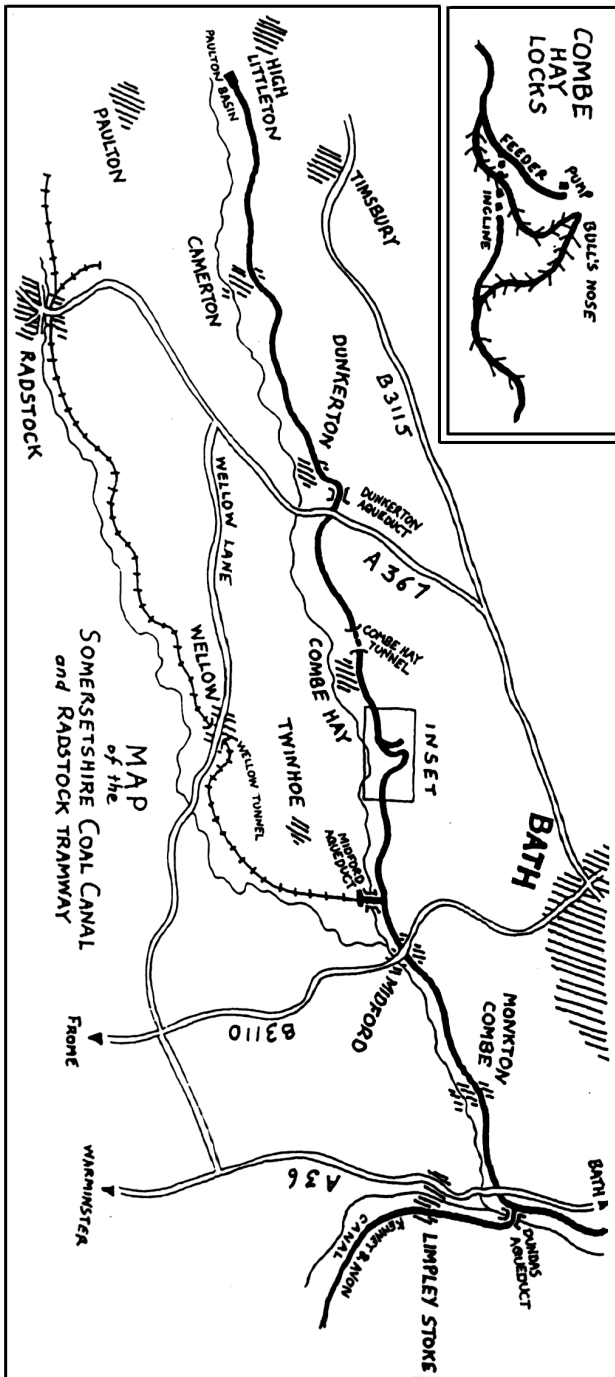


WEIGH-HOUSE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL SOCIETY



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



Nº 77

DECEMBER 2019

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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

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Affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association N^o 0005276
Inland Revenue reference code for tax purposes: CAD72QG

MEMBERSHIP

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☎ (01761) 433418 *E-mail:* membership@coalcanal.org.uk
and on the Society Website: <http://www.coalcanal.org>

The Editor welcomes 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 necessary. Author's guidelines are available at:

<http://www.coalcanal.org/wh/guidelines.htm>.

Please send articles and correspondence to:

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☎ 01225 335974 *E-mail (not HTML):* adrian@poppyrecords.co.uk

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

Tuesday 9th June — 19:30

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Meet: Radstock Museum

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

Sunday 5th July —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 2nd August —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 6th September —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 4th October —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 18th October —10:00

WALK — MIDFORD TO MONKTON COMBE

Meet: Twinhoe Lane, Midford.

For further details please contact: *Adrian Tuddenham* ☎ 01225 3359746

Thursday 26th October— 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — THE CANAL, RAILWAYS AND COLLIERIES OF CAMERTON AND DUNKERTON

by Roger Halse

Meet: The Radstock Working Men's Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Steve Page* ☎ 01761 433418

Sunday 1st November —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 15th November —10:00

WALK — DUNDAS - MONKTON COMBE - DUNDAS

Meet: Twinhoe Lane, Midford.

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 07986 972984

Thursday 26th November— 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — WILLIAM SMITH'S EARLY CAREER IN SOMERSET

by Peter Wigley

Meet: The Radstock Working Men's Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Steve Page* ☎ 01761 433418

Walks

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

The walks include detailed explanations, so they 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: <http://www.coalcanal.org> for last-minute changes

WEIGH - HOUSE N^o 77

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EDITOR'S NOTES

The previous edition of Weigh-House covered an unusually wide variety of topics and this edition continues in the same vein, with articles ranging from a chance discovery of Victorian photographs of a shareholder's family *via* reminiscences of a childhood in wartime Combe Hay to a recent exhibition of art based on pictures of the Canal and its wildlife near Paulton.

For the first time, this issue includes a section on Web-based sources of information which may interest our members. If anyone stumbles across other websites which contain material relevant to the S.C.C. and which they feel ought to be better known, please contact the Editor. Given the speed at which the internet continues to grow and sprout new branches, there is the potential for this section to become a regular feature.

