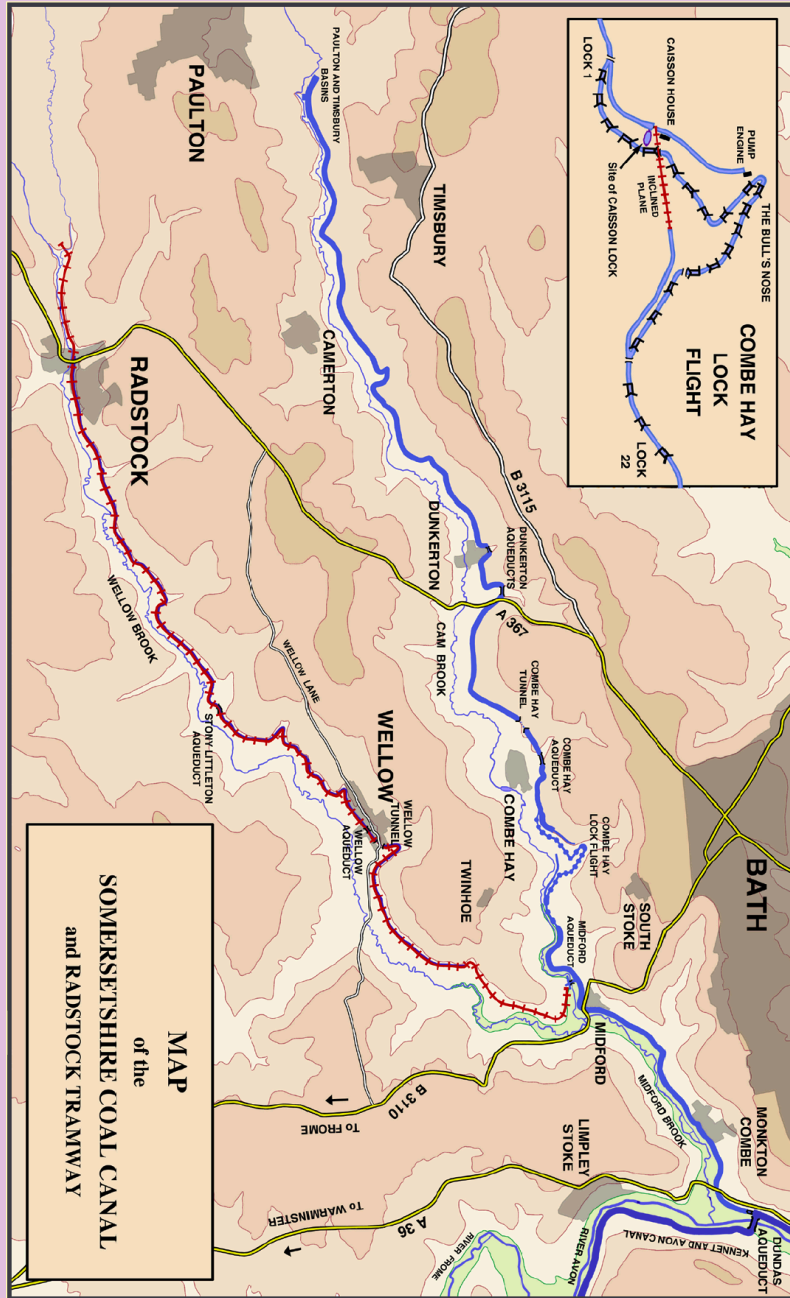


# WEIGH-HOUSE

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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*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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Inland Revenue reference code for tax purposes: CAD72QG

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## MEMBERSHIP

Membership Application Forms are available from  
the Membership Secretary, Steve Page,  
36, Lower Whitelands, Radstock, Bath BA3 3JW  
☎(01761) 433418 *E-mail:* [membership@coalcanal.org.uk](mailto:membership@coalcanal.org.uk)  
and on the Society Website: <http://www.coalcanal.org>

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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:

Liz Tuddenham 88, Mount Road, Southdown, Bath BA2 1LH

☎ 01225 335974 *E-mail (not HTML):* [liz@poppyrecords.co.uk](mailto:liz@poppyrecords.co.uk)

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

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March— 19:30

**SOCIAL EVENING — T,B,A.**

*Meet:* The Radstock Working Men's Club.

