 22nd (date of Coal Canal Locks permit).
 Trade of Coal & Coke to Dauntsey from Semington: 102 tons.
 Trade of Coal & Coke passing through Semington from K&A: 1,067 tons.

Week ending Saturday August 25th 1860
 Monday August 20th (date of Radford New Wharf permit).
 Trade of Coal & Coke to Dauntsey from Semington: 81 tons.
 Trade of Coal & Coke passing through Semington from K&A: 931 tons.

Week ending Saturday May 12th 1860
 May 7th 1860 (date of permit from Timsbury Withy Mills Coal Work).
 Trade of Coal & Coke to Dauntsey from Semington: 26 tons.
 Trade of Coal & Coke passing through Semington from K&A: 805 tons.

This would suggest that in the week ending May 12th 1860, the coal from Withy Mills was the only one received at Dauntsey. I would be interested if anyone can provide me with any more information about George Freegard, Coal Merchant at Dauntsey. My contact details are on page 2.

Roger Halse

over the end of the adit below. Indeed, it is quite possible that the foundations of the whole mill complex still lie below ground surface.

Also found during the visit, serving as a gatepost at the entrance into this field from Carlingcott Lane, was a length of flanged iron pipe which, from its gauge and weight, would appear to have been acquired from the Pumping Station a little further up the road.

The Pumping Station

As soon as the canal company was authorised to acquire Dunkerton Mill by the third Somerset Coal Canal Act in April 1802, a double-action pump was immediately purchased and put into service - an event that had already been anticipated the previous September when an advertisement appeared for:

'Any person or persons willing to contract with the Somerset Coal Canal Co. for the erection of one or more Fire Engines on the two lines of the Canal near Bath, for the purpose of supplying the upper levels with water, on the most approved construction, with a 52" cylinder, 23" pump, and to raise the water from 60 to 70ft high ...'



A 4-inch CAST IRON PIPE WITH COUPLING FLANGE PRESERVED AS A GATEPOST JUST BELOW THE ENGINE SITE

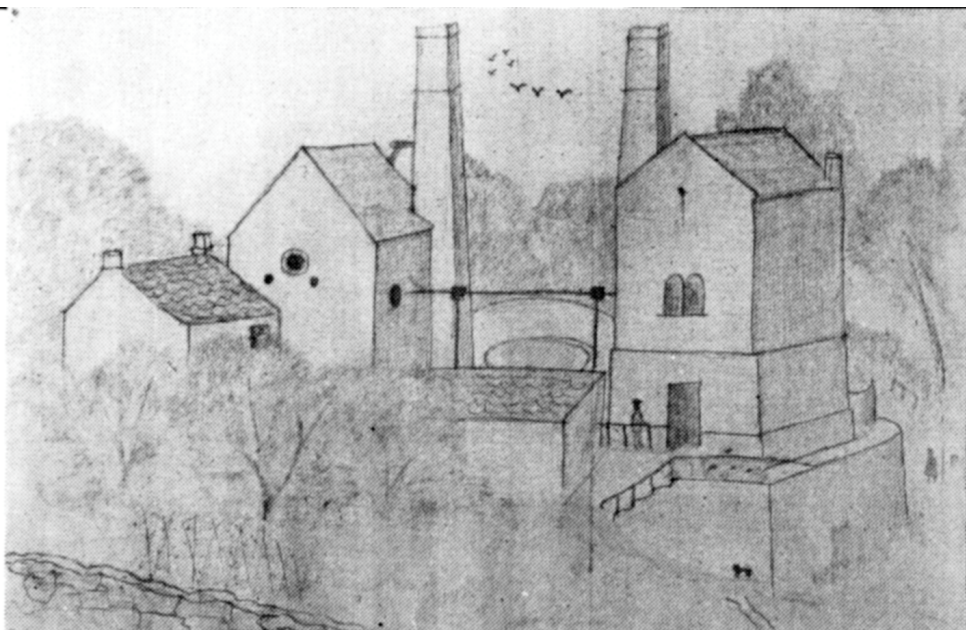


EXTRACT FROM THE CRUSE MAP — c.1810
 Showing the engineman's cottage with only one engine and the buildings remaining at Dunkerton Mill

