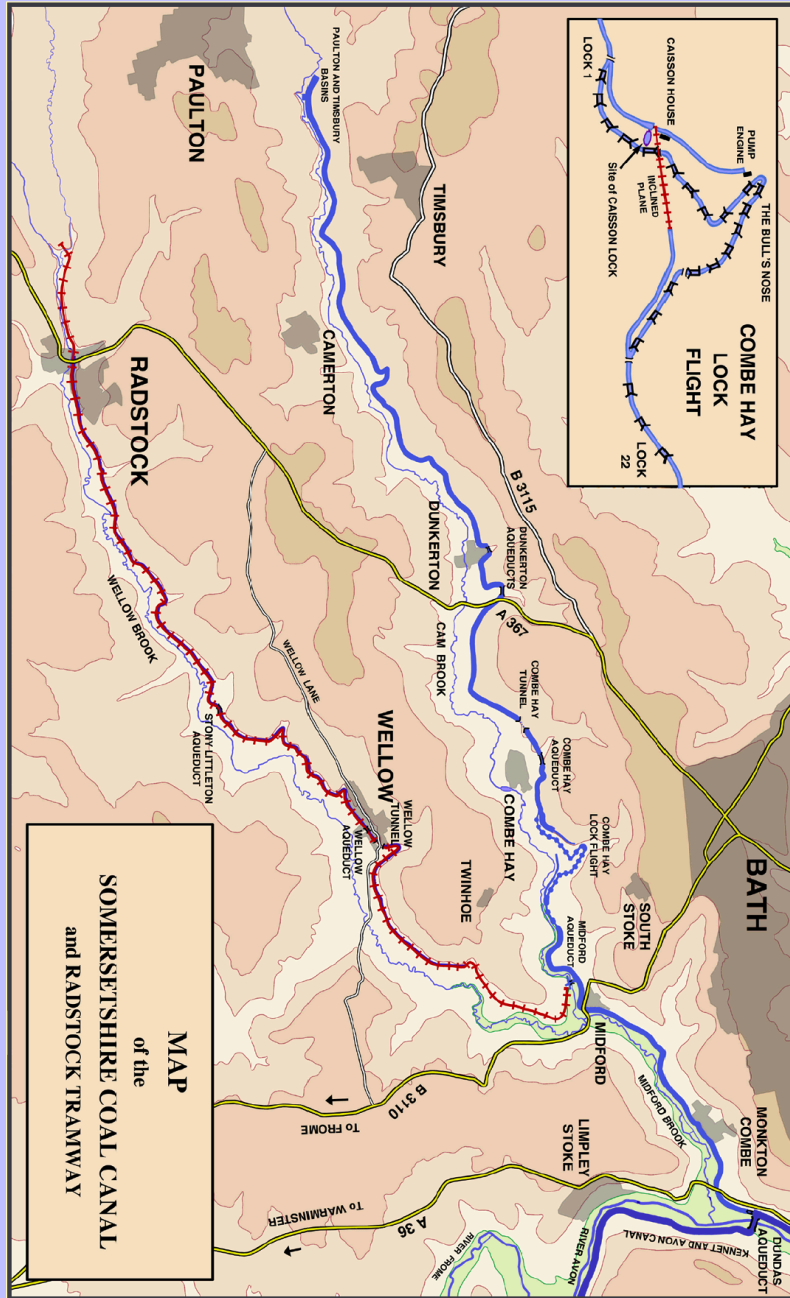


WEIGH-HOUSE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL SOCIETY



MAP
of the
SOMERSETSHIRE COAL CANAL
and RADSTOCK TRAMWAY

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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The Editor welcomes letters, articles, photographs *etc* for inclusion in
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THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE DO NOT
NECESSARILY REPRESENT OR CONVEY THOSE OF THE SOCIETY

Most of the books listed above were published quite a few years ago and are out-of-print. Copies may be obtainable to purchase *via* the internet, but be aware some can be expensive to buy online. Some specialist railway book shops or local museums may have copies for sale. Some time in the future your local library will re-open, thus allowing you to borrow a copy to read from them. The more recently published books are available from all good bookshops.

If you are interested in acquiring even more detailed information about the canals and railways of the Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire areas, there are many more books, far too many to list here. There are at least four photographic books about the Kennet & Avon Canal, three about the Wilts & Berks Canal and six about the Thames & Severn Canal. All of these canals traded in coal from the North Somerset coalfield. Railways are more than adequately served as there are at least forty plus on the Somerset & Dorset Railway alone. I have at least twenty of them!

