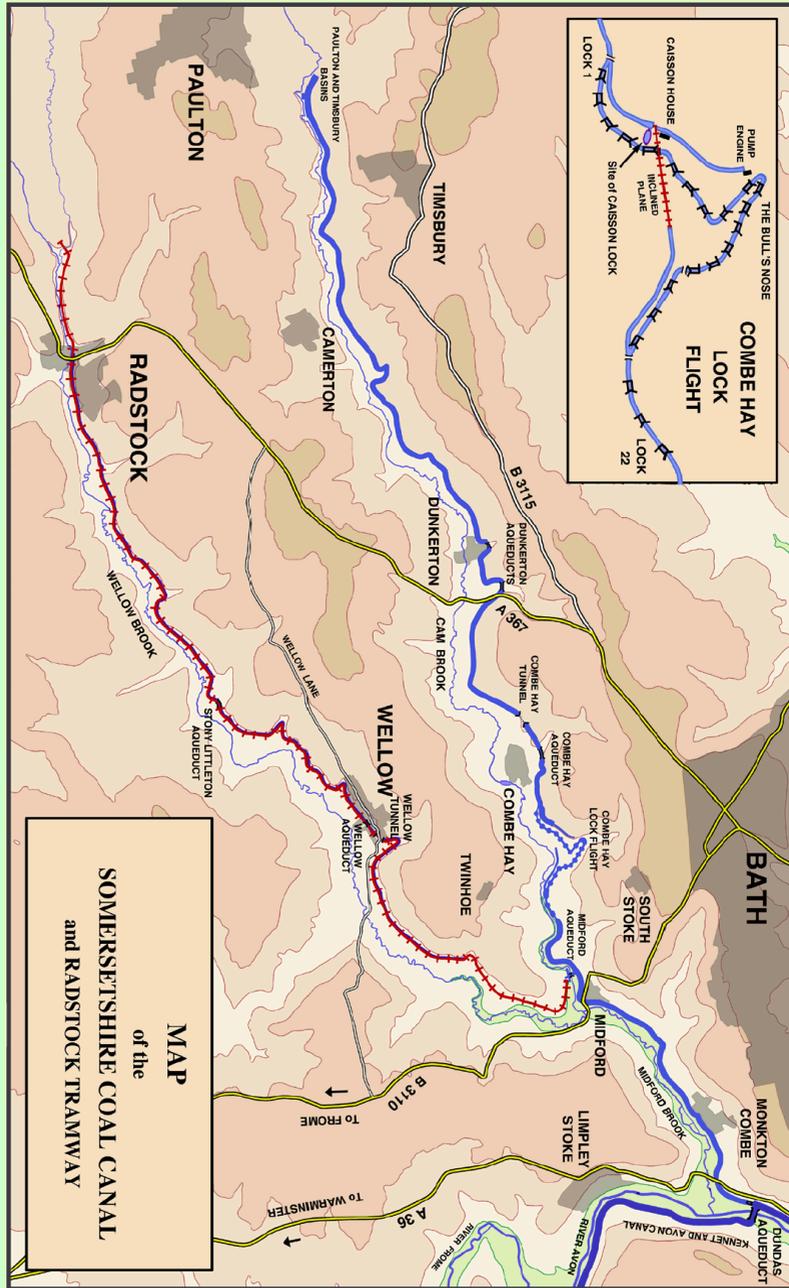


WEIGH-HOUSE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL SOCIETY



N° 79

JULY 2020

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



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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY — 2020

We shall be following Government advice on measures to combat Covid-19 (the Corona Virus) so any of the events listed here may have to be cancelled at short notice. We shall do our best to go ahead with them, but please check with the website or telephone one of the contact numbers given below for the latest information before travelling:

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

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 — COMBE HAY TUNNEL to ENGINE WOOD

Meet: The Avenue, Combe Hay.

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

Thursday 22nd 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 — COMBE HAY LOCK FLIGHT

Meet: Layby opposite Bridge Farm, Combe Hay, BA2 7EE

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

Sunday 6th December —10:00

WORK PARTY — Location to be advised

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

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Public Houses and Beer Houses were important features along the canal in days gone by, but only a few are commemorated by their names and even fewer are still trading. Tim Lunt has collected together the details of these long-departed institutions and put together a fascinating 'pub-crawl' along the northern branch of the S.C.C. with the help of photographs from Roger Halse's collection. Roger himself contributes an article which includes our centre-page spread: a newly-discovered photograph of Lock 19, showing the S.C.C. during its final working years.

The Society hasn't been idle during 'lock-down', as vital repair work has been in progress between Paulton Basin and Withy Mills. Mark Sherry contributes an article detailing the trials and tribulations that can derail even the best-laid plans.

Our Chairman has been busy too, laying the foundations of a future collaboration with B.&N.E.S. Council and looking into ways to promote our restoration plans to other 'stakeholders', for whom the restoration of a canal takes on a much wider significance in terms of biodiversity and other benefits to the surrounding area.