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

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March —10:00

**WALK — THE LOWER LOCK FLIGHT**

*Meet:* Bridge Farm, Combe Hay.

For further details please see website or contact: *Liz Tuddenham* ☎ 01225 335974

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April —10:00

**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**

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

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April —10:00

**WALK — THE UPPER LOCK FLIGHT**

*Meet:* Bridge Farm, Combe Hay.

For further details please see website or contact: *Liz Tuddenham* ☎ 01225 335974

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April— 19:30

**SOCIAL EVENING — T,B,A.**

*Meet:* The Radstock Working Men's Club.

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

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May —10:00

**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**

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

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June —10:00

**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**

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

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June— 19:30

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — 2022**

*Meet:* The Radstock Working Men's Club.

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

**WEIGH - HOUSE N<sup>o</sup> 82**

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**EDITOR'S NOTES**

The work parties have returned and *Navying Notes* contains a lot of catching up with what they have been achieving, walks are also resuming and a full programme has been planned to take us through to the Spring. The first Social Evening to return was actually part of the A.G.M. and the talk by Roger Halse was well received; this will be followed throughout the Winter months with further social events, so please have a look at the *Dates for your Diary* page and make a note of these on your calendar.

We have reached a landmark with donations: the list in this issue runs to three columns, a level we have never reached before. Membership is also holding steady; quite an achievement in view of the way the pandemic has hit other societies.

This issue sees the first part of an article by Roger Halse examining the area around Midford in some detail. The *Tale of Two Towpaths* shows that the way canals were built and operated is not always as straightforward as the initial impression you might get from a casual walk.

Mike Chapman, whose articles formed the backbone of *Weigh-House* for many years, has stood down from the Committee but remains as our Historical Advisor, he will no doubt continue to be the background reference authority for many of the articles written in future by other contributors.

Sadly I have to report the death of Terry Paget, who did so much to help the Society during its early years and remained a stalwart supporter right to the end. We shall all miss him.

**LIZ TUDDENHAM**

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*Non-members are always welcome to turn up at our walks, talks and work parties (unless the event is specifically stated to be for members only), so why not bring along a friend to the next event you attend? They are bound to learn something about the S.C.C. that they never knew before and, if they enjoy the experience, they might want to join the Society. Not only will your friends appreciate the new experience you have given them but, if they decide to join the Society, you will be doing your bit by helping to increase our membership.*

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

When we held our Annual General Meeting in 2019, no-one could have anticipated the total shutdown of normal life that was to follow in 2020. The Charities Commission suspended the requirement for charities to hold an AGM in 2020 and has left it up to their discretion in 2021. We decided that two years without an A.G.M. would be too long and have now formally held the Annual General Meetings for 2020 and 2021 with members present in person. The next A.G.M. will be held on 23rd June 2022, committee meetings continue to be held electronically for the time being.

Many voluntary societies have been struggling to survive the pandemic, particularly if they have higher fixed financial commitments, so the fact that we are still here at all, and able to plan for the future, is in itself a success.

Our aim is to restore the Somersetshire Coal Canal to navigation, but we aren't capable of doing it on our own. The total cost is likely to be between 60 and 100 million pounds; well beyond our ability to project manage on our own. Our rôle is to promote and raise awareness of the benefits of restoration through projects, including the Coal Canal Way and the work at Timsbury and Paulton Basins. They are seen as evidence that the restoration process has started but, more importantly, they act to promote further restoration. We are in active discussions with other bodies who are in a better position than us to take the restoration forwards, especially B&NES Council.

However, there is a problem at Committee level: the Society lacks an important Officer because the post of 'Secretary' has never been filled. The secretarial tasks have been split up among members of the committee, with John Ditcham, as 'Secretary to the Committee' carrying the burden of producing coherent notes of our sometimes chaotic meetings. We have now reached the point where the lack of an individual to fill the post of the more general 'Secretary' is beginning to make itself felt, so if anyone feels like volunteering we would be most grateful, so please contact me for a discussion.

Finally I have to announce the sad news that Mike Chapman has had to stand down from the Committee on health grounds. He has been a mainstay of the Society as our Historical Adviser from the beginning and served for several years as Chairman. We wish him All the Best for his 'retirement' but he has said that he will still be available in the background for us to turn to when necessary.