You may be asking yourself, “Why has he not listed this one or that one?” Why not Ivo Peters’ excellent four volume set of books photographing the S.&D. between 1950 and 1966, or Neil Macmillan & Mike Chapman’s specialist book on the Fuller’s Earth Works, or Ian S.Bishop’s photographic books of Timsbury, Clandown and Radstock!? I could quite easily have listed another dozen, or maybe two dozen, but lack of space means that I have had to put some limits on my list. Those of you who have seen my bookcases will know how many books I have!

I make no apologies for including my own books as, apart from Ken Clew’s and Niall Allsop’s books, these are the only ones specifically about the S.C.C..

So even if the above is not a definitive list, it does include the titles which I would recommend to those of you who wish to study more about the Canals, Railways and Collieries of North Somerset.

Good Reading.

ROGER HALSE

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY — 2021

Following Government advice on measures to combat Covid-19 (the Corona Virus) all our walks and talks have had to be cancelled until further notice. We shall do our best to go ahead with work parties as soon as the restrictions ease, but we are unable to publish any firm dates at the time of going to press.

Please check for updates on the website from time to time:

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

Normally work parties would be held at Paulton on the first Sunday of each month and at Combe Hay on the second Saturday. For further details and last-minute updates, contact:

Mark Sherrey ☎ 07973 918467 *E-mail:* workparty@coalcanal.org.uk

WEIGH - HOUSE Nº 81

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EDITOR’S NOTES

With no work parties, meetings or walks this Winter, it would be easy to assume that the Society had gone into hibernation, but this is far from the truth. The Committee has been working at normal strength, possibly even a little harder than usual, with only minor inconvenience caused by being unable to meet face-to-face. The results of this work, in the form of the appointment of a fund raiser and some substantial grants raised by our own efforts are described in articles on Pages 4 and 12.

Individual members have also been busy. One of the activities which ‘lockdown’ has encouraged in many households across the country has been the turning out of attics and cupboards and the re-visiting of collections and photograph albums. This means more old photographs of the canal are turning up in unexpected places, a selection of them is reproduced on Pages 8, 10 & 11.

Building work at Radstock has briefly uncovered some evidence of the canal beneath the site of the S.& D.J.R. station, luckily Steve Page was able to photograph it before it disappeared for, probably, another 100 years.

The article *Voyaging to Somerset’s Coalfield* in *WH80*, chronicling a journey along the northern branch of the S.C.C. during its twilight years, gave rise to a number of queries and described some anomalies that begged for further explanation. The result has been an article which is nearly as long as the original and which still hasn’t managed to answer all the questions raised. Can anyone come up with any knowledgeable explanations of the truth behind some of the descriptions?

LIZ TUDDENHAM

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

These notes are once again being prepared in lockdown, and once again come from Greater Manchester rather than Somerset, as I got caught out with the early January announcement and have spent the last two months “working from home” in the house I grew up in; a house that is only a few hundred yards from Marple Locks on the Peak Forest Canal. This is in large part the reason for an enduring love of canals that, in turn, is the reason why I am Chairman now. I am reminded that when I first set eyes on Marple Locks as a young child, they were ruinous and derelict, as much of the Somersetshire Coal Canal is today.

Thanks to a development reported on elsewhere, the S.C.C. will soon become slightly less derelict, with a new bridge at the terminal basins. This is joyous news indeed and will serve to inspire more restoration as well as enhance the basins themselves. Also reported in these pages is the appointment of a professional fundraiser, Laura Wigg-Bailey, who will help us to further our restoration ambitions. To achieve these steps whilst the world is in an enforced state of suspension is no mean achievement, and as we emerge blinking from our homes into the Summer there is the prospect of real progress on the ground and in the coffers towards restoration of the Canal.

When COVID first hit I suggested that our canals would be more in demand than ever, as people yearned for space and recreation outdoors — so it has proved, with canal towpaths more popular than ever and the canal hire fleets already fully booked for this year and taking bookings for 2022. Britain needs more canals, and it needs them more than ever. We are well placed for the S.C.C. to make its own contribution.

PATRICK MOSS

FUNDRAISER

There is a long-standing conundrum in canal restoration, which has grown bigger since the first canal reopening in 1964 — if a nationalised transport industry or canal company can't or won't find the resources to maintain or reopen a canal, then how are bunch of enthusiastic volunteers who can offer little more than the sweat of their own brow hope to succeed. In the early days when most of the resource needed was labour, volunteers could move mountains, but now that conundrum has a new variant: how can a canal society with ten thousand in the bank deliver a ten million pound scheme.

