

THE COAL CANAL WAY

The Coal Canal Way is a series of walks which, when taken together, cover the entire length of the Northern Branch of the disused Somersetshire Coal Canal. The walks are described in both directions for people who want a short exploration which returns to its starting point. The individual short walks can be linked to those on adjacent pages to form a longer walk for those who prefer greater distances. Each page includes a map at an appropriate scale for that section and a description of the interesting things to be seen on the walk, with a summary of their history.

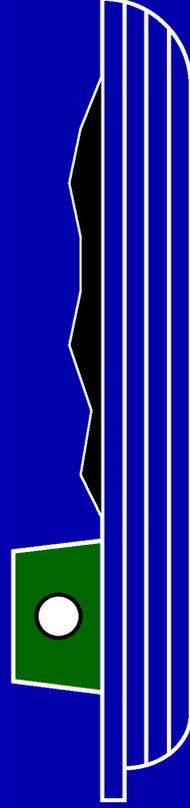
The Somersetshire Coal Canal was built in the early 1800s to bring coal from the mines in the Timsbury, Paulton and Radstock areas to the Kennet & Avon Canal for distribution across southern England. The Southern Branch was sold to the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway after 40 years, but the Northern Branch to Paulton survived for nearly 100 years and was one of the most profitable canals in England.

This booklet was produced by the Somersetshire Coal Canal Society.
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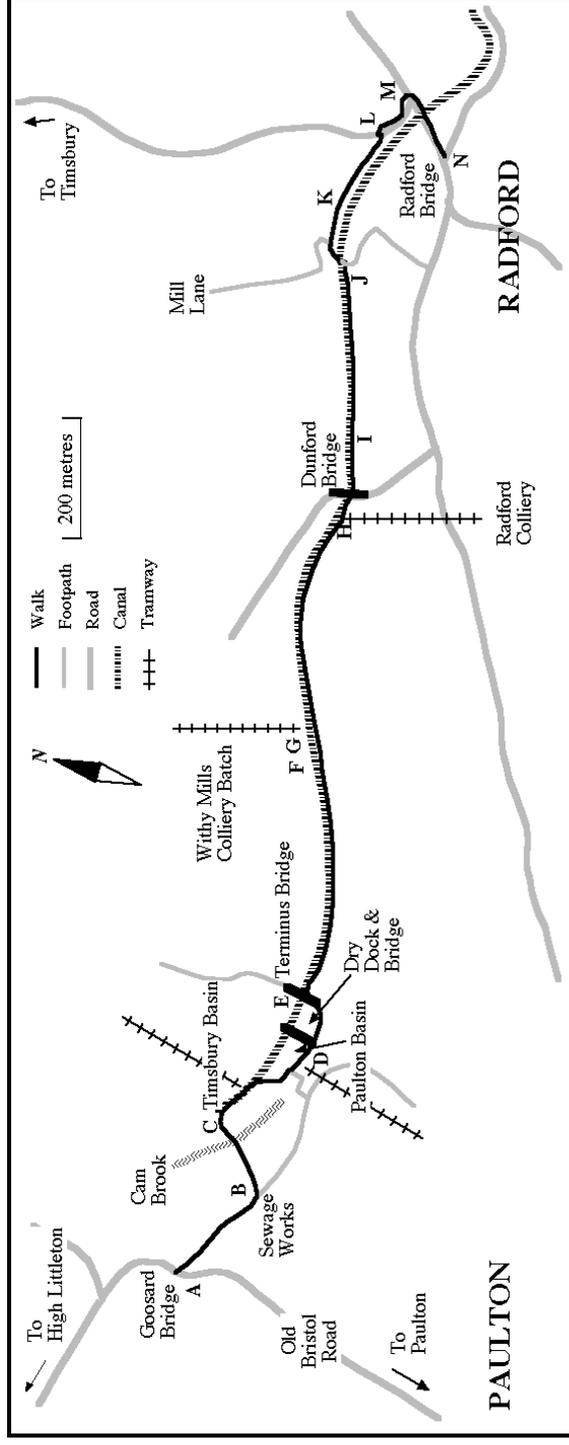
PLEASE STAY ON PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND DO NOT TRESPASS

THE COAL CANAL WAY

A WALKER'S GUIDE by



<http://www.coalcanal.org>



Paulton to Radford

2 km or 1.2 miles

Radford to Paulton

From Goosard Bridge **A** a public right of way runs along the sewage works access road.

At the nature reserve batch, take the first left turn **B** which brings you over the Cam Brook and into a meadow adjacent to Timsbury Basin **C** and the terminus of the canal.

Follow the towpath to the right, keeping the canal on your left.