ADRIAN TUDDENHAM

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

For any society to be a success, a lot of work has to go on behind the scenes, this work falls entirely on the shoulders of volunteers who spend a lot of their own time and effort keeping things running smoothly. The activities listed in our our diary dates (p21) show the wide variety of the tasks undertaken by our volunteers:

Walks — These aren't just conjured up out of thin air, a coherent programme has to be put together; the lengths of the walks have to be planned to fit into the available time and the starting point has to have space suitable for parking cars. Not so obvious is the need to plan short easy walks during the worst of the Winter weather, keeping the longer ones for the Summer months.

Work Parties — Mark Sherry is working hard to increase the number of volunteers turning up for work parties. Leading a work party doesn't just mean turning up on the day, but involves keeping an eye on the potential work sites all along the canal at frequent intervals to see which ones will need priority. Before every work party, the tools, personal protective equipment and First Aid kit have to be loaded up and brought to the work site and even such apparently trivial things as milk, clean water and tea bags have to be checked and replenished each time.

Social Evenings — These usually take place at the Radstock Working Men's Club and the task of liaison with that organisation falls to Steve Page. He also does the publicity in the print media. We are constantly on the lookout for interesting speakers and these have to be booked well in advance, but we are fortunate to also have our own members who can give talks on their special areas of interest.

Of course, none of the above activities would work if people didn't turn up to them, so we have to thank our members, some of whom live locally and some who travel considerable distances, for their continued support at these events. To turn up to something, you have to know when and where it is taking place; so our various online listings have to be kept up to date. Mark Sherry has built up a considerable following on Social Media and he is soon to be joined in this task by Martin Rayner, who has been co-opted onto the Committee as a project manager and fund raiser.

Another form of publicity, which brings us to the attention of the general public, is attendance at fêtes and other community events. For many years this task fell mainly upon the shoulders of Roger Halse, but it is now shared with Ruth Eversley, Mark Sherrey and several others who attend when they can. The walks in the *Coal Canal Way* booklet are another form of contact with the public and we are pleased to find that our initial print run has sold out and a reprint has become necessary. These walks have sparked the interest of the Ramblers Association, who have already completed two walks along the canal and are planning a third. To make sure they get the best from these rambles, we provide volunteer guides and sometimes lead guided walks for other organisations too.

Until now, I have only been describing the activities that are visible to our members and the public, but a lot of other activity takes place behind the scenes. We hold regular Committee meetings to discuss finance and planning, and members of the Committee act as our representatives at restoration events organised jointly by the *Inland Waterways Association* and the *Canal and River Trust*. Our work parties have acted as hosts to the Waterway Recovery Group, who have cheerfully helped us out on projects that were beyond our own resources.

There are still opportunities for further volunteers, especially those willing to fill gaps on the Committee, so please let me know if you think you can find some time to help.

Wishing you all the best for Christmas and a New Year filled with restoration progress

PATRICK MOSS

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY — 2020

Sunday 5th January —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Please note, extra work parties are planned for this year, so check the website for details.

Sunday 2nd February —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 16th February —10:00

WALK — COMBE HAY TUNNEL TO ENGINE WOOD

Meet: The Avenue (top end), Combe Hay

For further details please contact: *Adrian Tuddenham* ☎ 01225 335974

Thursday 27th February— 19:30–

SOCIAL EVENING — THE BRIDGWATER CANAL & THE MANCHESTER, BURY & BOLTON CANAL.

by Steve Bacon

Meet: The Radstock Working Men's Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Steve Page* ☎ 01761 433418

Sunday 1st March —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 15th March —10:00

WALK — COMBE HAY LOCK FLIGHT

Meet: Layby opposite Bridge Farm, Combe Hay.

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 07986 972984

Thursday 26th March— 19:30

SOCIAL EVENING — THE CLEVELAND POOLS, another Georgian achievement.

by Sally Helvey & Dr Linda Watts

Meet: The Radstock Working Men's Club.

For further details please see website or contact: *Steve Page* ☎ 01761 433418

Sunday 5th April —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 19th April —10:00

WALK — COMBE HAY TO MIDFORD

Meet: Layby opposite Bridge Farm, Combe Hay.

For further details please contact: *Derrick Hunt* ☎ 07986 972984

Sunday 3rd May —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

Sunday 7th June —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

→

BOOK REVIEW

Robin Ansell, Allan Collier and Phil Nichols, *Secure the Shadow, Somerset Photographers 1839-1939*, (The Somerset & Dorset Family History Society 2018), A4 Perfect bound, 97pp, illustrated, with accompanying DVD. £14.10, obtainable online.
ISBN 978-1-905639-34-2

Although primarily intended as an aid to the study of family history, containing a 60-page directory of professional photographers who worked in Somerset, this book also serves as an excellent and very detailed history of the development of photography in that part of the county now known as North Somerset and Bath & N.E. Somerset. This is fully described in the introductory chapter which illustrates, as might be expected, the importance of Bath in the first appearance of commercial photography and its pioneers in the west of England. Since it can be reasonably argued that the Bristol studios also played a leading part in these developments, it is unfortunate that these lay outside the scope of this study.