**PATRICK MOSS**

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## FUNDRAISING REPORT

*In WH81, Patrick Moss explained the reasons why the Society needed to employ a professional fundraiser and announced that the Committee had appointed Laura Wigg-Bailey to this rôle. We now welcome her to the Society and have invited her to tell us about her background, why that makes her enthusiastic about the job she is doing and what that job actually entails.*

My love of canals stems from a childhood spent kayaking on the newly restored Rochdale Canal, later I worked for a canal tourism business called "Calder Valley Cruising". Little did I imagine that my teenage weekend job would come in handy later on when planning and delivering canal restoration and regeneration projects.

I am a heritage management consultant specialising in historic buildings and industrial heritage, especially canals. I have worked in this sector since graduating with my M.A. at the Ironbridge Institute

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY — 2021

**We shall be following Government advice on measures to combat Covid-19, 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>

Saturday & Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> November —10:00

**WORK PARTY with W.R.G./B.I.T.M. Terminus Bridge**

For further details please see website or contact: *Liz Tuddenham* ☎ 01225 335974

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November —10:00

**WALK — MIDFORD to MONKTON COMBE**

*Meet:* Twinhoe Lane, Midford.

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

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November— 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 5<sup>th</sup> December —10:00

**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**

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

## — 2022 —

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January —10:00

**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**

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

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February —10:00

**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**

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

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February —10:00

**WALK — MIDFORD to LOCK 22**

*Meet:* Twinhoe Lane, Midford.

For further details please see website or contact: *Liz Tuddenham* ☎ 01225 335974

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> February— 19:30

**SOCIAL EVENING — T.B.A.**

*Meet:* The Radstock Working Men's Club.

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

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March —10:00

**WORK PARTY — Location to be advised**

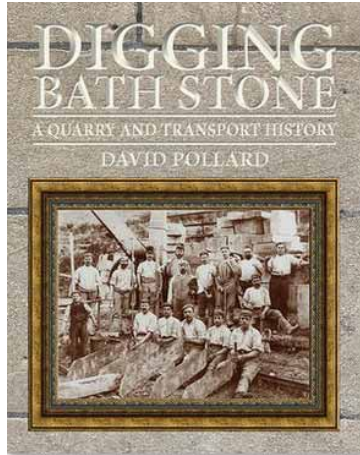
For further details please contact: *Mark Sherrey* ☎ 07973 918467

## BOOK REVIEWS

### DIGGING BATH STONE

by David Pollard (1941 - 2017)

David Pollard, a Swindon Railway Works apprentice, founded the Bath Stone Quarry Museum Trust in 1984 and bought the Hartham Park Stone Mine, Corsham, to house the Trust's collection. The mine continues to be worked to this day.



This high-quality large-format book of 500 pages is illustrated with excellent images, sketches covering the mines themselves and the surrounding geology and industrial archaeology. It includes canal and railway connections, machinery, local machinery suppliers and details of the wider area including Box Tunnel and Avoncliff.

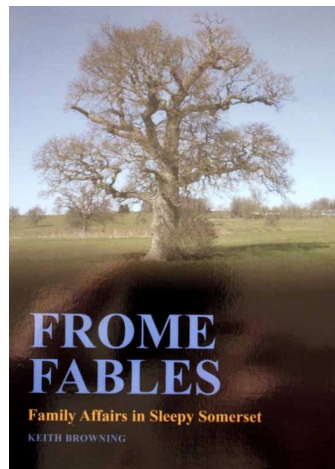
This must be the definitive study of the Bath Stone industry and is well worth the cover price of £50.00 to anyone with a serious interest in industrial archaeology.

*The Lightmoor Press, Unit 144B,  
Harbour Road Industrial Estate,  
Lydney, Gloucester.  
GL15 4EJ*

Pete Dunn

### FROME FABLES

by Keith Browning



This book is the result of over 15 years research into the history of four families with their origins in Frome and the surrounding parishes. They spread their wings, heading north to the Dunkerton Valley.

The central character around whom the Fables are built is a girl born at the original (Lower) Peasedown in 1844. Her family had moved up from Nunney and was one of the first to build a house on the southern side of the Dunkerton Valley, in 1828. Her 'father', James Hancock was from a family that lived on Dunkerton Hill from 1810 onwards.

