

**STAFFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE CANAL SOCIETY REPORT ON**

**THE NORTHERN SECTION OF THE CANAL**

**RELATING TO THE STAFFORD BRANCH (1968)**

**Researched and written by**

**David Jones**

In 1968 the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Society reported on the state of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and the various features and facilities along the 46 mile route. There were two Reports; one for the Northern Section (Great Haywood to Compton) and the Southern Section (Compton to Stourport).

The Report on the Northern Section was written by A J Phillips of 64 Tixall Road, Stafford. It was submitted to Eric Pike, Secretary of the Canal Society, on 19 November 1968. Together with the Report on the Southern Section from D Harpur, it was presented at the Committee Meeting held on 25 November 1968.

The Reports were detailed and described the locks, width & depth of the waterway, condition of the towpath, bridges, fuel supplies, shops, hostelries, water supply, rubbish disposal, toilets, Elsan disposal, boat yards, angling societies, societies other than angling, industry and, finally, Branches off the main Canal.

Only those parts of the Report relevant to the Stafford Branch and the section of the main Canal either side of the Branch Canal are considered here.

From "Great Haywood to Stafford" (i.e. Radford), the "towpath is passable but some minor hedge cutting is required."

The comments below are relevant to the section between Radford Bridge (Bridge 99) and St Thomas' Bridge (Bridge 101) which is where the Stafford Branch is.

At Radford Bank, *The Trumpet Inn* was identified as "having a public bar suitable if one has just climbed out of the engine room. Elsewhere the bars are very nice with fitted carpets and the types of seats which would show oil stains. There is a restaurant at the rear which is very good but collar and tie required."

Regarding industry in area, the Report notes "The following industrial premises are on the canal side but as far as can be seen neither take water from nor do they discharge rubbish into it: Baswich Lane, Stafford: The Salt Works, Lignacite Ltd and Baswich Builders."

The Report devoted just one paragraph to the Stafford Branch.

"The Stafford Branch was closed about 50 years ago but ran from near Baswich Lane (photo **G**) via one lock (photo **H**) to the River Sow, which was maintained at an artificially high level by a now demolished weir. The former wharf at Stafford is now

Bridge Street car park. As a point of irrelevance my landlord's father took the last coal boat down this arm to Stafford and needed nine horses to pull it, the channel was so shallow."

Although neither photograph was in the file, they were obtained from Tony Gregory, a long-standing member of the Staffs & Worcs Canal Society. The photographs appear below.



Entrance to the Stafford Branch Canal from the Staffs & Worcs Canal (1968).

The blocked-up Arm, overflow weir and remains of one of the abutments of the Roving Bridge are clearly visible. St Thomas' Bridge (Bridge 101) on the main line is in the upper right of the picture in the distance.

**Photograph G:** Courtesy of Peter Freakley Collection  
(Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society).



Entrance to the Aqueduct from the Basin (1968).

The brickwork clearly shows walls of the Basin. The towpath and towpath bridge are on the left. The space to the right of the bridge is where the aqueduct was. Originally, the aqueduct led directly into the Lock which was beyond.

**Photograph H:** Courtesy of Peter Freakley Collection  
(Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society).

The author of the Report appears to have misinterpreted photograph **H** by implying that the brickwork was part of the Lock, whereas the brickwork was part of the Basin wall.

### **Sources of Information**

(a) Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies:

(i) *Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society: Reports for committee re northern section and southern section of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal (1968)*. Ref: D-SWC/15/4

(ii) *Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society Minutes October 1968- April 1976*. Ref: D-SWC/2/4.

(b) Telephone conversations and email correspondence with Mr A W Gregory, Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal Society.

(c) The photographs were taken by P D Wilde, University of Keele, and are reproduced here courtesy of Peter Freakley Collection.

## **Acknowledgements**

David Jones would like to thank Tony Gregory for his help, advice and encouragement while researching this article.

---

© D J JONES 2013

---