Nevertheless the authors have brought an impressive amount of research to this subject. In all, the lives of some 800 photographers have been examined, and a number of appendices are included to take account of professional women photographers, significant amateurs, itinerant professionals with no known local studio, and professionals who were not resident in Somerset but took at least one Somerset image during this period. The large quantity of information required for this project was obtained from many diverse sources, all fully quoted.

The inclusion of the DVD, to ensure the publication was both cost effective and of a manageable size, contains more than 1,500 images and mini-biographies of each of the photographers together with examples of their work. To this end the authors have added an Epilogue chapter, 'The Timelines', to guide and encourage readers to further investigate the individual stories included on the disc. In all, this book, handsomely produced at a reasonable price, will not only serve as a useful dating guide to old photographs, but also as an indispensable reference source in general for those researching the origins of photography in this part of the country.

MIKE CHAPMAN

BRIDGE MYSTERY SOLVED

In W.H.75 (p22) we published a request by Derrick Hunt for further information about an unnamed bridge near Brassknocker.



THE DEFACED NAME CARVED ON THE PARAPET OF COMBE BRIDGE

Both Tim Wheeldon and Roger Halse have identified it as "Combe Bridge"; not through some phenomenal feat of eyesight but by research into the archives of the Black Dog Turnpike Trust at Bradford on Avon Museum.

<<http://www.bradfordonavonmuseum.co.uk/archives/3740>>

LEGACY

A generous legacy has been received from the estate of the late John Wragg. His widow has sent us this tribute:

...As a boy, and subsequently as an engineer, John was fascinated by steam engines, railways and all things mechanical. He moved with his family from Kent to Bath at the beginning of World War II as his father worked for the Admiralty. This was when he discovered the railway lines of the S.&D., G.W.R. etc, and the Coal Canal. He always enjoyed reading 'Weigh-House' and the current projects being undertaken. I would like to think that this donation could help to play a significant part in a current or future project.

I shall be interested to hear from you in the future.
Yours sincerely
Margaret Wragg

DONATIONS

The Society wishes to express its thanks to the following for their generous donations:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr. A. & Mrs. M. Trinder | Mr. B. Roe & Family |
| Mr. C. Winpenny | Mr. A. Screen |
| Mr. G. & Mrs. S. Woodward | Mr. J. Smith |
| Mr. S. Ashman | Mr. D. Sumner |
| Mr. C. Axon | Ms. H. Kelly |
| Mr. G. Blacker | Mr. & Mrs. R. Wilsdon |
| Mr. D. Francis | |

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Mr. P. Grimsdell | Westbury | Mr. S. Ashman | Bath |
| Mr. I. Walker | Croydon | Mr. I. Montgomery | Hull |
| Mr. A. Stevens | Winford | Ms. A. Godley | Writhlington |
| Mr. A. & Mrs. M. Trinder | High Littleton | Mr. A. Seal | Totnes |
| Mr. C. Helps | Norton St Philip | Ms. L. Gibson | Wells |
| | Dunkerton & Tunley Parish Council | | |

NAVYING NOTES

I'm pleased to say that the number of volunteers turning up at our work parties is increasing, with ages ranging from veterans of some of our earliest restorations right through to Leo, our youngest volunteer, aged 12. If you are interested in joining a work party or just keeping up-to-date with current events, please contact me (details on p2), or join us on Facebook, or ask to be put on our group e-mail system <mark@coalcanal.com>.

With our new fundraiser, Martin Rayner, we hope we shall soon have the finances to push projects forward more quickly; we are looking into purchasing new equipment to help us with vegetation control. We also need more finances to cover the cost of improvement work on the Canal at Paulton, which we intend to start in 2020. Local councils have also shown an interest in helping us, so we look forward to collaborating with them.

We are planning to have two work parties *per* month in 2020, these will be on Saturdays and Sundays, 2 weeks apart, some at Paulton and some at Combe Hay. The dates aren't yet decided, so please keep an eye on our websites or Social Media if you have any Saturdays or Sundays free and would like to help us.

MARK SHERREY



Photograph: Ruth Eversley

**OUR BRAVE WORK PARTY PRESSING ON WITH THE VITAL WORK OF TEA-DRINKING
IN SPITE OF SQUALLY WEATHER.**

Another surprise took their place ! I think it was the 4th or maybe the 5th June 1944.

The railway from Limpley Stoke to Camerton was not the busiest in the country in those days. Maybe 3 or 4 trains in a busy week with an 0-6-0 Dean Goods shedded at St Philips Marsh Bristol. Maybe there would be 6 or 7 wooden wagons and a brake van used to collect coal from Dunkerton or Camerton Colliery and that was it. The lengthsmen use to walk the whole branch. He often used to tell me about adders basking under the rails in the summer and he had to be a bit careful.

I had a habit of regularly looking over the wall at the cross roads above the tunnel and generally it was a fairly quiet scene looking towards the old Combe Hay Platform.