There is no evidence of their direct connection to the Coal Canal, but the book gives a feeling for what it was like to live in the area around the canal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Available from Radstock Museum, the Hunting Raven Bookshop or directly from the author:  
<[kbrow5121@aol.com](mailto:kbrow5121@aol.com)> Price £14.99

in Shropshire in 2004. I am passionate about history of all shapes and sizes and believe there is nothing more grounding than reaching out and touching those real links to our past, that make you appreciate what we have in the present.

I like to take in other perspectives and current trends and agendas in order to get things moving. I'm ambitious for the Somersetshire Coal Canal, using a positive approach and my background knowledge to help you realise your vision for the future of your heritage.

For the Somersetshire Coal Canal I am working with the committee to develop a way forward towards restoration. I see the strategy as bringing together a partnership of organisations including the landowners, the Society and B&NES Council to create a new organisation which will work collaboratively to fundraise and restore sections of the canal and the structures on the Northern Branch. Once this organisation is formed we can then begin to build up a colourfully woven tapestry of environmental and tourism projects to concentrate on a phased programme of works which will involve volunteers and paid contractors.

One of the most obvious and rewarding projects will be Paulton and Timsbury Basins as the canal could become a real resource for the community.

I hope to update you on progress in future editions of Weigh-House.

Laura Wigg-Bailey

## DONATIONS

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

Mr. M. Anderson	Mr. P. Evans	Mr. J. Smith
Mr. C. Axon	Mr. & Mrs. T. Fisher	Mr. D. Storey
Mr. T. Baldwin	Ms. S. Flint	Mr. D. Sumner
Mr. S. Bryant	Mr. D. Francis	Mr. G. Taylor
Mr. P. Buckland	Mr. C. Helps	Mr. T. Turner
Mr. & Mrs. C. Camburn	Mr. D. Hunt	Mr. & Mrs. R. Williams
Mr. M. Clarke	Mr. S. Laurenson	Mr. & Mrs. R. Wilsdon
Ms. J. Copeland	Mr. C. Lowe	Mrs. A. Wilson
Mr. M. Cox	Mr. & Mrs. G. Puddephat	Mr. C. Winpenny
Mr. J. Ditcham	Mr. M. Sad	Mr. G. Woodward
Mr. & Mrs. W. Durrant	Dr. D. Slater	

## NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr. M. Allez	Salisbury	Ms. C. Mulholland	Bristol.
Miss. M. Camilleri	Paulton,	Mr. K. Niklass	Holcombe
Mr. J. Davies	Shrewsbury	Mr. R. Pearson	Nailsea
Mr. S. Duckett	Bristol	Ms. J. Regan	Paulton
Mr. M. Girling	Reading	Mr. M. Sad	New York
Mrs. S. Langdon	Midsomer Norton	Mr. P. Turner	Bath
Ms. H. McCoid	Bath	Mr. F. Wagstaff	Dunkerton.
Mr. D. Mogg	Timsbury		

## OBITUARY

### Terry Paget (1939- 2021)

Terry Paget was born at Paulton hospital in July 1939. His Father was local, a printer, and his Mother from Sidcup, Kent, was a French teacher. During the war, when his father was away, when he was small, he and his mother and sister and dog Scamp went for many local walks and he was enthralled by the story of the Somersetshire Coal Canal. As a teenager



and later, he would tramp the local area, taking photographs of the features and milestones. We owe a great debt to Terry for those photographs, which have become classics and, in many cases, are the only record we have of the S.C.C. during those years.

After finishing at Midsomer Norton Grammar School, he attended Bristol University to study chemistry. He and his student friends were great fans of the Goon Show and, according to Terry, would all "laugh like idiots!". Upon graduation, he joined the Atomic Energy Authority, working first at Aldermaston for 6 years and then at Culham Laboratory.

In 1974, Terry returned to Midsomer Norton to run his father's print shop, the *Paget Press*, providing personal and business stationery to the local community — a community

which he came to know very well. He maintained the hot metal printing presses and typesetting machines himself, gradually migrating to offset litho and laser printing. Terry was always ready to assist the Society, producing leaflets and application forms amongst other things. He (finally!) retired at the age of 79.

Terry was also a member of the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society and Wells Railway Fraternity, and he also had an interest in the canal systems of Europe, mounting several photographic "expeditions" to France and Belgium. His boyish enthusiasm sometime got the better of him. Once, while trying to smuggle himself and his video camera through the boundary fence at the huge Ronquieres boat lift, he had to beat a hasty retreat when he was spotted from afar and gently admonished over the powerful public address system: "Derriere la barriere, s'il vous plait!".