ADRIAN TUDDENHAM

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

John Lennon once sang of "Strange Days Indeed" and that is a fitting description for the times we are living through as I write. The song is Nobody Told Me and it is fair to say that no-one told any of us that we would spend up to 12 weeks not leaving the house and that social routines that we had taken for granted for years would be sidelined, mothballed and in some cases outlawed indefinitely.

One of those routines is the A.G.M., a feature of the last 27 Summers, but cancelled this year in circumstances that we never saw coming. Every single charity and business that normally holds such a meeting has been affected and, in the grand scheme of things, it is perhaps just a minor matter in a landscape where businesses have closed, the N.H.S. has battled to cope and people have died. Nevertheless the A.G.M. is a legal requirement and, in any other circumstances, to postpone it indefinitely would have been in contravention of our charitable status and our articles of association.

In a way, complete lockdown did those who organise meetings a favour — prior to that we would legally have been obliged to hold an A.G.M. but most of our members would have been advised not to attend it. As it was, when the day came round, no venue could legally host an A.G.M. and even outdoors such a gathering would have been in contravention of government guidance and regulations. The Charity Commissioners have recognised this and given considerable latitude on arrangements — we can delay, have a meeting by proxy, or simply wait until next year and catch up.

The absence of an A.G.M. doesn't mean we haven't been busy, though — in other news we are working with Bath & North East Somerset Council on a major heritage landscape project for the Somerset Coalfield, which will include projects on the canal between Timsbury and Dunkerton and for which the Radstock Branch is also eligible between Radstock and Wellow. We have been undertaking works at Paulton — more about that elsewhere.

I hope that you all enjoy this edition of Weigh House, but more importantly, stay safe in these strange times

PATRICK MOSS

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new and recently re-joined members:

Mr. N. Hardwick,	Bath	Mr. S. Swift,	Paulton
Mr. A. Hinkley,	North Petherton	Mr. T. Turner,	Westbury
Mr. G. Johnson,	Paulton	Mr. S. Varley,	Paulton

DONATIONS

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

Mr. P. Evans	Mr. K. Vassmusson	Mr. C. Winpenny.
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The book is divided into eighteen sections, four directly related to Health & Safety and the rest covering such diverse subjects as Dewatering, Scaffolding and Leadership skills. The majority of the sections are of direct relevance to S.C.C. Work Party activities, such as Hand Tools, Vegetation Clearance, Towing Paths and Bank Protection. The more general sections give advice on dealing with the mass of legislation and regulations relating to personal safety, insurance, construction and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.

Each section is written by an expert (or group of experts) in that field, carefully avoiding the use of esoteric jargon and with clear explanations of any unfamiliar terminology. The approach is focussed on what canal restoration groups need to know for their particular purposes — the hands-on experience of the authors is clear from the way in which they approach each subject.

If this handbook had been available 20 years ago, it would have saved us a lot of time and trouble and enabled us to get things right first time in the past. It is now available and still has the potential to save us a lot of time and trouble; it will amply repay us for the time taken to read it so that we have a better chance of getting things right first time in the future.

D.J.H.

A GUIDE TO THE INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOMERSET

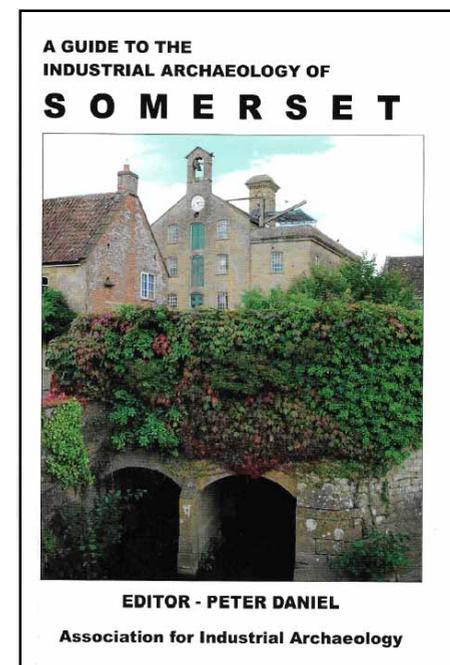
A new Gazetteer has been published by the Association for Industrial Archaeology, edited by Peter Daniel of the Somerset Industrial Archaeological Society (SIAS) and sub titled "An introduction to the Industrial Archaeology of Somerset", it may be used as a reference, gazetteer or guide book.

The guide covers the present administrative county of Somerset, which was formed in 1974. The northern parts of the historic county of Somerset are now in the unitary authorities of North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset and, for industrial archaeological purposes, these areas are covered by the Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society (BIAS).

The guide is divided into the five District Council areas; each has its own map and larger towns have more detailed maps. Each site has a unique reference number that relates to the maps, photographs and index together with a grid reference. It also includes a list of Museums and Working Museums in which there are displays of industrial heritage interest. This is a quality publication which has been compiled with great care and accuracy — and in my view it is a bargain !.

It may be obtained at a cost of £5 from the Publications and Sales section of the SIAS website:
www.sias.me.uk

D.J.H.