The 'new' engine actually appears to have been second hand (judging from the cost of repairs) and its maker is not known, although a drawing of it has survived in the Bath Reference Library. Not only are the pumping station and engineer's cottage shown on the company map of the canal of c.1810 (the 'Cruse' map), but also Dunkerton Mill, which was evidently not demolished until later when the company sold off the site whilst retaining the water rights and access to the adit. A stone arch bridge was built over the canal on the east side of the pumping station to carry the Carlingcott road, but, being mostly supplied from the canal, there does not appear to have been any great need for access from the road except for a small entrance further down on the south side.

The exact date when the Combe Hay engine (originally installed in 1805) was re-erected at the Dunkerton Pumping Station, or for what reason, is still unclear.

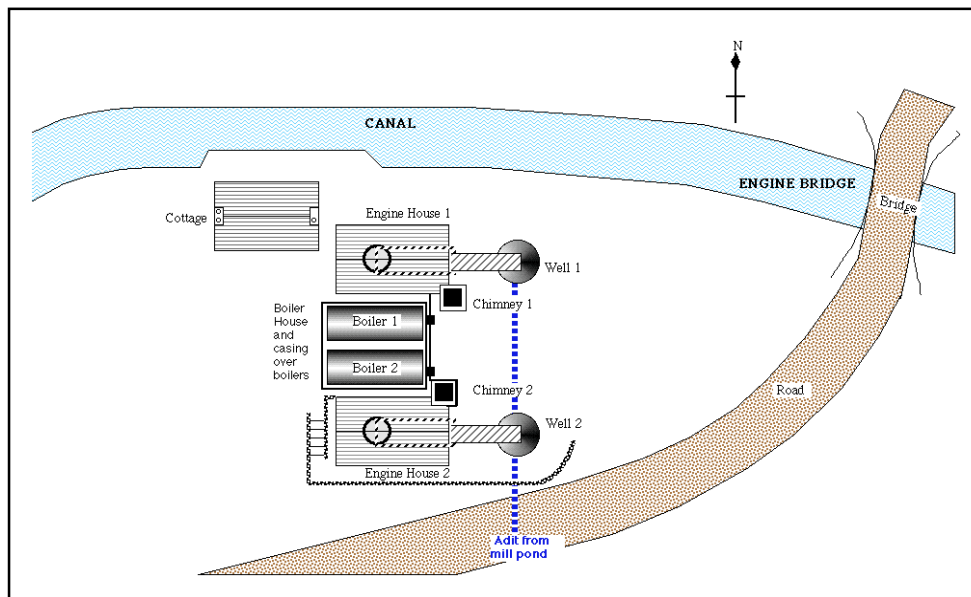
Continued on Page 10 →



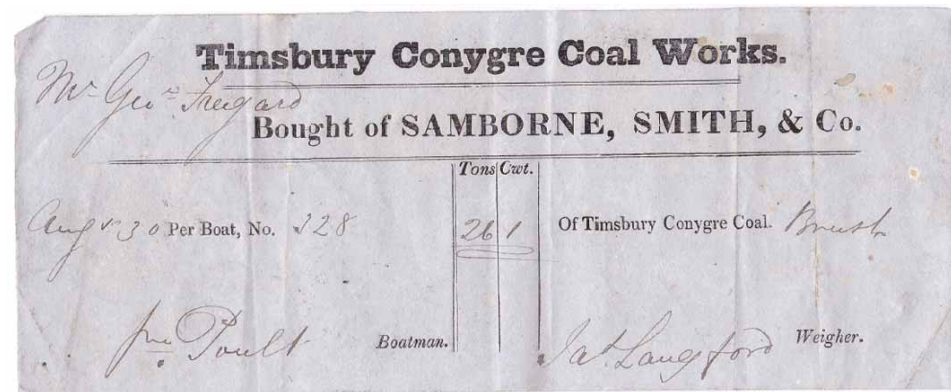
Len Bampfylde

A SKETCH OF THE PUMPING ENGINES LOOKING EASTWARDS

The boilers were in the gap between the two engines, bricked over to conserve heat and set into the ground to bring their flues level with the underground chimney bases.



