



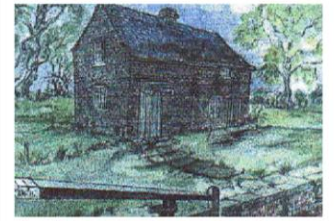
# Pewsham Locks Trail

## The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

1. Start at the remains of the lock cottage.



The lock cottage was also known as the Canal Agent's House. This is an artist's impression of what it may have looked like, although there were actually no windows on the wall next to the lock.



In 1861, William Hodgson and his wife Eliza lived here with their children. How many people do you think could fit in this cottage?



2. Go to Top Lock. (Keep behind the fence, take care on the bridge.)



Top Lock lifted or lowered boats 8ft 9ins (2.6 metres). It could take boats 72ft (22 metres) long by 7ft 6in (2.3 metres) wide. It was designed by the engineer James Brindley.

This is an illustration of a horse drawn narrow boat about to enter a lock.



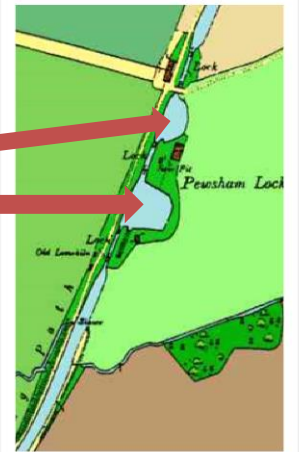
If a canal boat was travelling towards Chippenham, would the lock have to lift it or lower it?

What do you think the lock keeper (or Canal Agent) would do?



3. Walk along the towpath towards Middle Lock. On the way you pass a large (empty) pond called a pound.

Diagram of the pounds at Pewsham



This is Caen Hill flight of locks on the Kennet & Avon Canal at Devizes.

The pounds between the locks here are called 'side pounds'. When locks are so close together, the pounds extend sideways, hence the name.



The pounds at Pewsham also extend sideways.



Why do you think a lock sometimes needs a pound full of water?

Middle Lock is particularly damaged; there have been many theories about why.

One was that Canadian troops stationed nearby used it to practise their explosive skills prior to D-Day.

However, this article in the Western Daily Press of 1931, states one lock was demolished by the Royal Engineers in 1931, prior to WW2.



#### DEMOLITION OF CANAL LOCK.

##### Bristol Territorials' Smart Work.

Members of the South Midland Royal Engineers, Park Row, Bristol, were offered an opportunity yesterday of putting to practical test their knowledge of demolition and explosive work. The party in the morning went to Pewsham, near Chippenham, where an old lock on the Avon Canal had to be demolished. The lock measured 15ft. by 4ft. 6ins. Gun cotton, gun powder, and ammonal (the latter for destroying the gates) were used.

When the ignition took place a deafening explosion occurred, and masonry and iron-work were thrown into the air. It was an effective sight. The work was smartly done. Col. M. Whitwill, D.S.O., M.C., T.D., Capt. Bastine, R.E., adjutant, and other officers of the unit were present. The party returned to headquarters in the evening.



What do you think are this piece of wood and the metal ring above, in the lock wall brickwork?

Can you estimate how deep the lock is?

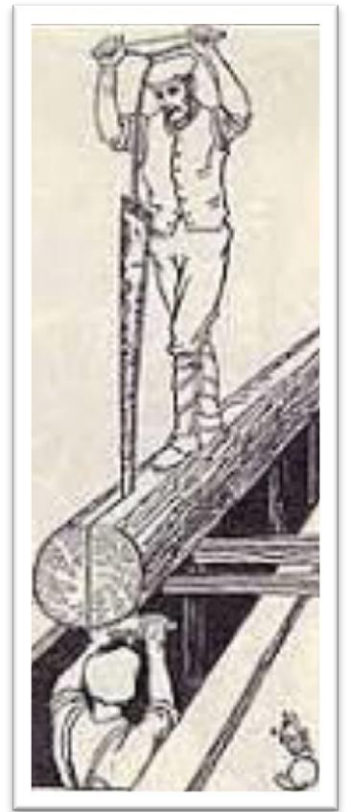
#### 4. Stay on the towpath.

Behind Middle Lock are the remains of a sawpit.



The sawpit is near the site of a carpenter's workshop.

It would have been connected with the boat building and boat repair businesses.



Why do you think they bothered to dig a pit and saw logs this way, instead of just laying them on the ground?



The man on top was the 'Top Dog', why was he better off than the man underneath?

#### 5. Continue down the towpath, past another pound, to Bottom Lock.



Bottom Lock has had some restoration by volunteers after it too suffered severe damage.

It is thought that the outer wall bricks may have been removed for other building works nearby.



What do you think this arched structure was for?