BOOK REVIEWS

PRACTICAL RESTORATION HANDBOOK

by the Inland Waterways Association

Part 1; Health & Safety

In the early days of the S.C.C.S. work parties, things were very informal. A core group had some practical training in the use of tools by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, but then we were left to fend for ourselves and make it up as we went along. We were very quickly joined by Bob Parnell, whose military background gave us the organisation and structure which has served us well ever since, but written risk assessments and other Health & Safety measures were unheard of in those days. We took a practical common-sense point of view and had no accidents during that time. Things have now changed, as the society we live in has become risk-averse; a burdensome bureaucracy has generated a raft of legislation which we must comply with.

Fortunately the Inland Waterways Association has now compiled their *Practical Restoration Handbook*, which saves canal restoration societies from having to constantly re-invent the wheel. The online version is available at:

https://www.waterways.org.uk/wrg/resources/practical_restoration_handbook



AN EARLY S.C.C.S WORK PARTY NEAR LOCK 1 — 3 March 2002

WEIGH-HOUSE INDEX

There have been several attempts in the past to create an index of the contents of Weigh-House, but they have all ground to a halt long before completion. We are now approaching our 80th edition and it would be a useful resource to have all the articles from the past properly catalogued so as to save a lot of searching for half-remembered details. If anyone feels they could take on this project, I would be grateful if they would contact me:

derrickjohnhunt@gmail.com

DERRICK HUNT

APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

The early history of the S.C.C.S. is well documented, but there is very little documentation of events that took place before that and which led to the formation of the Society. No doubt these events and the personalities working on canal history are remembered by those who were involved at the time, but their recollections need to be written down and collected together.

I would be grateful if anyone with information or memories of the pre-S.C.C.S. canal scene could get in touch with me:

derrickjohnhunt@gmail.com

DERRICK HUNT

WEIGH-HOUSE IN COLOUR

Perceptive readers will have noticed that the previous edition of Weigh-House was printed in colour; this was because the printers didn't have time to switch their processing to Black & White and decided it was cheaper for them to just run our job in colour at no extra cost to us. The unforeseen consequence of this expedient was a flurry of favourable comments from readers and a decision by the Committee to print all future editions in colour, especially as the price of colour printing is now not greatly different from Black & White. This gives us the advantages that photographs will be more realistic, diagrams easier to follow and the overall look of the publication will be more professional.

This is a good opportunity to pay tribute to our printers: *Able Print / Printminor* of Saltash. A few years ago we were despairing of our local printers; the good ones were closing down and we were having to pay ever-increasing prices for ever-decreasing quality. By happy chance we stumbled across another society whose magazine had been superbly typeset and printed for them by *Able Print*; we contacted the printers for a sample and were so impressed by their printing quality and friendly attention to detail that we switched to them and have never looked back.

In fact the above headline is misleading, because Weigh-House has been produced in colour since Issue N°41 but it has only been printed in Black & White because of cost constraints. The colour editions are available for download from our website, where the pages are arranged in printing order to fit A4 paper. You won't even need to log in with your membership number because we have decided that, during the current lockdown, all copies of W-H will be free to download from our website:

<http://www.coalcanal.org/wh.php>

BIO-DIVERSITY NET GAIN

...the latest buzzwords in canal restoration and indeed in much of the planning and construction of the built environment, appearing not only on the I.W.A. magazine pages covering canal restoration but on the pages of the Government Planning website and that of many consultants, including, by the time you read this, my own. But what does it mean?

Put simply, it means making a project plan such that the biodiversity surrounding your project is better when you finish than when you started. The Department for Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) defines B.N.G. as “an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand and the aim is that all developments, no matter the scale or the location, should achieve this”.

In canal restoration the concept is nothing new — indeed formalising it will give an advantage to many schemes and is something those of us who have worked in restoration for many years will welcome. How so? Well who remembers the brouhaha when the Basingstoke Canal reopened, or rather, it didn't reopen in the manner that people had hoped. Volunteers over many years had restored a canal that varied from a stagnant ditch to a dry one and in the process had improved the natural environment of the canal, almost as an unintentional by-product of what they were doing. This environmental restoration was so successful that English Nature, as they were then, promptly declared the canal a ‘Site of Special Scientific Interest’ and placed restrictions on its management and use.

At the time many enthusiasts cried foul; without the restoration initiative the canal environment would not have improved, and now the use of the canal was impeded even though the impact of normal use would have only marginally affected the new habitat. The argument was that, however much the canal was used, it would be in a better environmental condition than before they had started — and in that argument, Bio-diversity Net Gain is defined.