Whilst this is a simplification, and in the end someone else will actually spend the ten million pounds, a society such as ours needs financial resources to make things happen, and this is where the appointment of Laura Wigg-Bailey by the S.C.C.S. Committee comes in. Laura is a professional fundraiser, active in the field of canal restoration, and with a proven track record. After working for Stockport Museums' service, Laura set out on her own raising the funds for, and establishing, a museum in her home town of Uttoxeter. Laura is presently working on the restoration of Sinai House, a multi-million pound restoration project to restore a derelict half-timbered building old enough to make the Coal Canal look modern. Laura has also, as we go to press, just gained an Architectural Heritage Grant for the Burslem Port Trust who are seeking to restore the Burslem Branch Canal.

Laura has been appointed because we feel, as a committee that we have got as far as we can go with our present resources. The volunteer work parties can achieve much, and, with funding such as that for Terminus Bridge, we can restore certain structures; but restoration on a large scale will require millions, and even the development work in terms of design, feasibility, ecology surveys and similar will cost many tens of thousands of pounds. Laura's job is to raise the money for us to do that.

Could a volunteer do this? That's a fair question, but the answer is “No”. Most of us have to earn a living and, as with plumbers or carpenters, the best are doing it for a living. If you look at the

Coal

The History of the Somerset Coalfield by C. G. Down and A. J. Warrington
(David & Charles, 1971, Reprinted by the Radstock Museum, 2005)

Highly recommended: If you want to know about a particular colliery in the North Somerset Coalfield including Paulton, Timsbury and Radstock, then this is the book for you.

Coal From Camerton by Neil Macmillen & Mike Chapman
(Lightmoor Press, 2014)

A detailed history of Camerton Collieries from 1790-1950. A very good book.



ROGER'S BOOKS

This is what happens when you collect books on Canals, Railways and Local History. And there are two more book cases as well!

The TitfieldThunderbolt

On the Trail of TheTitfield Thunderbolt by Simon Castens
(Thunderbolt Books, 2018)

An updated and expanded Second Edition of (almost) everything you wish to know about the filming of the popular Ealing Studios film. It was filmed on parts of the former Camerton Branch railway line at Dunkerton (Colliery sidings), Combe Hay, Midford and Monkton Combe, the station at Monkton Combe being renamed “Titfield” for the film.

Railways (G.W.R.)

The Camerton Branch by Colin G. Maggs & Gerry Beale
(Wild Swan Publications, 1985)

The widely-respected history of the railway built over the former canal. Top of my recommended list for those wishing to study the history of the G.W.R. branch line.

The Bristol-Radstock-Frome Line by Colin G. Maggs
(Oakwood Press, 2013)

History of the former Bristol & North Somerset Railway between Bristol and Radstock. Includes a chapter on the Hallatrow to Camerton Branch.

Through Countryside & Coalfield by Mike Vincent
(Oxford Publishing Company (OPC), 1990)

A history of the G.W.R.'s Bristol & North Somerset Railway, its associated railways and collieries. Includes a chapter on Hallatrow and the Camerton branch.

Frome to Bristol – including the Camerton Branch and the “Titfield Thunderbolt”

by Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith
(Middleton Press, 1986)

Photographs of the railway between Bristol, Radstock and Frome. Includes the stations and halts of the Hallatrow/Camerton to Limpley Stoke branch line.

Railways(S.&D.J.R.)

The Somerset & Dorset At Midford by Mike Arlett
(Millstream Books, 1986)

A detailed history of the Somerset & Dorset Railway at Midford.

Radstock Coal & Steam – Volume 1: History by Chris Handley
(Millstream Books, 1991)

The Somerset & Dorset at Radstock and Writhlington. A detailed history of the S.&D.J.R. If you want to know about the S.&D.J.R., then this and its companion second volume are for you.

Radstock Coal & Steam - Volume 2: Buildings, Locomotives and Workings by Chris Handley
(Millstream Books, 1992)

The Somerset & Dorset at Radstock and Writhlington. The second volume of the history of the S.&D.J.R. at Radstock/Writhlington. This one concentrates on the buildings, locos and workings of the railway.

Bath to Evercreech Junction by Vic Mitchell & Keith Smith
(Middleton Press, 1986)

Photographs of the S.&D.J.R. railway between Bath Green Park and Evercreech Junction. Includes the stations and halts at Midford, Wellow, Shoscombe & Single Hill, Writhlington and Radstock.

restoration schemes that have made real progress, somewhere behind the scenes is a professional fundraiser, raising funds to pay other professionals who in turn develop the scheme and make the case for restoration and for more funds.

Laura describes this as the step-ladder, this is how a society with £10,000 in the bank can deliver a multi-million pound scheme, by spending, say, £5,000 to raise £25,000, which is used on development funding and for further funding bids for larger sums. £25k begets £75K, which in turn begets £250k and so on. This is how all the big schemes, from the Cotswolds to the Trans-Pennine Huddersfield and Rochdale Canals have achieved what they have.