Terry's many contributions to the Society over the years are invaluable. We remember an intelligent, warm and generous man, whose enthusiasm and cheerful company will be much missed. He leaves a wife, four children, and one grandson — who may also walk along the Somersetshire Coal Canal.

At Midford you had a choice of two towpaths to use, depending on where you were going to or from. I will show you the alternative towpaths, as if you were in a boat travelling in a westerly direction along the canal, heading from Midford towards Combe Hay. We start from the towpath opposite the Weigh-House.

If you wanted to go to the Midford Interchange Basin, the terminus of the Radstock Tramway, you would stay on the southern (left-hand side) towpath. Follow this towpath pass the back of the Toll Collectors house [See Fig. 4 opposite], under the road bridge, and head towards the junction of the two branches. Here, you would then turn left, cross over the Midford Aqueduct and head towards the basin to load/unload your cargo. This towpath would have been in use from the opening of the basin in c.1805 until its closure in 1871, when the Radstock branch was sold to the S&D

However, if you wanted to avoid the junction and travel towards the lock flight at Combe Hay and the coal pits beyond, your route would be slightly different. You would first have to unhitch the horse from the boat. Then lead it through the gate to the side of the Toll Collectors house, across the road, and bridge, and down to the northern (right-hand side) towpath. This is now the public footpath you have just walked along.



Photograph: Edward Smith

Fig. 7 — MIDFORD c.1880

Looking westwards, two boats head towards Combe Hay. Note the two towpaths.

Continuing our walk, the footpath shortly switches from right to left. You are now on the southern towpath. Walk past the blocked-off entrance to the Radstock Branch. Opposite here you may see the remains of a small stone wall on the northern towpath. This was built to prevent damage to the towpath by boats entering and exiting the junction. Now head towards the Midford Accommodation Bridge.

To be continued in WH 83



Photograph: Tim Samler

**Fig. 4 — MIDFORD c.1900** The back of the Toll Collector's House.  
The towpath heading under the road bridge, just visible.

Directly opposite the Hope & Anchor (watch out for the speeding traffic) is a footpath which leads down some steps, under the railway viaduct and onto the former canal towpath. Walk a few yards further on and just as you come to the underside of the Midford to Twinhoe Road bridge, Stop! On your left can be seen the course of the canal cut, now a private garden.



Photograph: Roger Halse

**Fig. 5 — PIER OF S&D RAILWAY VIADUCT — 1997**  
Built on top of the former canal towpath.

Look towards the foundations of the pier for the railway viaduct, and you may see that it stands on large ashlar coping stones. This was also a former canal towpath.. Yes, here the canal had two towpaths - hence the title of this article!



Photograph: Bathintime

**Fig.6+ — MIDFORD c.1900**  
Looking back towards the main road bridge showing the two towpaths.

## NAVYING NOTES

*With the easing of 'lockdown' restrictions, work parties have resumed and are making good progress; being open air events, only a few sensible precautions have proved necessary to reduce the risk to a very low level. At the moment our Sunday work parties are concentrating on Paulton, but for every task we tackle, two others seem to appear. Despite that, progress is being made and we have managed to tick off several items from our jobs list.*

For a long time now, the Intake has not been covered, making it vulnerable to vandalism and the curiosity of cows, who will chew almost anything in the hope that it might prove tasty.



**[Above] THE INTAKE VALVE IN ITS NATURAL HABITAT**  
which cows find an irresistible attraction for reasons we have been unable to fathom

**[Right] MARTYN & LEO BEDDING-IN THE PLANKS FOR THE INLET COVER**  
...or possibly just enjoying a game of see-saw.



A worse scenario than cows damaging our equipment would be if our equipment damaged the cows; they might develop digestive disorders from chewing bits off the intake valve or suffer an injury from falling into the trench that houses it. One of our priority jobs was to order a load of railway sleepers and use them to form a cover over the trench. This we have now managed to do, so that is one item we can cross off our list.