This understanding has now progressed so far that such that canal restoration is generally regarded as habitat friendly. Indeed, I have worked on one scheme that would restore navigation but was actually promoted for reasons of biodiversity enhancement. That scheme is the Bradley Locks branch in the Black Country: a canal and flight of locks that closed in the 1960s. The route now passes through a landscaped corridor with housing where once mines and factories stood. The corridor is green but sterile, and the Black Country Wildlife Trust spotted an opportunity. Our report laid bare that the canal would see some boat traffic, although given its location it would not be busy, but also emphasised the environmental opportunities, creating a linear corridor with up to six separate habitats including the towpath hedge, the water surface, the water body, and marginal vegetation at the water's edge. In a corridor, these features would combine, allowing wildlife such as bats to move from woodland around a former coal tip to other habitats also suitable for them, increasing not only the biodiversity of the canal corridor but of the habitats so connected.

This is a huge opportunity for our own canal, to create a multi-habitat corridor linking the various sites along the canal, and a walk where one might see butterfly and kingfisher, where fish and bats feed on insects at the water surface, and where small mammals inhabit the banks; benefits that would arise regardless of how few or how many boats use the finished canal.

PATRICK MOSS

For a copy of I.W.A.'s *Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance Note*, visit
<http://www.waterways.org.uk/biodiversity>

The recovered material was used to build a ramp down to the bed of the canal. At this point things went badly wrong, for when the dumper reached the canal bed it promptly sank and dug itself in, with all four wheels spinning helplessly. The excavator towed it out with the help of a borrowed chain, but clearly the work further along the canal couldn't go ahead as planned. The excavator had no difficulty moving about on the canal bed, so it was used to dig out the area of the leaks and strip off the vegetation in the surrounding area to check for any further leaks that might have gone unnoticed.



DUMPER IN DIFFICULTIES

The area of the leaks showed evidence of previous repairs, stones & wooden framing were discovered at the same level as the leaks. In total, 15 significant holes were uncovered in 20ft of embankment — and a dying tree just below the embankment prompted us to discover a further hole which was saturating the ground around its roots. It would have been unsafe to dig out any further without the dumper to bring in fresh clay to refill the excavation, so the work had to be stopped.

The lorry-loads of clay continued to arrive and these were dumped in the canal at the access point. This has left a large clay bund blocking the canal, which has enabled us to put at least some of this length back in water and acts as a convenient temporary access ramp. We now have a good store of clay ready to re-start the work when the canal bed dries out. With luck, the work will only take another 2 days, but we still have sufficient funding for 5 days, if necessary.



THE NEW BUND ACROSS THE CANAL

We hope to re-commence work parties on 5 July with whatever social distancing is necessary. This is a good chance to get out and about in the fresh air once again, but please check with me before travelling.

E-mail: mark@coalcanal.com

MARK SHERREY

NAVYING NOTES

The recently dug-out section of the S.C.C. between Withy Mills Stop point and Terminus Bridge began to lose water about 2 years ago. At first, the cause was not obvious; there was a wet patch in the garden below the canal, but this only appeared when the level was high. A much bigger leak was rapidly draining the canal to somewhere that didn't show.

A previous exploration of the banks of the Cam Brook had shown that some sort of drain or spring was trickling into the Cam at a point just above Summer water level. When we returned to look for this after the Autumn rains, it had become two underwater jets of muddy water, marked on the surface by turbulence and betrayed by plumes of discoloured water downstream. That quantity of water could only have come from the canal and the turbidity showed that it was washing away clay from below the embankment.



ONE OF MANY HOLES

Mark Sherrey and Michael Thomas were both available once the lock-down had eased, so they agreed to do the work. A 6-tonne tracked excavator and dumper were booked for 5 days and a supply of clay, 5 lorry-loads of 16 tonnes each, was ordered. An extra 40 to 50 tonnes of material was needed, so this was taken from the bunds between Timsbury & Paulton Basins, which restored the original canal navigation in this stretch.



A LORRY-LOAD OF CLAY ARRIVING

Vigorous attempts were made to patch it up, but these all failed within a few days as more and more small holes appeared in the foot of the embankment where it joined the bed of the canal. The leak was getting bigger by the day and the only remedy was to stop the water supply to this section of the canal before any more damage could occur.

An expensive but completely secure way of stopping the leak would have been sheet steel piling but access to this area is difficult for large machinery and the cost would have been more than the Society could afford from its own coffers. Fundraising and grants might have raised the necessary cash, but both are slow processes and the C 19 pandemic put paid to any hope of running any fund-raising events. It was decided to use a small tracked excavator to dig out the affected area and replace the porous material with good quality clay.

PUBLIC AND BEER HOUSES ALONG THE S.C.C. FROM DUNDAS TO PAULTON — Part 1

Canal-side inns remain a feature of the waterway network today and the Somersetshire Coal Canal had its own selection of watering holes to satisfy the passing boat crews. Tim Lunt follows the northern branch of the canal from Dundas to Paulton, a sort of 19th century canal pub crawl, identifying the hostelries that existed during the 100 year life of the SCC.