SURPRISE ! one evening when I looked over the parapet. –The whole cutting was occupied with older type railway coaches. I do not remember how many but 12 or 15 starting at the tunnel and going the whole length of the straight bit of track. I think they were in dull brownish green livery but each one had a large red cross on the roof and each side. They were there for a few days and then they were gone. They were the back-up support trains taken to the South Coast to collect wounded soldiers and sailors after D-Day. I have no idea where they eventually went and I feel sure that not many people had any knowledge of these activities at Combe Hay in 1944.

TREVOR RADWAY

ON ONE OF OUR WALKS...



Photograph: Ruth Eversley

**A HOLE HAS BEEN DISCOVERED IN THE CANAL BED BETWEEN DUNKERTON & COMBE HAY
— WE ARE LOOKING INTO IT**

MEMORIES OF COMBE HAY IN 1942

Towards the end of the Second World War, even the quiet lanes and rural railways of Britain were pressed into service and played their part in the final push across the Channel on D-Day. Trevor Radway was living in Combe Hay during this period, as a refugee from the bomb damage in Bath. He recounts his memories of the unexpected wartime activities he stumbled across.

April 23rd 1942 saw my family home in Bath demolished by a certain aggressive action from a German bomber. We were homeless but still alive. We first went to Inglesbatch living in an ancient wet caravan for a few months. My father walked the lanes every night and eventually found a house at Combe Hay so we moved. It was the thatched cottage on top of the railway tunnel at the cross roads and owned by the Robertson Family of marmalade fame.



THE THATCHED COTTAGE AT COMBE HAY

Why have I written this ? Memories are the answer. As I write we are hearing about the 75th anniversary of D-Day on 6th June 1944 and that prompted me to write this which I feel sure is not common knowledge.

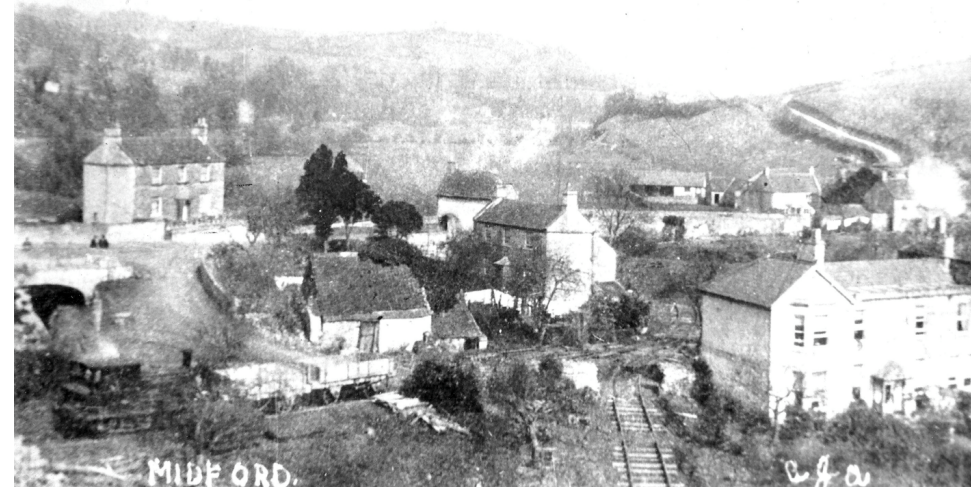
I went to Combe Hay School with 18 children aged from 5-11 all in one class. Miss Edwards was the sole teacher. Can you imagine that today ? At the end of school I went to Perret`s Farm and collected the milk as usual on 1st to 4th June 1944 and than walked home swinging the can as a game. When I got to the cross roads I had the shock of my life as I looked down the lane to Wellow. Tucked into the bank underneath the big beech trees I saw four net camouflaged Army Vehicles. They were halftrack U.S. Army manned, (and I am not being racist here) mainly by coloured soldiers. I had previously, very little knowledge of such people. Being a curious lad I went down and spoke to them. They did not disclose why they were there or when they were leaving. They gave me `gum` and other small gifts like biscuits. I think my mother provided them with a brew of tea from time to time.

Then one evening, probably the 4th they all left without a word. I now know where they went. To the South Coast where they became part of the American Contingent taking part in the D-Day landings. My temporary friends had gone.

I regularly walked along the railway line to Caisson House which was owned by a notable gentleman who could have been a Judge or a Q.C.. At that time I seem to remember there was some water in the bottom of one of the locks and a poor lock gate holding it back. Whenever he saw us there he would charge his manservant to chase us off so he was not too popular. I do not think he was the most popular person in the village at that time.

THE CONTRACTOR'S RAILWAY — Part 2

In the far background of Fig. 13 (WH76), the contractor's railway can be seen heading off towards the viaduct of the S&D Railway at Midford, it's presence there is confirmed by another photograph (Fig. 14) looking northwards from above that viaduct, with the viaduct out of sight just off the left of the picture.



**Fig. 14 — MIDFORD FROM ABOVE THE S&D RAILWAY VIADUCT
LOOKING NORTHWARDS**

On the extreme left can be seen the bridge carrying the main road over the dry canal; the S.C.C. Company offices were the handsome double-fronted building just to the right of the bridge. At a lower level, just in front of the bridge, is a small locomotive and some trucks, which gives an indication of the line of the contractor's railway: it must pass under the viaduct just off the left-hand edge of the photograph and meet the road somewhere off the right-hand side.