With Summer approaching, we were reminded that a few years ago there was a 'Great Stink' in the area of Paulton Basin during some hot dry weather. It seemed to be coming from the reed bed islands that had drifted to one corner of the basin and packed tightly into the dead-end arm that led to Terminus Bridge. In the stagnant water, the natural decomposition of some of the dead reeds had depleted the oxygen levels and led to the death of more reeds, which made the situation worse. The bacteria that thrive on decomposition without oxygen were suspected of causing the stink and this was confirmed when we sprayed oxygenated water over the reed beds for 48 hours non-stop and found that normal healthy conditions were restored almost immediately.



Photograph: Mark Sherrey

**TIGHTLY PACKED DECOMPOSING REED BEDS**

The reed beds have grown in size since then and were again packing tightly into that area, so we took the opportunity to thin them out before they had a chance to repeat their previous noisome performance. By the end of the Summer they had grown back in quantity, but at least it was fresh growth and less liable to generate the foul conditions that come with excessive decomposition.



Photograph: Mark Sherrey

**CUT BACK BUT STILL GROWING**

Another on the list of jobs was the leak that had appeared in the canal embankment near Withy Mills Stop Point. It wasn't just 'a' leak but was a whole series of leaks and tunnels, culminating in two outflows into the Cam Brook and eroding a cavity under the canal embankment, about 1.5 metres cube, which could eventually collapse and take the towpath with it. We had taken delivery of 90 tonnes of clay to use in the repairs, but these were stranded 200 metres away because the canal bed had become a quagmire which would no longer support the weight of a dumper truck.

The village still attracts many visitors today, either *via* the hourly bus service (reduced times on Sundays), or on foot, by bicycle or by car. The former S&D line from Bath now being part of the Sustrans Cycle Route 24 from Bath. Part of this route following the 'Colliers Way' cycling and walking path between Dundas Aqueduct and Radstock. Today there is only one pub to feed, and quench the thirst of, passing visitors.

The canal is still a popular walking route, and I will often recommend this area as a starting point for following the canal. As walkers travel along the public footpath, how aware are they of the history of the village and the often-unnoticed pieces of canal/railway history? With the aid of some of the various maps and photographs I have of the area, I will take you on a brief, historical journey, along a short section of the canal at Midford.



Photograph: Roger Halse

**Fig. 2 — MIDFORD ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE S.C.C. — 1977**  
 Showing the former (*now private*) path to the Weigh-House between the Hope & Anchor (*left*) and the Bridge (*centre*).  
 The building on the right was the Toll Collector's house

Here boats travelling along the canal were weighed to record the amount of coal, or other goods carried, and the toll fees calculated. Every boat would have to pass this point and the Weigh-House would have been a busy place. Unfortunately, following the closure of the canal, the weighing machine was demolished and sold for scrap in 1915. The former office, having been converted to a private house, is not accessible to the public. The Toll Collector's house on the downhill side of the bridge is also now a private house.



Photograph: Edward Smith

**Fig. 3 — MIDFORD WEIGH-HOUSE c.1880**  
 The railings can still be seen in the alleyway beside the Hope & Anchor →



## A TALE OF TWO TOWPATHS — Part 1

### An historical walk along the canal at Midford

*The village of Midford is an intriguing place; not only does it straddle two counties, it lies in four parishes and is at the meeting point of two streams. It had two railways (and a third temporary one) and, most interestingly of all, is the meeting point of two canal branches and a section of canal with two towpaths. Roger Halse takes us on an historical walk through Midford which begins with a detailed introduction to the village.*

Midford lies on the border between Somerset and Wiltshire and extends into the four parishes of South Stoke, Wellow, Limpley Stoke and Hinton Charterhouse. It had two railways: The Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway's (S&D) Evercreech to Bath Extension opened in 1874 and the Great Western Railway's (GWR) Camerton to Limpley Stoke Branch opened in 1910. Midford was also the junction of the two branches of the Somersetshire Coal Canal (S.C.C.). The 'Dunkerton Line' ran for ten-and-a-half miles, from its junction with the Kennet & Avon Canal at Dundas, to the Paulton and Timsbury Basins. The 'Radstock Line' ran for seven miles from Midford to Radstock.

Midford has always been a popular place for visitors, being only a few miles from Bath. The S&D's Midford Station was open to passengers from 1874 to 1966. The GWR's Midford Halt only served passengers for a few years from 1910 to 1915 and from 1923-1925. Omnibuses from Bath travelled though the village *en route* to Frome. There were numerous public footpaths through the village and walkers would often use the canal towpath. This was a far easier route for them as it avoided the many hills that surround the village. The village hostelrys capitalised on the visitors with three public beer houses serving the thirsty travellers. (See *WH 79* for further details of the pubs.)