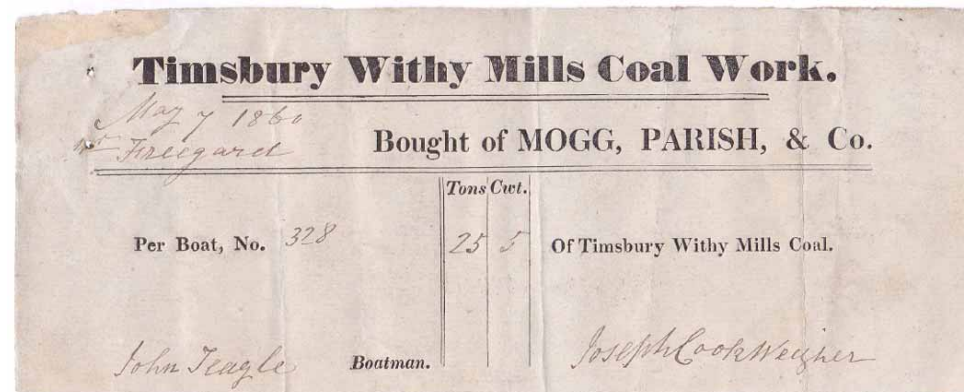
THE LAYOUT OF THE ENGINE SITE c1890



Copyright: Kennet & Avon Canal Trust - K1935

A COAL RECEIPT — Timsbury Conygre Coal Works

Mr. Geo. Freegard	26 Tons 1 Cwt. of Timsbury Conygre Coal
Bought of SAMBORNE, SMITH, & Co.	(?) Poult(?), Boatman
August 30 (no year given but thought to be 1860)	Jas. Langford, Weigher
Per Boat, No. 328	



Copyright: Kennet & Avon Canal Trust - K1937

A COAL RECEIPT — Timsbury Withy Mills Coal Work.

May 7 1860	25 Tons 5 Cwt. of Timsbury Withy Mills Coal
Freegard	John Teagle, Boatman.
Bought of MOGG, PARISH & Co.	Joseph Cook, Weigher.
Per Boat, No. 328	

Despite the expansion of the Great Western and other railways through Wiltshire, many of the villages and towns along the route of the Wilts & Berks Canal still received coal by canal.

We are fortunate in that Trade Ledgers for the W&B from the 1860 period still survive and record the weekly tonnages of coal and coke carried to George Freegards' wharf at Dauntsey. →

CANAL TRADERS' PERMITS & TICKETS

— Part 2 —

Roger Halse continues his investigation into the valuable insight these documents give on the day-to-day working of the S.C.C.



Ken Scotcher

LOWER CONYGRE COLLIERY

The first pit in Timsbury, Upper Conygre opened in 1791. However, coal from Timsbury was not carried by canal until after the second pit, Lower Conygre, had opened.

Both collieries outlasted the canal — but only just; Lower Conygre closing due to flooding in 1914, followed by Upper Conygre just two years later in 1916.

Withy Mills Colliery was opened in about 1815, with a self-acting incline constructed to carry the coal down to a wharf on the S.C.C. It closed in 1877.

It is also interesting to note how many of the colliery and foundry owners were among the original shareholders in The Company of Proprietors of the Somersetshire Coal Canal Navigation. The colliery owners being one of the major promoters of the canal, which was seen as a vital transport link to the coal market in nearby Bath — and increasingly to the coal-starved markets in Wiltshire and the neighbouring counties.