Every canal society that is serious about restoration needs to take a step such as this — and we are serious. Laura will be visiting the Canal as soon as circumstances permit to prepare the first bids. I'm sure we will all welcome her arrival and wish for the greatest success.

PATRICK MOSS

DONATIONS

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

Paulton Parish Council

Mr. J. Griffith

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Mr. R. Bullock

Mr. P. Carter

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Mr. A. Screen

Mr. I. Walker

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr. B. Bennett,

Mr. D. Blackmore,

Mr. N. Bradish,

Mr. R. Bullock,

Ms. M. Caudle,

Mr. D. Chapman,

Mr. C. Chudleigh,

Mr. D. Cox,

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Mr. H. Messom,

Mr. R. O'Neil,

Mr. N. Parfitt and family

Mr. T. Randall,

Mr. A. Read and family,

Mr. P. Urch,

Mr. S. Wareham,

Mr. R. Wyatt,

Mr. A. Tidey,

Bristol

Bath

Radstock

Midsomer Norton

Bath

Colerne

Redhill

Bath

Welton

Trowbridge

Bath

Paulton

Odd Down

Melksham

GERALD WILLIAM QUARTLEY

15th October 1932 — 29th November 2020.

My first memories of Gerry are from 1966 when I was the designated measuring stick carrier as he and my father excavated sections of the Somerset Coal Canal tramways that resulted in their article in *Industrial Archaeology*: "Some technical aspects of the Somerset Coal Canal tramways".

His first job was as a mines inspector at Norton Hill Colliery where he knew my grandfather. After Norton Hill he was working at C.I.C. Engineering in Shepton Mallet, where my father also worked, and from this the tramways dig team was formed leading to many industrial sites being visited over the next 50 years.



GERALD QUARTLEY — 1966
Excavating tramway remains behind
Radstock Signal Box on the S&D Railway

Gerry had a range of local jobs, but nothing that held him for long until he got the job at Frome Station. Shortly after this he became a signalman based at Frome North Signal Box. Here he was in his element and I spent many days 'assisting'.

He was often asked to comment from the floor at Frome Town Council's public meetings as he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of Frome. His local knowledge and collection was of great benefit to a number of local authors and of course his local books collection is stuffed full of notes, with personalities identified and numerous corrections. He was always generous with his loans of books and information to friends who expressed an interest in the subject and many of his photographs were reproduced in local books.

Having declined treatment for leukaemia he spent his last months in a care home. We spoke the day before he died and I can see now that he knew those would be his last words.

PAUL GILSON

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

At this time of uncertainty amid the Covid-19 restrictions, many of us, especially those on 'Lockdown' are reading more. With this in mind, here is a selection of history books, along with a brief synopsis, about the Somersetshire Coal Canal. Also included are some books about the canals most used for the onward journeys of coal from the Somerset Coalfield, a selection of books about the two railways built over the former canal, and a couple about the coal mines that supplied the canal with the coal that it carried far and wide. In no particular order:

Canals

The Somersetshire Coal Canal & Railways by Kenneth R. Clew
(David & Charles, 1970; Brans Head Reprint, 1986).

Widely regarded as the definitive history of the Somersetshire Coal Canal. This book is the one I always recommend to those wishing to study the history of the S.C.C.

The Somersetshire Coal Canal – A Pictorial Journey by Roger Halse & Simon Castens
(Millstream Books, 2000)

Photographs of the canal from Dundas to Paulton, Timsbury & Wellow.

The Somersetshire Coal Canal – A Second Pictorial Journey by Roger Halse
(Millstream Books, 2011)

A second selection of photographs of the canal from Dundas to Paulton, Timsbury & Radstock.

The Somersetshire Coal Canal Rediscovered – A Walker's Guide by Niall Allsop
(Millstream Books, 1988, Revised Edition, 1993)

A series of eight walks along the former canal. Includes 14 pages of old photographs.

Queen of Waters: A Journey In Time Along The Kennet & Avon Canal by Kirsten Elliot
(Akeman Press, 2010)

A photographic journey along the K&A between Reading and Bath and then via the Avon Navigation to Bristol. Includes chapters on both the Somersetshire Coal and Wilts & Berks Canals.

The Wilts & Berks Canal by L. J. Dalby
(Oakwood Press, 1971; Second Edition, 1986; Third Edition 2000)

A detailed history of the Wilts & Berks Canal, to which the majority of the coal from the S.C.C. was transported.