Just right of centre is a length of railway track leading almost directly towards the photographer. This branch appears to be leading towards the area where the complex of bridges was being built to carry the new line over the Twinhoe Road, over the Cam Brook and under the S&D Railway viaduct; a site that would have required large quantities of materials for the construction work. This picture confirms that Midford once had three railways and a branch siding, in addition to the two streams and five roads which converged upon it.

Further East, there were several arches above the confluence of the Cam and Midford Brooks and a further steel bridge over the main road, all of which would have required large quantities of bricks and a heavy steel structure to be brought in by rail. Other bridges on the line were one over the Midford Brook between Midford and Monkton Combe, which has been demolished and is all but lost in vegetation, and another carrying the A37 road over the line at Brassknocker which is still in good condition. Another bridge over the Midford Brook, which is still in existence but not very well known, is to be found in the meadows just to the East of the Canal Centre at Brassknocker, the curved embankment at this point served for the contractor's railway before the main line was finally built on it.



**Fig. 15 — THE CONTRACTOR'S RAILWAY AND EMBANKMENT
CURVING AWAY FROM THE MAIN LINE NEAR BRASSKNOCKER**

The rails and sleepers of the contractor's railway are much smaller and lighter than those of the main line. The bridge over the Midford Brook is visible at the extreme left and the line of the S.C.C. can be seen on the hillside above.

Returning now to Upper Midford and the embankment on which the steam navy was standing in Fig 11. (WH76) This was a large construction which stretched eastwards all the way to Midford and was made by tipping spoil from the cutting which stretched approximately the same distance westwards towards Combe Hay. One of the skills of a railway engineer was the ability to calculate the correct line and level for the cuttings and embankments to ensure that the volume of spoil removed from one was exactly equal to the volume of spoil needed to construct the other; quite sophisticated mathematics was developed to solve this problem. In the case of Upper Midford, a substantial length of the embankment lay on the opposite side of the Cam Brook from the cutting, so tipping there could not take place until Holley's Bridge had been built. →

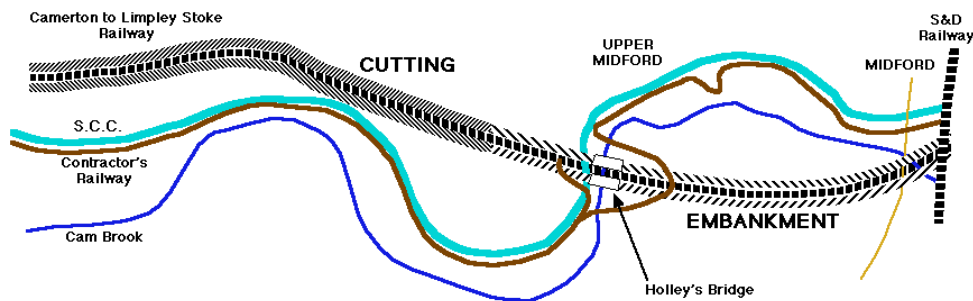


Fig 16 — SKETCH MAP OF THE UPPER MIDFORD AREA

BOAT WEIGHING MACHINE — UPDATE

In Weigh-House 67 (p18) we reported on the only surviving canal boat weighing machine in Britain, which had originally been installed on the Glamorganshire Canal near Cardiff. It had been brought to the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea from Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum and was in the process of being put on exhibition. The plan at that time was to build a replica canal boat and place it in the cradle, so as to demonstrate the working of the machine.

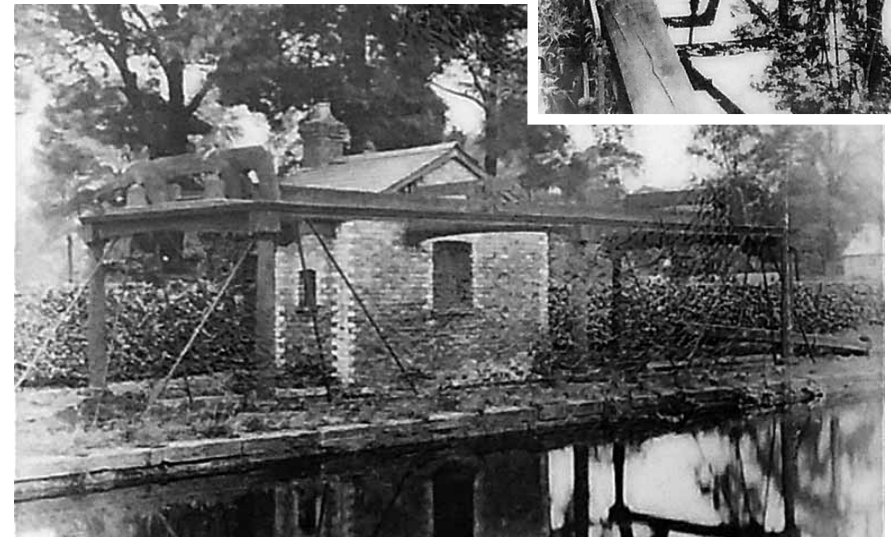
Recently one of our members visited the National Waterfront Museum and reported that, although the machine is on display, it is at the far end of the display area where it is easy to miss. Once discovered, it repays the search with some excellent interpretation boards which not only explain the purpose of the machine but also describe the way it works in easily-understandable terms. The museum also displays a number of historic tramway and railway rail sections with helpful information about their manufacturers.