Some were ancient village Alehouses that pre-dated the Canal but found themselves situated close to the various wharves where barges stopped for loading. They were supplemented by other licensed establishments, all by the 19th century known as 'Public Houses', which sprang up as a result of the new canal business or the expansion of the coal industry in the area. Smaller enterprises, 'Beer Houses', appeared after legislation in 1830; run by householders selling beer from their premises and encouraged by the Government of the day in an effort to reduce the consumption of gin. The pubs and beer houses might offer food, games and lodging as well as drink, with stabling alongside for boat horses. Beer houses in particular also gained a reputation for prostitution and crime which was probably not uncommon in the Somerset coalfield.

Dundas

We start near the junction with the K.&A. Canal at Dundas where the *Viaduct Inn* has stood at the foot of Brassknocker Hill since the early 1800s. Originally called the *Chequers Inn* it began by serving traffic on the road from Bath to Bradford on Avon and was renamed the *Viaduct* after the turnpike road along the valley arrived in the 1830s. It was also conveniently placed to the wharf at this junction where we now find the Canal Visitor Centre.



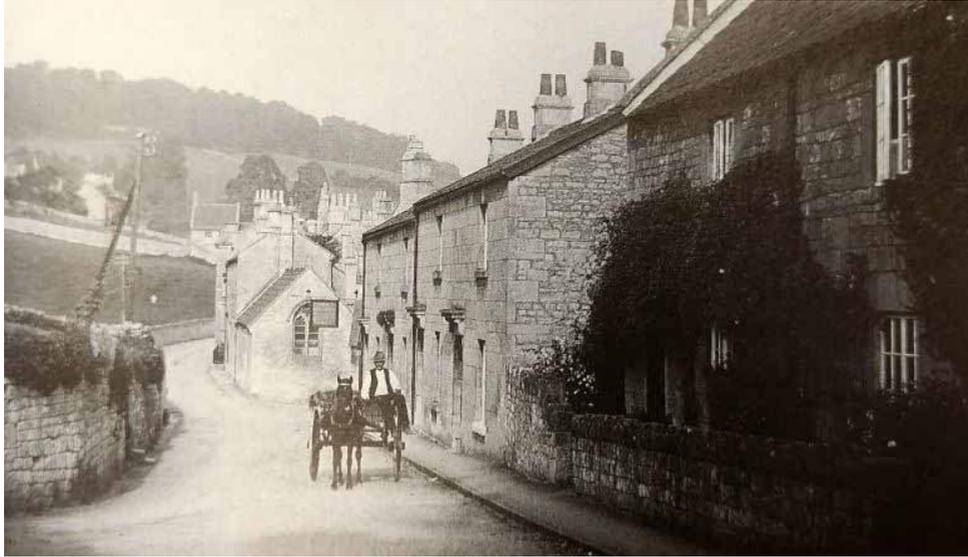
VIADUCT HOTEL, BRASSKNOCKER HILL

Boatmen would have been likely to use the bar although by the 1870s it was heading upmarket having been renamed the *Viaduct Hotel* and boasting a concert hall and gardens. The *Viaduct* closed in 2005 to be converted to flats. Its history and connection with pleasure trips on the canal is explored in WH74 and 75. →

Monkton Combe

Only a short distance from the Viaduct, the pubs in Monkton Combe village may also have profited from canal boats passing through. *The King William IV* was open in the village from before 1840 until the building became part of Monkton School in 1868.

It seems that the demise of the *King William* prompted the arrival of the *Wheelwright's Arms* as it was trading by at least 1869.