The Kennet & Avon Canal by K. R. Clew
(David & Charles, 1968)

A detailed history of the Kennet & Avon Canal, to which the S.C.C. was connected at Dundas.

And don't forget:

The Coal Canal Way- A Walker's Guide, published by the S.C.C.S. in 2019
Available from the Society's website.

→

The lowering of the chimney at Combe Hay tunnel is puzzling, because the tunnel profile appears to be the same as most of the bridges along the canal (it was probably made as a cut-and-cover, using the same centering timber frame as the bridges). Why wasn't the chimney lowered at every bridge — or was the Combe Hay Tunnel roof set lower than the others because of some peculiarity of the roads above it?

There are two aqueducts in Dunkerton, they would have crossed the big one first (and it really is big) and then the 'tiny' one.

I'm not sure about the description 'walking' applied to those pumping engines. That term was usually reserved for boat engines but might conceivably have been applied to stationary rotative engines - but these were neither. The beam was made of cast iron, not wood, but the pump rod (sometimes called the 'pitman') was a composite of wood and wrought iron plates and straps. The beams were not adjustable in any way as they were made of two enormous parallel iron castings; there may have been bolted tensioning straps for the bearings, which gave the impression they were intended to be adjustable.



THE BEAM OF THE BOULTON & WATT PUMPING ENGINE AT CROFTON — July 2004
 This is a contemporary of the Combe Hay engine which was later moved to Dunkerton.
 The beam is constructed from two iron castings with no wood involved.

The journey to Radstock Station across the fields must have been an interesting one, they would be lucky to complete it in under two hours. Overall, this is a very entertaining article which gives a good impression of what the Canal must have been like in its dying days, but in view of the above notes, it would be best not to rely on it too heavily for accurate technical detail.

Any further observations would be welcomed.

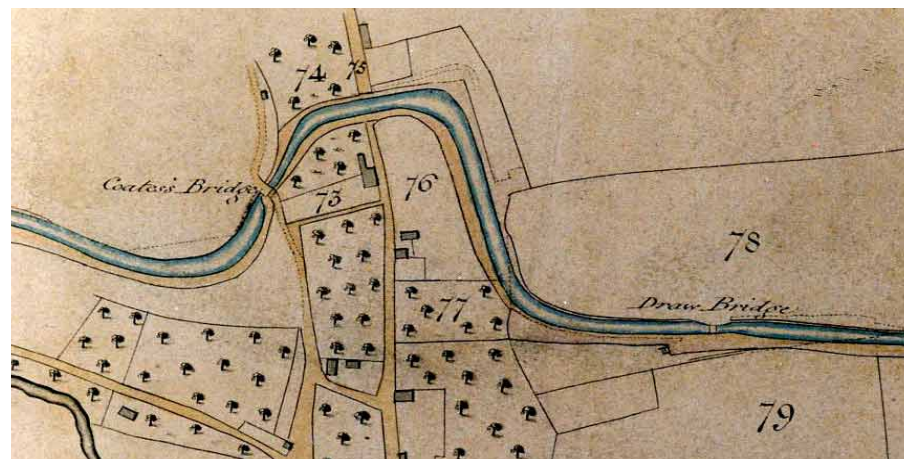
LIZ TUDDENHAM

MEMORIES OF COMBE HAY AND THE CRUSE MAP IN THE 1950s

John Weeks, a Bathonian now living near Glasgow has sent us some reminiscences about how he discovered the S.C.C. in the early 1950s.

My parents used to go for Saturday afternoon walks in the Midford, South Stoke and Combe Hay areas. These often took us by 'the canal', and past the Bull's Nose locks in particular. I never thought much about this until one day it dawned on me that a canal must come from somewhere and go somewhere. I began to study various maps and to search local history books in the library, gradually getting an overall idea of the canal's course and filling notebooks with information. I cycled around the various sites taking photos. I once met an elderly man in Southstoke who remembered going for a pleasure cruise on the canal (probably in the 1890s) when he was a young boy on Primrose Day - an interesting link with the past.

I read that there was a very old map, dating from the time of the canal's construction, in the Bath library. I knew one of the librarians, Ben Maslen, who was also organist of St Mary's Bathwick, in whose choir I sang as a boy. He arranged for me to view it at a time that the library was closed to the public (when it was in the Victoria Art Gallery building). I had expected to see a map laid out on a table, but - to my amazement - it was hung on bookshelves and covered most of one wall! I think it had been stored, rolled up, in a wooden box. I duly studied it and thanked Ben very much for his kindness. I have often wondered where this map is now. I think it may be in the Reference Library, which moved to Queen Square — but maybe that no longer exists and the map is in the Podium. *[It is still in the B.R.L.S.I. at Queen Square — Ed.]*



THE AREA AROUND DUNKERTON LITTLE AQUEDUCT
 From the Cruse Map referred to by John Weeks

I little guessed, back in the 50's, that 'my' canal would one day become 'public property' (as it were) and that your excellent and enthusiastic Society would be formed, and that restoration work would be taking place on such a huge scale. All I can say is "Carry on the good work!".