Sadly the replica canal boat hasn't yet materialised, nor are there any boats on the derelict sections of the Swansea Canal nearby. However, these do include some excellent walks; the Clydach to Ponrardarwe and Ponrardarwe to Ynusmeudwy sections are especially to be recommended. The walks and the museum comprise an excellent day out.

DERRICK HUNT



**(Right and below:)
TWO VIEWS OF THE WEIGHING MACHINE
WHEN IT WAS INSTALLED AT
NORTH ROAD, CARDIFF**



ON THE WEB

A SELECTION OF WEBSITES THAT MAY INTEREST OUR READERS

THE TITFIELD THUNDERBOLT BEFORE AND AFTER

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hW1bZnBPtOM>>

There have been many variations on the 'before and after' theme, but this effort deserves special praise. The videographer, whose pseudonym is *stroudtimewatch*, has uploaded to YouTube a series of short excerpts from the film *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (1954), mixed with more modern pictures from the same viewpoints. Thanks to some extremely painstaking research and camera work, the matching of the shots is excellent and gives a real feel of being transported back and forth in time. Many of the locations will be familiar to members of the Society, as they lie along the route of the S.C.C..

A further dimension is given to this document when it is realised that the "after", when it was uploaded, was 2009, so the 'modern' pictures are at least 10 years old and some are already beginning to look historic in their own right.

WILLIAM SMITH — A NEW ONLINE RESOURCE

A new interactive website of William Smith and his maps, funded by the U.K. Onshore Geophysical Library, is now available at <<https://www.strata-smith.com>>. It is a free-to-all educational resource designed for teachers and students as well as academicians and anybody with an interest in the life and work of William Smith.

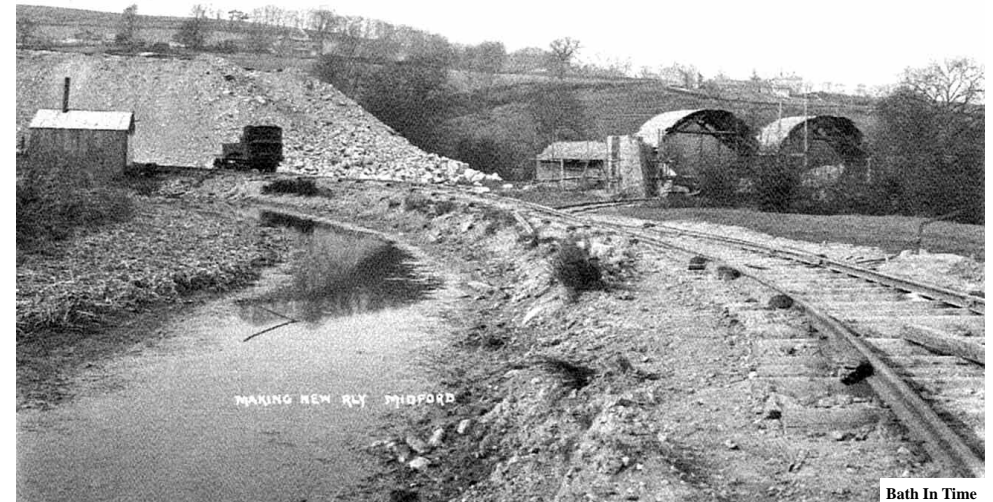
The editor is Peter Wigley and he has generously agreed to give us a talk on Smith's early career in Somerset on 26 November 2020 at the Radstock Working Men's Club.

S.C.C. ON WATERWAY ROUTES WEBSITE

The website <<https://www.waterwayroutes.co.uk>> specialises in downloadable cruising maps for computers, Android, iPhone/iPad or printout. Although primarily intended for cruising, it now includes a map of the S.C.C. as a restoration project.

...AND FINALLY

A reminder that *The Coal Canal Way* is still available as a free download from the S.C.C.S. website: <<http://www.coalcanal.org>>



Bath In Time

Fig 17 — UPPER MIDFORD EMBANKMENT LOOKING NORTHWARDS
The embankment is advancing from the left (from the cutting) and the wooden centring is in place for Holley's Bridge



Bath In Time

Fig 18 — UPPER MIDFORD EMBANKMENT LOOKING NORTHWARDS
The embankment is nearly complete as far as Holley's Bridge.
Note the two locomotives parked on the left branch line near the hut,
the main line goes through the left (western) arch of Holley's Bridge and on to Midford.