**THE WHEELWRIGHT'S ARMS, MONKTON COMBE,
with sign displayed at the turn to the canal down Mill Lane.**

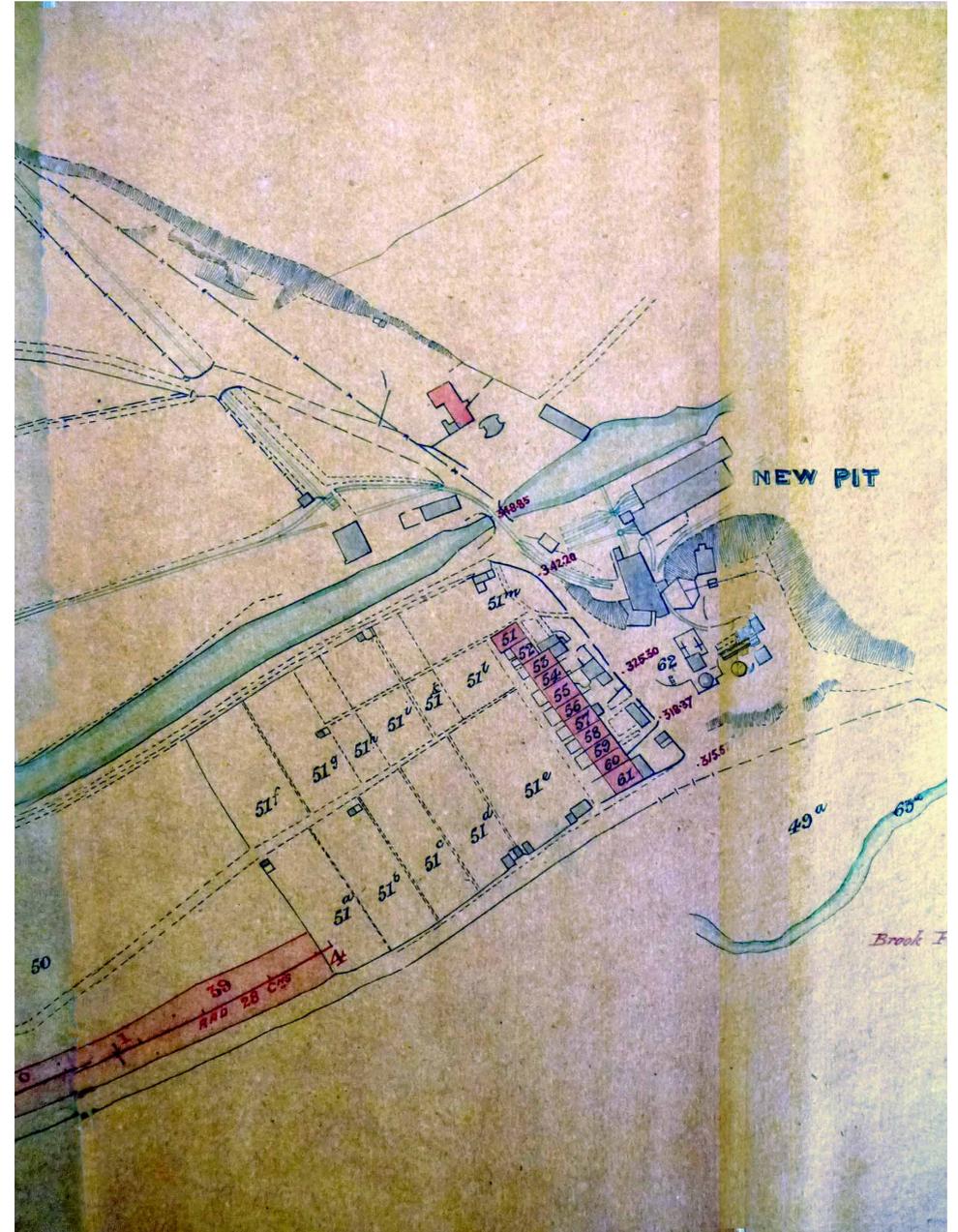
A private house from 1750 at the corner of Mill Lane it may have been part of the Monkton Combe Brewery before occupation by William Harrold. He began to run both his business there as a wheelwright as well as starting the *Wheelwright's Arms*. The pub still trades today and remains a short walk up from where Mill Lane bridge used to cross the canal.

Midford

Two miles from the canal junction at Dundas, Midford was a hub for S.C.C. activity as all boats were required to pass through the Boat Weigh-House here. This device physically recorded the boat weight on entry to and exit from the canal allowing a cargo weight to be calculated and the appropriate toll charged for canal passage. Nearby, the wharves for the Radstock tramway lay over the Cam Brook aqueduct and these were busy with the transfer of coal that had been carried down from the collieries around Radstock.

For these reasons boat crews may well have used Midford as an overnight stop and this is borne out by the large tip of ash and other rubbish by the canal at Upper Midford discussed in WH48. It may also explain how this very small village came to have three public houses.

The *Hope and Anchor* dates in part back to the 1600s but possibly became a public house when the turnpike road to Bath was built in the 1770s. The building was enlarged when the S.C.C. was dug



B.N.S.R. MAP OF CAMERTON OLD PIT

CAMERTON NEW PIT

The photographs of Camerton New Pit published in the previous edition of *Weigh-House* have led to a number of requests for more information about this area.

Roger Halse has discovered a map [opposite] of Camerton New Pit at the Somerset Heritage Centre, relating to the proposed construction of the Bristol and North Somerset Railway which he thinks could date from between 1863 and 1873. It shows the pit before the arrival of the railway, with the canal running right through the middle of the site and crossed by a bridge. To the North-West of the bridge is the tramway for taking coal to the land sales depôt further up the hill and to the South is a row of miners' cottages with their gardens. With the coming of the railway, some of the cottages were demolished and a ramped railway track built along the centre line of the gardens, right through the middle of the row of cottages and straight to the screens next to the pithead.