JOHN WEEKS

A VIEW THROUGH DUNKERTON LITTLE AQUEDUCT



*Photograph: John Weeks
(Roger Halse collection)*

**A VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWARDS THROUGH THE ARCH OF
DUNKERTON LITTLE AQUEDUCT
Limley Stoke to Camerton railway viaduct in the background**



SOUTHSTOKE BRIDGE SHORTLY BEFORE DEMOLITION

The above photograph clearly shows that Southstoke Bridge did have a towpath on the 'lower' side and the horse could have passed through the bridge hole without the need for unhitching. If it intended to take the left fork after the bridge it could go straight on and if it intended to take the right fork and the 'upper' towpath (from which the photograph was taken), it would have crossed over the bridge. The road bridge over Lock 16 may have had no towpath because it is over the tail of the lock, so it might have been necessary to unhitch the horse here; this bridge could have been confused with Southstoke Bridge.

The inn described as being by a basin on the left fork after Southstoke Bridge was called the 'Anchor Beerhouse' and later the 'Anchor Inn'; there is no record of a 'Wellow Inn' on this branch of the canal. [See *Tim Lunt's articles on Public and Beer Houses in W.H. 79 & 80.*] There was no big basin in front of it, nor in front of any of the other pubs along the canal as far as we know. It is probable that the writer did not actually take the left fork at Southstoke Bridge and did not see the public house which he called the 'Wellow Inn', which might explain his erroneous description of it.

There doesn't appear to be anything special about the construction of the top lock, all the remaining locks in the flight appear to have been made with wooden framings and faced with iron plates. This was a most unusual form of construction which was not repeated on any other canal. Lock gates had a limited life, so it is quite possible that these were replacement gates installed later in the life of the canal and, like so many things on the S.C.C., were an experiment with new materials and methods. In other publications it has been suggested that the top lock gates were stronger than the rest because of the extra weight of water they had to hold back; this, of course is nonsense, because the pressure on the gates depends only on its depth, not on its volume. →

VOYAGING TO SOMERSET'S COALFIELD

Some further notes

When the article VOYAGING TO SOMERSET'S COALFIELD — A Canal Trip in 1898 was published in Weigh-House 80, we were unsure who had initially posted it on Facebook, now Alison Cannon has contacted the Editor to say she was the originator of that posting and to ask if we could give her any more information about the places and events mentioned in the article. In particular, it was mentioned that there were several errors in the text and it would be interesting to have them pointed out.

To be read in conjunction with the previous article:

The stop plank points were used when sections of the canal were drained for maintenance, they could not be installed quickly enough to prevent water loss from a 'blow-out'. There were automatic stop gates for that purpose, fitted to projections at vulnerable sections, such as the Limpley Stoke reach. They were not as conspicuous as the stop planks and their purpose might have been misunderstood by the author, as they look very much like lock gates, but no with accompanying lock.

The entrance to the S.C.C. was under a stone bridge at Dundas. A nearby decorative iron bridge spanned the K&A Canal towards Bath, there is a now modern replacement of similar appearance in the same position. There was also an iron bridge on the S.C.C. marked "Cast at Paulton 1810", but this was at Monkton Combe, not Dundas, and they would not have gone under that until after the kettle-filling incident.

I am at a loss to explain the iron railway running close to the water's edge. There was an iron plateway and marshalling yard at the coal wharf by Midford Aqueduct, but, as far as we know, it finished on the opposite side of the Cam Brook and never came near the main line of the S.C.C.. Perhaps someone can suggest an explanation for this?

The description of the horse being unhitched at a bridge with no towpath through it, is an interesting addition to our knowledge. We had previously assumed that every bridge on the canal had space for a towpath, so we now know that at least one did not. From its position in the narrative, it would appear that the author is referring to Southstoke Bridge, but this raises an interesting question:



THE OLD DECORATIVE BRIDGE OVER THE K&A CANAL — 2001

It has been altered since this picture was taken

EBAY FIND - CHRISTOPHER STEANE S.C.C. ESSAY

As Honorary Archivist for the Society, I am always on the lookout on ebay for postcards of the Somersetshire Coal Canal and, over the years, have managed to find several. What I did not expect to appear in my email inbox of 'eBay lots for sale', was something far more interesting than your normal postcard or reproduction photograph: "The Somerset Coal Canal — Christopher Steane 1981. Hand-written project".