Go through a gate past Paulton Basin **D** and the Dry Dock Bridge, then down the right hand side of the Dry Dock.

direction of Bathampton.

B to C Pass through the cutting in Sydney Gardens and the tunnel under the A36 Warminster Road. Continue along the towpath to Bathampton and the George Inn **D**.

The towpath leads on past Claverton Pumping Station **E** to Dundas Aqueduct Basin.

F Cross over the decorative bridge to the wharf with the crane

G and look for the entrance to the Somersetshire Coal Canal under the metal lifting bridge

H.

(Continued as Walk 10)

Follow the wharveside past the crane **G** and turn right over the decorative bridge **F**, then left onto the towpath.

The towpath leads past Claverton Pumping Station **E** to the George Inn **D** at Bathampton.

D Continue past the George Inn until you reach the tunnel under the A36 Warminster Road **C**.

Go through the tunnel into a cutting through Sydney Gardens.

B Continue following the towpath until it brings you to the top lock of the Bath Lock Flight **A**.

Things to see on Walk 11

A There were several privately-owned coal wharves alongside the K&A Canal in Bath, but the Somersetshire Coal Canal Company had its own wharf at the top of the lock flight. An old photograph shows the company's name boldly painted on the building and coal stockpiled on the wharfside.

B The towpath changes to the uphill side of the canal for a short distance, this practice was usually avoided because it made the canal more expensive to construct. When this occurs it is sometimes driven by geography but more often it is the result of a land ownership difficulty.

C Above the tunnel portals are carvings of Neptune, representing waterways in general and Sabrina representing the Severn. Similar statues can be found at Sapperton Tunnel on the Cotswold Canals.

D to E The quarry at Bathampton Down was connected to the K&A Canal by an Inclined Plane gravity-powered tramway. The distinctive sloping bridge which carried it over the A36 road was incorrectly known locally as the 'Dry Arch'; it was demolished many years ago. The real

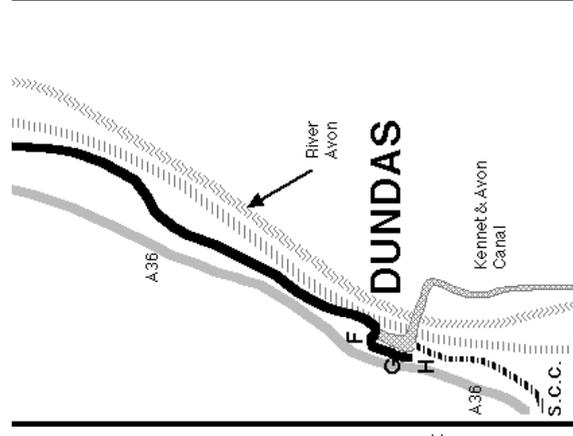
From Radford Bridge **N** take the road steeply uphill and take the first left turn **M**.

At the bottom of the dip, take the footpath on the left **L**.

Follow the footpath until it is joined by a lane coming from under a railway bridge **K** on the right, keep straight on up the slope.

At the top of the slope turn left downhill and then through a gate on the right **J**, to join the canal towpath.