THE McLEAN TIPPER

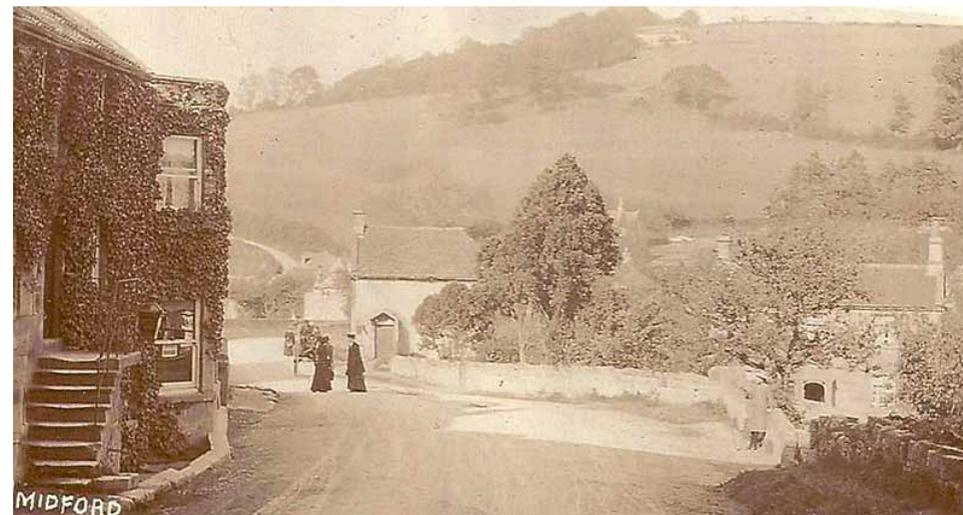
By 1910, the canal was still in place but had become impassable, as the North side of the spoil tip had begun to spill into it. Later the tip became even larger and assumed the present conical shape as a 'McLean electric tipper' was installed. This curious device was hauled up a railway track by a rope from an electric winch situated at the base of the tip. It had arms each side from which tubs of spoil were suspended, looking rather like a traditional milkmaid's yoke and buckets. Upon reaching the top of the track, it toppled the tubs forward and cascaded the spoil down the far (North-East) side of the pile; the track being extended from time to time as the pile grew.

As part of a nationalisation improvement programme, a canteen was built almost on the line of the (by then) infilled canal to the West of the bridge — nine months later the pit was closed.



THE CANTEEN BUILDING - CAMERTON NEW PIT— Jan 2008

The canteen became a dwelling house but has recently been demolished and a large multi-storeyed house is being built on the site. There is still room to re-instate the canal in this area, although it would have to run a little further North than its original line.



THE HOPE & ANCHOR, MIDFORD
on the left, with the canal bridge just beyond

just beside it in around 1800 and the present name adopted to gain trade from the canal. The *Weigh-House*, also built close by, came a little later in 1831. Finally the Somerset and Dorset railway arrived in the 1870s and, with Midford station built above the pub, it benefitted for a period of time from custom arriving by road, rail and water. The *Hope and Anchor* is still in operation today but now sadly only to those coming by road.

Nearby was another favourite haunt, the *Boatman's Arms* at Upper Midford, (now the *Hyver Boarding Kennels*) which was close to Midford wharf and the junction with the Radstock tramway.

Both these pubs must have been popular with the boatmen with their proximity to the canal. Another pub in Midford village, the *Fox Inn* with adjacent brewery offered luncheons, teas and a Skittle Saloon so perhaps was a classier premises. The *Fox* closed in the 1950s but the *Boatman's Arms* ceased at the same time as the canal when sold at auction in 1899 to become "Two Dwelling Houses". →



THE BOATMAN'S ARMS, UPPER MIDFORD
(Centre, nearest to the canal)

Combe Hay

At Combe Hay the workload for boat crews increased with the long transit of the 22 lock flight. Conveniently placed for refreshment on the lane below Lock 8 was the *Anchor Inn* which seems to have operated throughout much of the life of the S.C.C. It is recorded initially as the *Anchor Beerhouse* but by 1871 has become the *Anchor Inn* to be owned by the Purchase family from 1881 onwards. The pub brewery drew its water supply from the derelict adit which flooded backwards from Engine Wood when the canal pumping engine was moved from there to Dunkerton in the 1850s. The *Anchor Inn* closed on the 2nd April 1925 but remained occupied until the 1950s. The buildings were finally demolished during the 1960s.



THE ANCHOR INN
below the lock flight at Combe Hay

The history of *The Wheatsheaf* in Combe Hay village recorded on their website shows it being built as a farmhouse in 1576 and opening its doors as a public house in the 18th century. Census returns show it appearing as a Beerhouse run by John Barge alongside his existing business as the local baker in 1861. Barge seems to have retired in the 1870s as the beerhouse is taken over by George Burridge whose family are previously recorded in the village as shopkeepers. By 1881 *The Wheatsheaf's* name appears in the record and, with the pub a short walk from the top of the lock flight, canal trade could be expected.

To be continued in WH 80



Photograph: Paul De'Ath

STOP-PLANK NARROWS AND CANAL CUT TO INCLINED PLANE BASIN — c.1900

Today the lock is infilled, grassed over and used as a paddock for horses. The bottom entrance to the lock has been blocked-up with concrete breeze blocks. Only a few brief glimpses of some of the coping stones from the lock sides can be seen, where a public footpath crosses over the lock tail.

To return to the frame: the name on the back is "E. G. Smart". This is probably meant to read "F. G. Smart". Francis Gray Smart (1844-1913) was a keen amateur photographer, and at one time was President of the *Tunbridge Wells Amateur Photographic Association*.* At the time of the photograph, Francis Smart was living with his wife Marion and his father, Dr John Smart, at Combe Hay Manor. Using a magnifying glass, you can just see Combe Hay Manor in the distance, by the large tree next to the left of the lock.