→

The construction of Holley's Bridge is shown by *Figs 17 & 18*, two more photographs by George Love Dafnis. In *Fig 17* the wooden centring is in place for the arches and the western abutments are under construction; by the time *Fig 18* was taken the abutments and arches were complete but the parapets not yet built. The embankment, which had already blocked the S.C.C. by the time of *Fig 17*, had advanced right up to the abutments of Holley's bridge by *Fig 18* and might have been continuing beyond it if the newly-built bridge had developed enough strength by that time to support the weight of loaded waggons and lightweight locomotives.

Locomotives are visible in both photographs, but *Fig 18* is the clearer and, when enlarged, shows that two 0-6-0 saddle-tank engines were parked in the sidings, one branch of which appears to be running up towards main trackbed level.



Bath In Time

Fig 19 — AN ENLARGED SECTION OF Fig 18 SHOWING TWO LOCOMOTIVES

The contractors are known to have owned at least two Manning-Wardle 0-6-0 saddle-tank engines: an 1888 model "Type K" N°1068 (TYERSALL) which they purchased secondhand in 1897 and a 1901 model "Type Q", N° 56 (NORTHOLT) which they purchased for a contract at Northolt, Bucks, from 1901 to 1907 before transferring it to Dunkerton in 1908. The two locomotives in the photograph both have tanks with the distinctive Manning-Wardle shape and the one on the left has a typical M-W steam collector and safety valve. The arrangement of external steam exhaust piping to the smoke box of the locomotive on the right is not found in either the Type K or Type Q designs, so this is probably a different type altogether. No steam dome or safety valve is visible, which is distinctly strange, as the former was essential for a locomotive to be used on steep gradients and the latter was mandatory. Any correspondence which helps to shed more light on the identity of these locomotives will be welcome.

A special feature of these types of contractors' locomotives was the springing, which ensured that all wheels bore a fair proportion of the total weight despite considerable unevenness in the height of the track. If a proportion of the total weight had been carried on each wheel bearing by attaching it to an individual spring, as in many main-line locomotives, the wheel running over a high spot on the rails would bear more than its share of the weight as the spring compressed; the other wheels would become more lightly loaded and may well begin to slip or lift off the track. →



| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| ANNIE CRANG | UNKNOWN MALE | UNKNOWN FEMALE | UNKNOWN FEMALE |
| FINDLATER CRANG | UNKNOWN BOY | MABEL CRANG | MAUDE CRANG |

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE CRANG FAMILY AND PITFOUR HOUSE c1895

On one of our recent walks, Michael Miner, one of our members, happened to mention that he has a couple of interesting photographs of Pitfour House — these are reproduced here. They show the house and family as they were in about 1895, with Mrs. Annie Crang (*nee* Evans) and the children. Annie's husband, John James Gunning Crang, is absent from the photographs; his death occurred in 1897, five years later his widow sold the house and the Crang family left Timsbury.

The name "Pitfour" occurs as an area of Scotland and as a plantation in Jamaica where it is thought that a member of the Crang family worked and died. We would be pleased to hear of any further information on possible connections or any information on the Crang family in general.

Pitfour House is now run as a Bed & Breakfast — by a retired paediatrician and a retired dentist, maintaining the medical connection — so anyone who is interested in staying there may contact the proprietors at: <pitfourhouse@btinternet.com>

Derrick Hunt

More information is available at:

<<https://www.timsbury.org.uk/village/history/industrial-past/timsbury-coal-mines/>>
 <<http://www.highlittletonhistory.org.uk/transcriptions0905/Mining/HLMearnsRotcombeHeighgrove.pdf>>

SHAREHOLDERS OF THE SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL

WILLIAM & JOHN CRANG

Shareholding: John £2300, William £2000

The brothers William and John Crang were heavily involved in the coal mining industry around Timsbury and were both major shareholders in the Somersetshire Coal Canal Company.

The coal mining business was so risky that no landowner was prepared to finance ventures of this type, so the finance was raised by the colliery proprietors themselves, forming partnerships to spread the risk. In 1783, Mearns Coalworks was financed by 32 equal shares and John Crang is recorded as owning seven of them. By 1791, both brothers became founder members of "Timsbury Coal Proprietors" along with other Gentlemen: Samborne Palmer, Jacob Mogg, Alexander Adams and James Savage, and were responsible for developing much of the coal mining industry around Timsbury.

The Crang family has a long history of involvement in the medical field, their family tree includes apothecaries, surgeons and doctors. Findlater Crang was for many years a local doctor with his practice based at Pitfour House, the family home in Timsbury. His grandson, also confusingly named Findlater, is one of the boys in the photographs.



ANNIE AND THE CRANG CHILDREN AT PITFOUR HOUSE c1895

In these locomotives, the bearings were linked to the springs by "equalising bars" which shared the load of each wheel over a pair of springs; each spring took half the load from the two wheels each side of it. This halved the effect of humps and dips in the track and gave the wheels a greater freedom of vertical movement, which made for better traction and less risk of derailment.