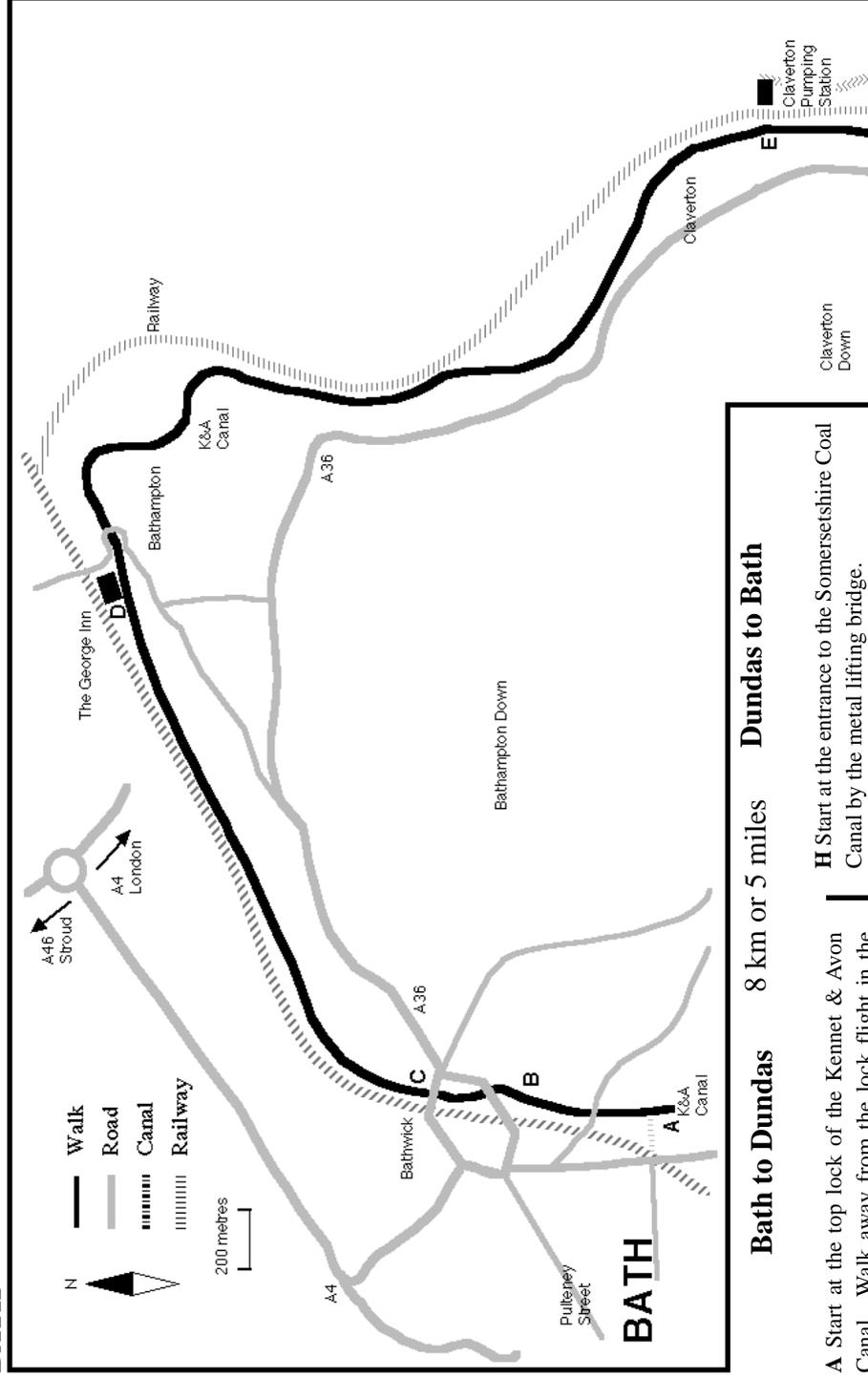
Follow the towpath with the canal on your right.



further up the plane from the site of the road bridge.

E Claverton has one of the two pumping stations that supplied water to the K&A Canal, the other was at Crofton. Unlike the steam-powered pumps at Crofton, this one drew its power from the river by means of a very large waterwheel; it was completely pollution-free. The slow rotation of the water wheel is geared up to a faster speed to operate the pumps more effectively and a large flywheel evens-out the pulsating load of the pumps which would otherwise put a strain on the gearing.

I The entrance to the Somersetshire Coal Canal is under the aluminium lifting bridge. The towpath of the K&A Canal towards Bradford on Avon crossed the spectacular Dundas Aqueduct, designed by John Rennie, which is worth a visit before continuing on your journey.



Look for a gate **E** in the left hand hedge. This brings you up onto the canal towpath at the site of the now-demolished Terminus Bridge.

Follow the towpath with the canal on your left.

At the Dunford Bridge site **H**, cross the track and walk to a gateway **I** on the far side of the meadow.

Go through the gate and then continue along the towpath to Mill Lane **J**. Turn left up Mill Lane, then immediately right down a slope. Go straight on through a gate **K** and follow the footpath until it emerges onto a road **L**.

Turn right on the road, then right again **M** downhill to Radford Bridge **N**.

(Continued as Walk 2)

When the towpath ends **I**, carry straight on in the same direction across a meadow and up a slope to join the canal towpath again **H**. Continue in the same direction as before.

Just before Paulton Basin the path goes down through a kissing gate **E** on the left, then turns right.

Go to the left of the Dry Dock, Dry Dock Bridge and Paulton Basin **D**. Continue through the gate, keeping the canal on your right

Follow the path with the canal on your right until you reach Timsbury Basin and the end of the canal.

Leave by the gateway **C** on your left leading to a bridge over the Cam Brook.

Turn right at the sewage works **B** and meet the road at Goosard Bridge **A**.

Things to see on Walk 1

A The sewage works has been built on the site of the Paulton Upper Engine Pit colliery.

B The track was a tramway taking coal from the pit to the canal.

C This is the terminus of the S.C.C., coal brought by tramway from pits in the Timsbury area was loaded into boats on the northern side of Timsbury Basin where there was a complex of tramways and buildings including a Wharfinger's house and stables.