These shareholders included Joseph Hill and Thomas Randell of the Paulton Brass & Iron Foundry (later to become Evans & Co.), Samborne Palmer, Jacob Mogg, Alexander Adams and James Savage, original partners in the Timsbury Coal Proprietors (later called The Conygre Co.), and George Mogg and George Adams of Withy Mills Colliery.

In 1860 the S.C.C. was still the only means of bulk transport of coal from the Paulton and Timsbury Collieries. The first railway to affect trade along the Cam Valley being the Bristol & North Somerset Railway's branch from Hallatrow to Camerton, opened in 1882.



Len Bampfylde

THE PUMPING ENGINES BEING DISMANTLED

The boiler house has been demolished and the remaining boiler lifted up and pulled out for scrap

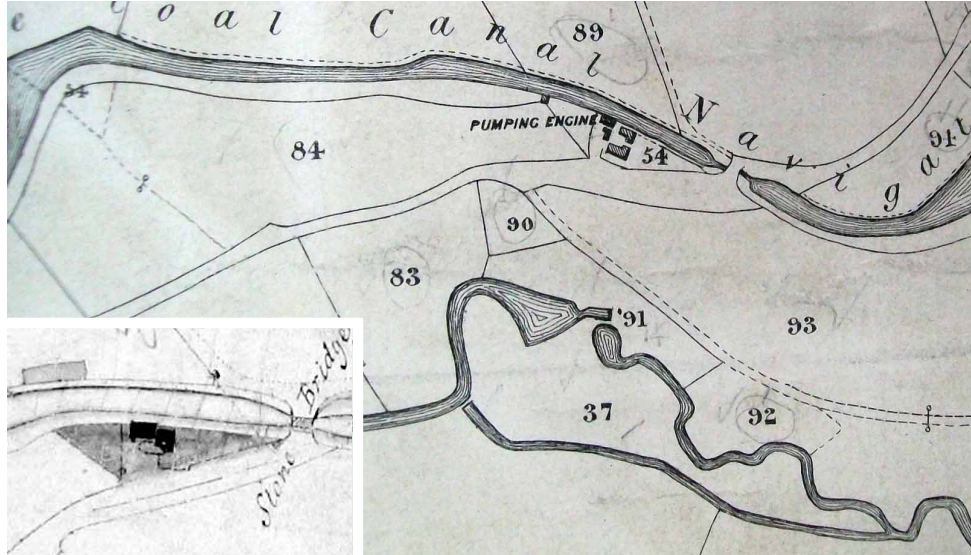


Paul De'Ath

THE SAME SCENE A SHORT WHILE LATER

Coal has been delivered to the cottage and the fire lit.

The Dunkerton tithe map of 1841 shows two engine houses but no boilers, with the notation suggesting a single engine; a parish rate-book for 1845 mentions 'engines' (plural). In 1844 a new pump engineer, Charles Warwick Bampfylde was appointed. The second engine was sited next to the first, over the line of the adit, on a high platform overlooking Carlingcott Lane. This was single acting, with a 52-inch bore and 8-ft stroke, rated at 57.6 bhp and had previously been coupled to a pump with a lift of 135ft. Coal for the engines, supplied by the Timsbury Coal Co. was brought by water from their wharf at Durcott near Radford.



PART OF DUNKERTON TITHE MAP (1841) SHOWING THE ENGINE AND MILL SITES
Inset: An enlargement of the engine site from a map c1802 showing one engine house (and boiler?)