The title intrigued me, what could this be? Not sure exactly what this was, but knowing that it was about the S.C.C. was enough for me, so I purchased the lot. It was not expensive at only £4.99, plus a few pounds for the postage & packing, so I did not expect much (I have paid far, far more for a single 3"x 6" size postcard). A few days later a large package arrived and what a pleasant surprise! A Collins photograph album entitled:



... the heading printed with one of the 1980 style Dymo label printing machines (the ones that gave you a strip of plastic with embossed lettering, used throughout factories and offices before home/office inkjet printers became the norm).

The Somerset Coal Canal: 1794-1970.

An essay,

illustrated with maps and photographs.

Christopher Steane

C.S.

1981

This was followed by an address in Bath. So Christopher was a local man living not that far away from the canal. There then followed seventeen pages of hand written text about the canal (I wish my long-hand was that neat), and, of most interest, thirty four 3" x 5" black and white photographs. Christopher had also included eight Ordnance Survey maps from the 1930s, hand-coloured to show the route of the canal. He had obviously studied the canal well.

Some of the photographs I had seen before: they appeared to be copies of the ones used by Ken Clew in his book, *The Somersetshire Coal Canal and Railways*. Copies of these photographs were lodged within the archives of the Bath Library, so perhaps Christopher had copied these? Ken Clew also lodged some photographs that he did not use in the book— and some of these appeared in the album as well.

However, there were ten that I had not seen before. These included views of Brassknocker Bridge/Tunnel, Tucking Mill, Midford Aqueduct, Combe Hay Locks, Combe Hay Tunnel, Dunkerton Bridge and Dunkerton Aqueduct. As these were more recent photographs, probably from the 1970s, my guess is that Christopher took them himself

I needed to know more about Christopher Steane. Who was he, did he still live in Bath, and did he know that I had his essay?

A quick email to the ebay seller did not help much. The album was in a lot of books purchased at auction in Herefordshire. Were they part of a house clearance perhaps? A search for Christopher Steane on the internet did not help. An enquiry by a friend confirmed that Christopher no longer lived at the address in Bath. Other enquires proved fruitless.

I would like to know more about Christopher and his essay. If any member can help please contact me, my contact details are on page two of this newsletter.

ROGER HALSE.



Photograph: Christopher Steane

**COMBE HAY TUNNEL
Eastern portal**



Photograph: Christopher Steane

**ROAD BRIDGE OVER FORMER RAILWAY LINE
NEAR CAMERTON COLLIERY SPOIL HEAP**

Recently another excavation, this time in Radstock, has uncovered a layer of clay where the canal bed once lay. The work was taking place at the site of the old Radstock Station on the S&D Railway where the ground level was higher than at Wellow, so the canal ran in a cutting which meant it was below the disturbances caused by building the railway and the station. The tramway was constructed at a higher level and that was excavated by Gilson and Quartley in 1966. [See Page 5]



Photograph: Steve Page

EXCAVATIONS AT WATERLOO ROAD, RADSTOCK — November 2020

It is usual on construction projects, such as the tramway, and later railway, to avoid doing any unnecessary work to remove structures that could simply be left in place and covered over — which appears to be the reason the canal bed has survived in this location.

Steve Page has been following the building work on that site and describes the layers of infill uncovered:

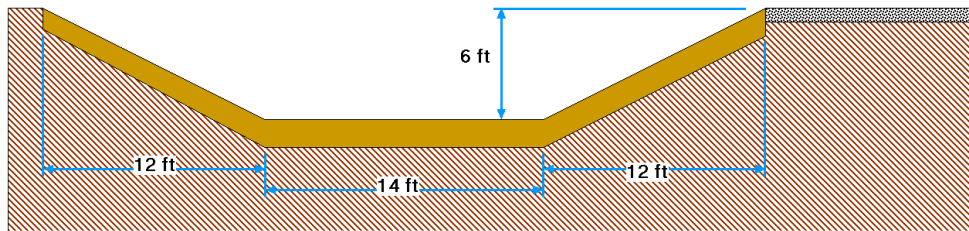
“At the bottom of the hole is a layer of light brown clay with a visible thickness of approx 2ft. and containing rough stones. (Is this typical of puddling clay?). Above it is an approx 2ft 6 in thick layer of what appears to be colliery waste, possibly from the nearby Ludlows colliery batch and used to fill in the canal to make up the formation on which to build the railway; there were no cuttings dug nearby to provide the material as would normally be the case. Above that is more clay split by a very thin dark layer and finally on top is aggregate in connection with the current building work. Loose material has fallen into the hole shown in the photograph.”