Source: National Archives, London

**Fig 1 — SOUTH STOKE TITHE MAP c.1840**  
The S.C.C. running South then West through Midford.

We put the problem to Joe Hitchins, a local contractor who had been a huge help to us in the past, and he concluded that a mini-excavator and a dumper truck, that was small enough to run along the towpath, would be the best answer. The drivers, who had spent their entire working lives trying to avoid creating a squidgy mess, were somewhat sceptical when we explained that a squidgy mess was exactly what was needed to make good puddling clay; but they soon caught on and enthusiastically kneaded and worked the mixture of dryish clay and filthy water until it formed a Plasticene-like, and hopefully completely waterproof, mass. In the course of digging out the leaks, the cause of the initial problem came to light and this will be described in more detail in *WH83*.



#### A FIRST CLASS SQUIDGY MESS

The digger kneading freshly-made puddling clay into the trench where the leaks have been dug out.

The main focus of our work has been on getting the abutments of Terminus Bridge ready to take a new bridge deck. There are no reliable plans of what form the original bridge took, so the only way to find out exactly what foundations were available, and what condition they were in, was to dig out parts of the structure. It appears, like so many other S.C.C. structures, to have been built in sections by different contractors and then modified several times since. Some maps show a swivel bridge and others show a fixed bridge — which could have been a swivel bridge that was later fixed in place for some reason.

If it was a swivel bridge, that would have normally pivoted from the 'offside' abutment to avoid obstructing the towing animal and rope when it was open to let a boat through. There are towpaths on both sides of this bridge, but the one on the North side terminates at the bridge and the bridge would have to be closed in order to use it. Discovering the exact configuration of the original bridge may seem like nothing more than an interesting academic exercise, but it is something we need to know if we are to replace the bridge deck with as authentic a structure as possible. →



**W.R.G./B.I.T.M. VOLUNTEERS RE-POINTING THE FOUNDATIONS OF TERMINUS BRIDGE**

The stonework of the supporting walls looked as though it was in a terrible state, but closer examination revealed some areas that only needed repointing to make them as good as new. We were very lucky to have the services of the Waterway Recovery Group/B.I.T.M. for a weekend. Due to Covid restrictions and other commitments, only a small group were eventually able to turn up, but they made up for lack of numbers by their expertise and enthusiasm. The crumbling mortar joints of large sections of the foundation walls were raked out re-pointed with a grade of lime mortar which was particularly suitable for historic structures on clay soils in perpetually damp conditions — which seemed a fitting description of the work in hand.

Although the central foundations were in reasonably good condition and only needed repointing, the same could not be said of the wing walls, parts of which had already succumbed to old age and the force of gravity. The most hazardous part of the repairs would have been removing the massive coping stones, but luckily the digger we used for repairing the leak was able to find time to do this for us; leaving ‘just’ the task of taking down the stone wing wall and rebuilding it

The top surfaces of the central portions were an unknown quantity, so they had to be excavated by hand in an exercise that turned into an archaeological dig. Like nearly every ‘dig’ on the S.C.C. in the past, this one has provided us with more questions than answers. It is clear that there was a deliberate mortared stone construction here, but there is no obvious structure to the remains that would give us an idea of what was built on the site. Only the South side has been excavated so far, so more useful information could come to light when we excavate the North side.



**S.C.C.S. VOLUNTEERS DOING THE BACK-BREAKING WORK OF EXCAVATING THE TOP OF THE ABUTMENTS OF TERMINUS BRIDGE**

With Winter approaching, the time available for lime mortaring is beginning to run out, but there is still plenty of other work on this site to

keep us busy. Only one wing wall out of the four has been properly investigated, it has taken two work parties to clear and investigate part of one of the two abutments, so we are nowhere near the stage of being able to build anything yet. We are determined to press on and get this site ready for the new bridge deck as quickly as we can, but we depend entirely on our volunteers. This is where YOU come in...