The locomotives did not have tenders for their coal and water, which would have hampered shunting operations involving continual running back and forth; instead they had a small coal bunker behind the cab and a large water tank over the boiler, where it benefitted from any heat which would otherwise have been wasted. These would have been carefully proportioned so that the locomotive could do a whole day's work without the need for frequent refills, although on this particular contract it would have been easy to arrange a small lineside coal dump and draw water from the Cam Brook or even the defunct S.C.C. at several places along the route. The locomotives in the picture don't appear to be in steam, which would agree with the photograph having been taken on a Sunday, so it could be inferred they had been left next to one of the coal dumps and watering places, so as to give easy access to supplies for the re-start on Monday morning.

The track from Midford came through the western arch of Holley's Bridge and continued up the valley of the Cam on the towpath of the S.C.C. For many years it has been recognised that sections of the towpath between Lock 22 and Midford have a curious profile: there appears to be a double-hump of one path built upon another. The overall height of the present-day path would make it very difficult for a horse to draw a boat because the towing rope would be constantly pulling downwards on the horses back. It now seems almost certain that, in building the contractor's railway, the level of the towpath was raised by a layer of ballast; it is the top of this which was mistaken for the original towpath. The photograph below, taken from "The Engineer" magazine, confirms that belief.

To be continued in WH 78

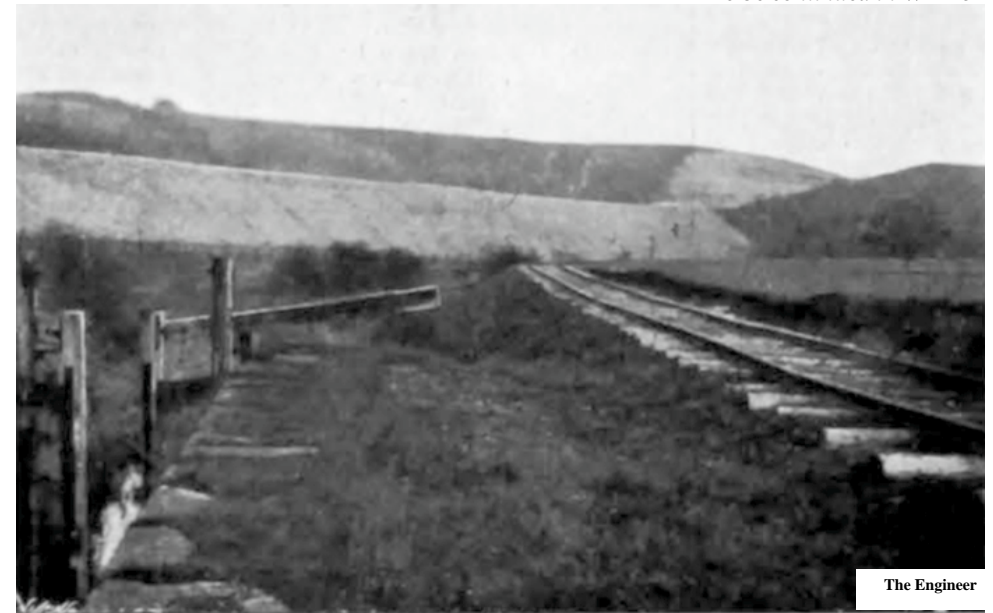


Fig 20 — A VIEW OF THE RAILWAY CUTTING AND EMBANKMENT BETWEEN UPPER MIDFORD AND THE BOTTOM OF THE LOCK FLIGHT
Lock 22 is on the left and the contractor's railway is on the built-up towpath on the right
Weigh-House 77

THE 'ENGINE ROOM' ART GROUP TRIPTYCH

In January this year, Shelagh Hetreed advertised for mature folk with an interest in the Timsbury and Paulton Basins, to form a new art group which would focus on the endless inspiration of the Canal. This was a commission from the Natural Theatre Company who had been delivering events in the area and responses were received from 10 local people, some already members and others living in the villages around the area. After 3 months or so of inspiring work which ranged from appliqué, cross-stitching, batik, screen printing and drawing, 22 pieces emerged and so the Then and Now triptych was created.

Everyone focused on an aspect of the Canal that caught their interest; from the swans, ducks and frogs to the bridge and flora through the seasons. Everything was produced on cloth, including photo transfers of some historic sepia pictures. Some of the group members had last done art works at school while others enjoy creative work regularly and three are current *Cam Valley Arts Trail* members. Everyone learned the processes involved in screen printing and batik (drawing with hot wax) and these techniques featured in the majority of the work.

The Triptych has been displayed at the new Midsomer Norton Library Hub at The Hollies, where a visitors' book demonstrated how much it was appreciated. The library supplied a display of canal related books to accompany the hanging. Paulton Library Hub is also interested in displaying the hanging when it finally transitions over to being a community resource, and we are in talks with Radstock Museum to see if a home might be found there in the future.

As for the Engine Room Art Group, they have continued to meet weekly and to continue their creative journeys. They are delighted with the positive comments about their first piece. The Group is now widening its scope to look for individual projects, but the Canal still holds an enormously diverse range of inspiring subject matter for a long time to come.

SHELAGH HETREED (Tutor)



Photograph: Shelagh Hetreed

**A FAMILIAR CANAL LANDMARK
DEPICTED IN THE TRIPTYCH**