6. Behind Bottom Lock is one of the gems of our site – a possibly unique dry dock.



On the brick floor, there is still evidence of pitch used to waterproof boat hulls – it dripped down and set solid on the floor.



Why was the dock so shallow?



What do you think this opening was for?



The horse shoe shaped dry dock was used to repair boats which were then launched back into the pound.

This is an artist's impression of what it may have looked like. There is still evidence of the roof supports.



7. Just below Bottom Lock, look across to the far bank, where you may spot the remains of a milestone. This originally stated that it was 7 miles along the canal to the junction with the Kennet & Avon at Semington.

Narrowboats on the Wilts & Berks Canal were mostly horse drawn. How long do you think it took to get to Semington?



8. Just below Bottom Lock, you will also see the splendid new waiting wharf recently built by volunteers.



There was originally a stone wall here. If the lock gates were closed, boats would stop and wait before entering Bottom Lock.



What do you think the bollards are for?

The original wharf in Chippenham was the site of Brinkworth's Coal Depot. This is a photograph of the last time it was uncovered.



This is Mr WH Brinkworth standing on the narrowboat Faith at Chippenham Wharf. The horse drawn boat would collect cargo from Camerton in Somerset.



Do you know where the original coal wharf in Chippenham was?



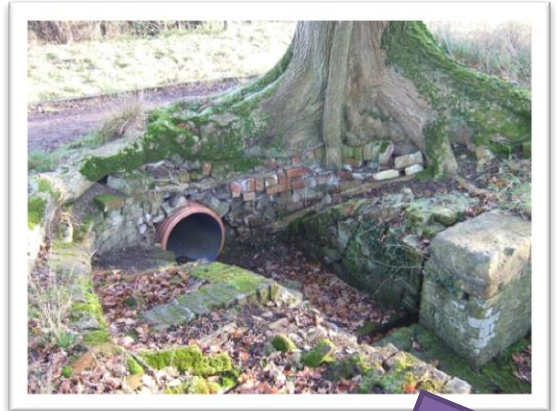
9. On the opposite side of the towpath, you will see the recently restored Horseshoe Spillway.



Water management is an essential part of building or restoring a canal. Weirs, spillways and culverts allow the water level to remain at a constant level.

The official opening of Horseshoe Spillway.

The original condition!



Where does a canal get its water from?



What could cause the water level to fall so that boats could no longer travel along the canal?

10. You can continue down the towpath if you wish, but it was badly damaged at Cocklemore Brook Culvert, which collapsed during the very heavy rains in January. Bunds (dams) have been constructed to conserve as much water as possible, but the water level in this section has been lowered dramatically, and the canal doesn't look as beautiful as it did in 2013.



The Hole January 26<sup>th</sup> 2014

It is a lovely walk through to the National Trust village of Lacock, and further down the towpath you will see where volunteers have been very busy. Here are a few of the projects which have been completed:



A small circular weir next to a bench for walkers



Triangle Wood, where the bank has been reinforced with stone filled gabions

The site where Wessex Water re-laid water mains below the canal bed



Dredging has been carried out to widen and deepen the canal bed

Towpath reinforcement with sandbags



Restored Double Bridge, opened by our patron, HRH Duchess of Cornwall.

From this to this!

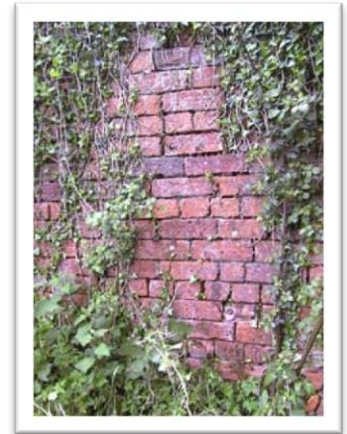
11. Walk back up the tow path to the Information Display.  
On the way, look out for piles of bricks.



Old or new??



The Wilts & Berks had several brickworks, including one just east of Pewsham Way (near Cary Glen). Millions of bricks were needed to build a canal (4 million between Melksham & Calne). In 1784, a brick tax was imposed on each brick, so the W&B made bigger bricks! A W&B brick was 10" long & 3" high, so only 700 would be needed instead of 1000.



Can you think why the Wilts & Berks didn't make the bricks even bigger to save even more money?



12. As you pass Middle Lock, spot examples of the main cargo carried along the canal to Chippenham.

Coal was brought from Somerset along the Somerset Coal Canal, the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Wilts & Berks Canal.

The Wilts & Berks reached a peak in 1854, but then started to decline in the same year.



In 1841, which exciting new and fast form of transport came to Chippenham?



How do you think this affected Chippenham and its canal?



LOTTERY FUNDED

Ask at the Information display for an answer sheet.