There is a memorial tablet on the wall of Combe Hay village church which reads:

John Cass Smart MD, of Combe Hay Manor.
and his wife:
Mabel Ellerby.
And their children:
Francis Gray Smart MB, of Tunbridge Wells.
George Edward, of Combe Hay Manor.
Margaret, of Combe Hay Manor.

It is possible that Frances Smart took this wonderful photograph while honing his photographic skills at Combe Hay. I would like to find more Frances Smart images of the canal, but that could be wishful thinking for now. Another research project for me to do!

I have since met up with David Drew and personally thanked him for the kind donation of the photograph. I hope you enjoy the photograph as much as I do.

ROGER HALSE

* Source: *The Summer Of '89 – Being the photographic Record of a Scottish Highland Summer Tour in the year 1889 by an English Gentleman from Tunbridge Wells* by Bob Charnley (Skye & Lochalsh District Council's Museum Service 1991)

Near the end of the top lock gate balance beam is carved the number “19”. This is the only photograph which shows this feature. The other balance beams may also have had the lock numbers carved on them, but this is the only view I have of a lock looking up the flight. All the other views I have are looking down the flight and the balance beams do not show a number. After discussions with Mike Chapman we have agreed that the photograph is probably c.1880, possibly a few years earlier.

I do have another view of Lock 19 taken through the bridge, but this view was taken much later. It shows the canal low in water, either for maintenance or, following the closure of the canal, when it was drained prior to its acquisition by the G.W.R. Both the top gate and bottom gates are open allowing for a flow of water through the locks.



LOCK 19 VIEWED THROUGH SOUTHSTOKE BRIDGE



ENTRANCE TO LOCK 19 — December 2019

Photograph: Roger Halse

LOCK 19 COMBE HAY c.1880

Old photographs of the Somersetshire Coal Canal in working order are not that common, and sepia prints even rarer; but, thanks to a kind donation, a previously unknown view of Lock number 19, of the Combe Hay flight has come to light. Roger Halse explains more.

As you may have read elsewhere in the newsletters, I am always on the lookout for old photographs of the S.C.C., especially those showing the canal during its working life. These photographs would mostly be from about 1870 to 1900: the earliest views I have are from 1872. These early photographs include the wonderful views of Timsbury Basin, complete with tramway wagons and boats, and the Combe Hay Tunnel, complete with fully laden horse-drawn boat. Two long-distance views of the Combe Hay flight of locks are also part of this group. Unfortunately, despite there being 22 locks in the flight, there are only four known views of the locks in water, one of lock number 1, one of lock numbers 5 and 6, two sepia views of lock number 16, and the bridge and pound below. It is my pleasure to say that I now have a fabulous view of lock number 19!

Last year Mr. David Drew e-mailed me *via* the Society's website contact email address: archive@coalcanal.org.uk. David had just acquired a photograph which had inscribed on the back "On the Camerton canal at Combe Hay", and then, beneath this, is the name "E. G. Smart" or something along those lines. David continued, "I presume that it depicts your canal and I will attempt to send you a photograph if you are interested". The photograph had been bought from a Charity Shop in Chiswick! I was definitely interested: the "canal at Combe Hay" title intrigued me, as did the "E. G. Smart" name, but more about that later.

My "Yes, Please" resulted in a scan of the photograph and the back of the picture frame. Yes, I could identify the scene; it was lock number 19. David kindly offered the society the photograph, and agreed to send me the photograph and frame in the post. My main concern was that they might be lost in transit, so David agreed to split the photograph from the frame and send it by the more secure *Royal Mail Signed For* method of postage. [Other methods of postage are available from other suppliers]. When it arrived I was delighted to find the original photograph was even better 'in the flesh'.

The photograph, a 6" x 8" size card-backed sepia print, was taken from the former South Stoke Bridge, looking up the flight towards Lock number 19. The top single gate is closed, but the two bottom gates are open, with the gate-paddles raised, waiting for the next boat to enter the lock. The well-used towpath can be seen on the right heading up round the bend towards the next lock. To the left of the pound below can be seen the original canal cut leading to the basin at the bottom of the inclined plane. The stop-plank narrows, used when the canal was drained for maintenance, or the prevent loss of water in case of a breach, are just visible.

When the inclined plane was closed after the opening of the lock flight, the cut became a feeder supplying water to the well at the bottom of the 1805 Bolton & Watt Pumping Engine. The cut itself was fed by a culvert from the nearby Cam Brook. After the pumping engine was moved to Dunkerton the cut was still used to supply the lower three locks of the flight and the remaining three miles of canal before it reached the Kennet & Avon Canal at Dundas. The Midford Weigh-House would use a lock full of water every time it weighed a boat, and the stop-lock at Dundas a few gallons more, so any extra water that the S.C.C. had would always be used. The pound and cut have an adequate level of water, in what appears to be a summer view of the canal.

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LOCK 19 PHOTOGRAPHED FROM SOUTHSTOKE BRIDGE — c1880

Picture from: David Drew