The traditional British pastime of staring down holes in the road and on building sites has paid dividends on these two occasions, long may it continue.

EVIDENCE OF THE SOUTHERN BRANCH COMES TO LIGHT

It might be expected that the building of the Somerset and Dorset Railway on the alignment of the southern branch of the Somersetshire Coal Canal would have removed all trace of the canal, but there are several sections where the railway took a more direct route and left the meandering loops of the canal untouched. There was, however little chance that anything would survive of the canal in the sections where the railway was built directly on top of it. This has now also proved to be untrue.

In November 2013, some building work in Railway Lane, Wellow necessitated excavation of a patch of ground where the southern branch of the Somersetshire Coal Canal had once run. Presumably nobody involved with the work thought there was anything noteworthy about the shallow layer of clay they had to dig through, but when it's profile was exposed at the one side of the excavation, it was found to match the profile of the puddling clay which was used to waterproof the canal cut..



TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION OF THE S.C.C. NORTHERN BRANCH
The southern branch was probably similar.



EXCAVATIONS AT RAILWAY LANE, WELLOW — November 2013
The profile of part of the canal bed is visible at the far end of the excavation



Photograph: Christopher Steane

INSIDE OF BRASSKNOCKER BRIDGE



Photograph: Christopher Steane

DUNKERTON BRIDGE (A367)

NAVYING NOTES

In 2019 we approached Paulton Parish Council for funding to help with repairing the leak in the canal embankment near Withy Mills. At the time they had no funds available, however, they asked for details of the work, so a grant proposal was drawn up and sent to them. Some time later we were contacted and asked to submit a follow-up proposal. The Council was looking for several local projects from the community which could be put to a public vote to decide which would be funded. Ours was one of the four projects selected and we had only a week to put together a plan that would capture the public's eye.

We have long been aware that we would eventually need to install a new bridge on the site of the old Terminus Bridge, just East of Paulton Basin, so it was decided that this would be a good project to benefit from the grant which was being put to public consultation. The vote opened in December 2020 via the Council's magazine and an online poll; the consultation ran for two months. After a Council meeting in February 2021 we were formally notified that we had won the public vote — not just winning but gaining an overwhelming three-quarters of the total votes.

Last year we were also awarded a grant from the Medlock Charitable Trust for the repair work needed to stop the leak, which includes the following:

- Clay for a new bund and repairs
- Ground paddle mechanism
- Terminus Bridge conservation Phase 1
- Plant hire and driver for canal repairs
- Stop Plank Point stabilisation

With sufficient funding in place, it is now possible to draw up a firm plan of action, some of which can be started even before the 'lockdown' is lifted. The water flow through the Paulton Basin bund, which has been keeping the puddle clay in the Terminus Bridge section wet, has now been stopped off. The sluice East of the bund is slightly leaky, so the water level will now drop, allowing the section around the bridge site to begin to dry out ready for work to begin.



THE TYPE OF BRIDGE WE ARE PLANNING TO INSTALL AT PAULTON

The sluice, which was a temporary plastic fitting, will be removed. The old damaged stonework it was set in will be stabilised with concrete to form a new flat vertical face on which a new drain valve can be installed. Once the means for proper control of the water supply has been established, work can commence on Terminus Bridge.

Scaffolding will be erected around the bridge wing walls to make repairs, with the help of the Waterways Recovery Group (BITM) when they are able to operate again. The wing walls include a stop plank groove which is essential for preventing water loss if there are any leaks in the section to the East of the bridge at a future date. During this work we will be able to assess and repair the stonework of the bridge narrows and the original foundations.

The bridge we are going to install is a flat-decked pedestrian bridge and is remarkably similar to the one at Brassknocker Basin, which is shown in the old photograph on p.16 of this issue. The exact design of the bridge and surrounding structures will be the subject of a separate schedule of works.

Before we can re-water this section, we may have to dig out and repair the embankment about 250 metres East of the bridge site, where numerous leaks have appeared. All attempts to stop the leaks have failed and a thorough investigation, which may lead to major repair work, seems to be the only answer.

To retain the water in the new section we shall have to either create a new bund on the West side of the stop plank point or build the stop point up to towpath level with the landowner's permission.

A full project plan and budget report will be submitted as soon as all the relevant information has been collected.

MARK SHERREY



A PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE LEAKING SECTION OF CANAL BANK AT WITHY MILLS

This is a composite photograph showing a 10 metre length of the southern bank of the canal. There are several major holes and dozens of smaller ones, which communicate with the Cam Brook through numerous passageways and cavities, rendering the whole structure porous.