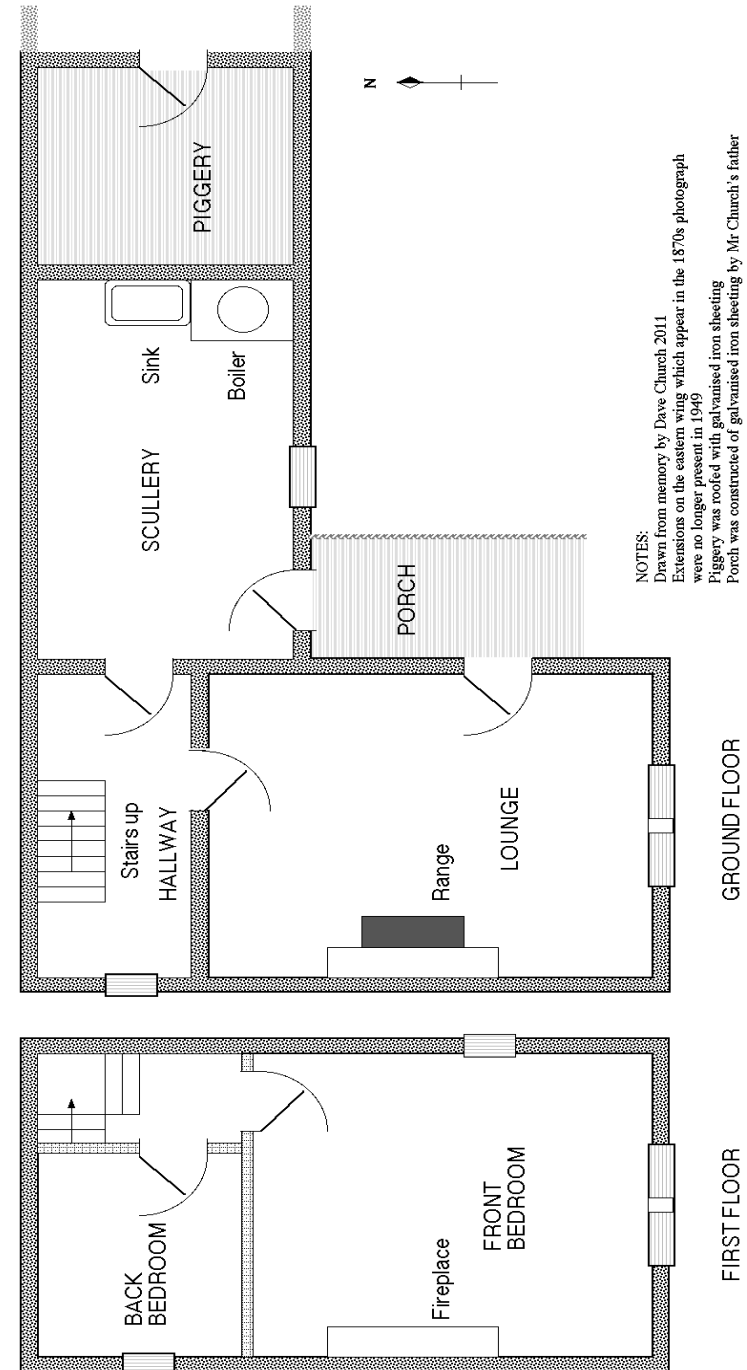
The running expenses of the pumping engines, two thirds of which were met by tolls on the locks, became increasingly difficult as the fortunes of the canal waned in the 1880s, particularly after the need arose to purchase a new boiler in 1887, and by 1890 payment for the Timsbury coal, although supplied on preferential terms, was seriously in arrears. The pumps remained in operation when the company went into liquidation in 1893, but low water in the upper level made navigation difficult. By 1898 one boiler had failed, so only one engine was left working, and in November that year pumping was ordered to cease and the canal closed.

In 1903 the abandoned canal was sold to the GWR who went on to dispose of the pumping engines and buildings; the engines were sold to the newly formed Dunkerton Collieries Ltd. in 1907 for £120 and the buildings demolished the same year. Nor did the railway company need the water, which was duly 'restored to its ancient course'. Alfred Bampfylde, who had succeeded his father as engineer in 1877, had been allowed to remain in the cottage for a while after the closure of the canal, but this too was demolished to make way for the railway. At this point the track ran directly along the line of the canal, but deepened with a cutting in order to convert the canal bridge to a railway bridge.