**MARK SHERREY**

## EXCAVATION AT WATERLOO ROAD, RADSTOCK A correction

*There was some confusion surrounding the image of the excavation at Waterloo Road, Radstock which appeared on p.15 of Weigh-House 81: the picture which was printed did not match the description. The correct picture, looking East along the route of the canal, is shown below, with the corresponding description by Steve Page.*



*Photograph: Steve Page*

### EXCAVATION IN WATERLOO ROAD, RADSTOCK (February 2021)

“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.”



**PART OF THE CRUSE MAP SHOWING THE S.C.C. THROUGH RADSTOCK**



**LOCK 11 c.1920**

*Photograph: Chris Gibson*

The final view is Lock 11. Behind it would have been the 'Bulls Nose' where the canal did a sharp hairpin turn to the left before following the trees towards Lock 10. Since this view the stonework has suffered badly and has partially collapsed into the lock chamber.

**ROGER HALSE**

## CALLING ALL MAGPIES

*There are many members who, in the nicest possible way, could be described as 'Magpies'; they visit car boot sales in the Summer; jumble sales in the Winter and charity shops all year round. They may not even know what they are looking for, but can usually justify an 'essential' purchase after they have bought it.*

These are the people who are most likely to come across postcards, photographs and other paraphernalia that could turn out to be relevant to the S.C.C.; there may be a photograph for our archives just waiting to be discovered by an alert rummager. It may not be directly of the canal itself, but could be a more general view with the canal in the background or it may be of houses that border the canal or even families who lived in the area and might have had connections with the canal.

If you are an alert 'Magpie' you may just be lucky enough to find that long-lost photograph or postcard which turns out to be another vital piece in the jigsaw puzzle of the Canal's history, so please keep your eyes open and let Roger Halse know if you find anything interesting.

## LOCK 11, 12 & 13 COMBE HAY c.1920

Following publication in WH 80 of two previously unknown views of Lock 13 at Combe Hay, we now have the final three images from the recently discovered set of five.

Before I describe the new views, I have to begin with an apology. I wrongly identified the view on page 12 of WH 80 as being lock 13, it is in fact lock 12 looking towards lock 13. Sorry Chris!

I have already detailed the source of the photographs in the last newsletter, so I will move onto the new images themselves. Thanks again to Chris Gibson for permission to publish these photographs. Please note that, as before, these photographs are not of the best quality, but are still very interesting views of the locks.

The first view is (probably?) Lock 13. The bottom gates can be seen complete with at least one balance beam. This is photograph has been the most difficult to positively identify as it is very out-of-focus, and there are no distinctive features that make it readily identifiable with the locks that can be seen today.



**LOCK 13 c.1920 BOTTOM GATES**

*Photograph: Chris Gibson*

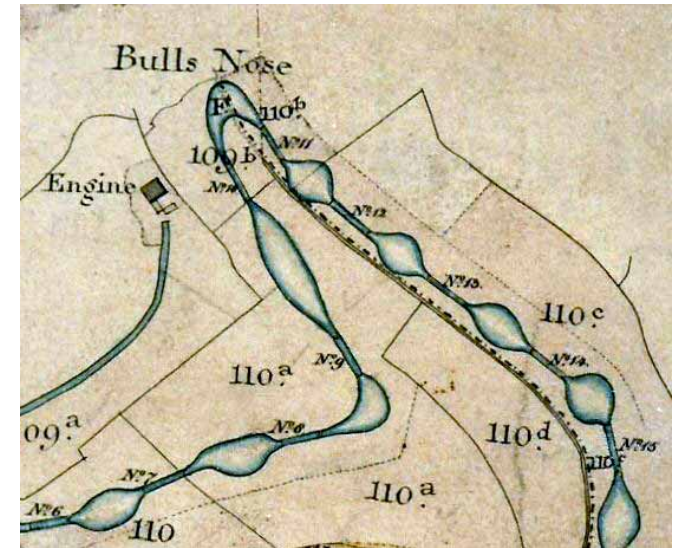




**LOCK 12 c.1920**

*Photograph: Chris Gibson*

The second view is definitely Lock 12. Both bottom gates can be seen complete with the balance beams and gate-paddles. The four courses of stonework repair on the lower left-hand side wing wall are still visible today. I have included a present-day view for comparison.



**S.C.C. MAP OF THE COMBE HAY LOCK FLIGHT (part)  
c.1812**



**LOCK 12 c.2000**

*Photograph: Roger Halse*