It is now difficult to know how much of the engine site was destroyed by the railway, which itself was closed in 1951 and the track lifted in 1958. Since then the abandoned cutting on each side of the bridge has been used as a refuse tip, so that all that is visible today is a grassy mound, leaving only the brick parapets of the railway bridge still showing.

Robert Gardiner & Mike Chapman

CANAL COTTAGE FLOOR PLANS



NOTES:
 Drawn from memory by Dave Church 2011
 Extensions on the eastern wing which appear in the 1870s photograph were no longer present in 1949
 Piggery was roofed with galvanised iron sheeting
 Porch was constructed of galvanised iron sheeting by Mr Church's father

THE FLOOR PLAN OF CANAL COTTAGE IN 1949 as remembered by Dave Church (brother of Joy Evert).

My youngest brother was 7 months when we moved in. He died a day after his 50th birthday, Sept 8th 1993. His wish was to be cremated and his ashes be scattered where the cottage was.

It was a lovely place to live, our parents were lovely, we did not want for anything and we were well.

I was 13 years old when I left down there, I cried I didn't want to go I am 72 in May & Canal Cottage will be with me for ever.
 Mrs JOY EVERD.
 (NEE CHURCH)

PART OF MRS. EVERDS ORIGINAL LETTER

It was very quiet down there and in the winter and when it rained, it flooded. The basin would overflow and we were living in the middle of it. It was a worrying time as we would be cut off for days and had to manage on what food we had.

A baker came down and walked from Goosard Bridge along the railway line, with bread in a sack tied with string. He would throw it over to the cottage, as close as he could!



TIMSBURY BASIN IN WATER

Photograph: Terry Paget

In the summer we have people, young and old, walking around upon the 'Coal Batch' the other side of the brook. My eldest brother would have his mates from Withy Mills, over for cricket, football what ever sport was in season. In a way we never got bored, we had a lot of friends. People the otherside of the coal batch, would come over and it was very helpful. I was 13yrs old when I left down there. I cried, I didn't want to leave. I am 72yrs in May 2011, but Canal Cottage will be with me forever.

Mrs Joy Everd (nee Church)

A CHILDHOOD AT CANAL COTTAGE

Mrs. Joy Everd (nee. Church) lived in the wharfinger's cottage at Timsbury Basin in the 1940s and 50s. Sue Langdon has transcribed Joy's written reminiscences of her idyllic childhood:

Mr. & Mrs. W. Church, (my parents), 3 brothers & me moved into Canal Cottage, 66 years ago.

My youngest brother was 7 months old and I was 5 years. We were there 9 years. Then we moved up to Paulton, in a 4 bedroomed council house, with all mod. cons., electric lights and a lovely bathroom and toilet.

In the cottage we had 2 up and 2 down, paraffin lamps or candles and our toilet was down the garden path with a septic tank. My parents had to go across the field at the side of the cottage, cross over a stream, get over a stile, to a spring to fetch buckets of water, for us to wash & cook with. It must have been hard work!

We were there 8^{1/2} years before someone came from Purnells and had water piped into our kitchen and we had a lovely flush toilet. When all this was done, a man from the Council came and said that there was a house up in Paulton, waiting for you all, if you like. I didn't know what to expect.

Mum had a hard life, she had 4 girls after we moved from the cottage.

Three years after we moved to Paulton, she had her tenth child, a girl. We were a big family, but we were happy! We older children didn't have much, not like the children of today. We loved life very much. Another family moved in after we moved out. They didn't stay very long.

Not long after they moved the cottage was pulled down.

Continued on Page 14 →



Ken Clew collection

CANAL COTTAGE at TIMSBURY BASIN — 1949

Mrs Church can be seen talking to the landowner, Mr. Turner, in front of the piggerly



TIMSBURY BASIN IN THE 1870s — Showing the cottage (L.H.S.), obviously occupied with smoke coming from its chimney



Photograph: Don Browning

Weigh-House 61



Photograph: Don Browning

THE REMAINS OF THE COTTAGE — February 1968



Photograph: Don Browning

Weigh-House 61