D Coal brought by tramway from pits in the Paulton area was loaded into boats at a wharf on the southern side of Paulton Basin. The Dry Dock was the largest on any canal in England and could repair three boats at a time. The bridge over the Dry Dock entrance has recently been rebuilt but all the other canal bridges in this area have been demolished.

E Horses towing boats to and from the northern wharves crossed over to the northern towpath at Terminus Bridge, those using the southern wharves stayed on the towpath and crossed over the Dry Dock bridge.

F This stonework is the remains of a stop-plank point formed in the footings of a swivel bridge adjacent to **G** the wharf wall of Withy Mills colliery, which carried a tramway.

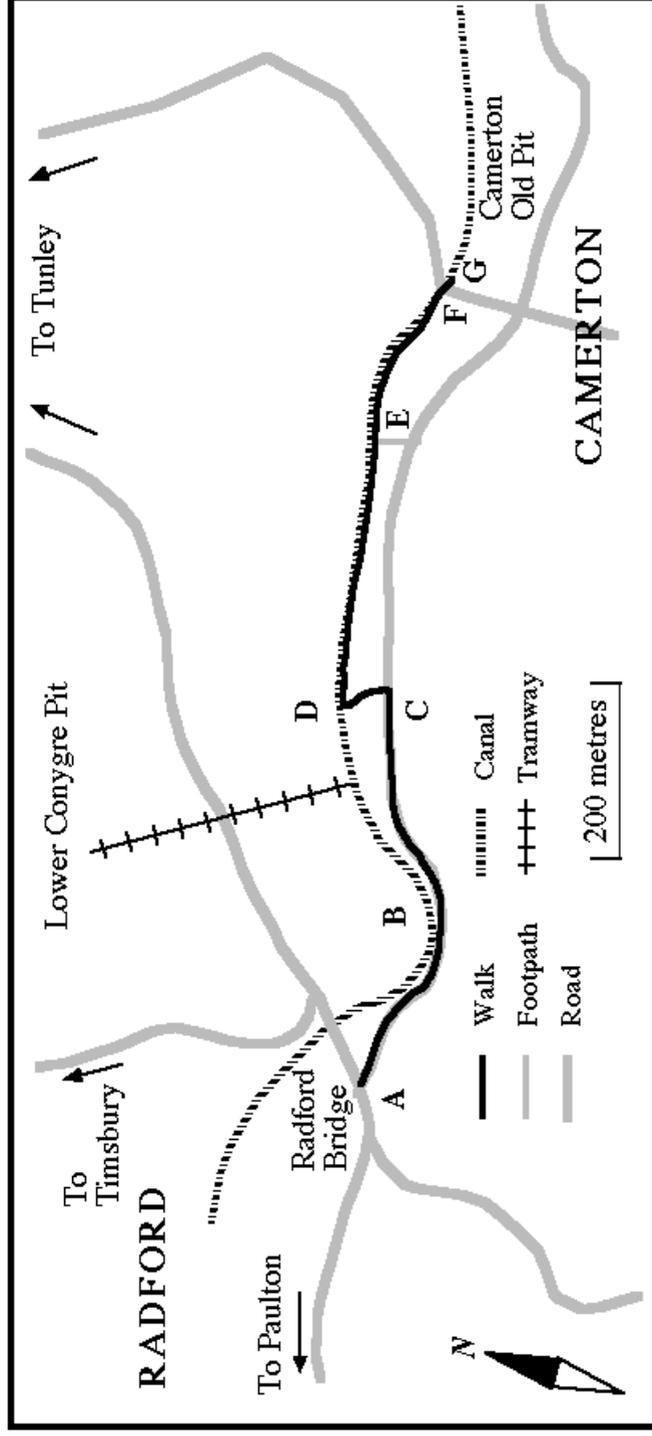
H A tramway brought coal from Radford Colliery to a wharf adjacent to the canal towpath.

J A level crossing took Mill Lane over the railway embankment, with a diversion to a bridge under the track for pedestrians.

K This was the site of Radford halt on the Bristol and North Somerset Railway.

RADFORD

CAMERTON



Radford to Camerton

1 km or 0.62 miles

Camerton to Radford

From Radford Bridge A, opposite a house take the road which slopes gently upwards.

Where the road curves to the left, it was built on the canal towpath. The canal was in the field on the left of the road. **B.**

On the left side, take the public footpath **C** which rises to join the canal

pitches can be seen on the right.

Walk along the road, through the old railway bridge **E** beneath the A36 road, and left towards the Canal Visitor Centre car park.

F Take the path which slopes upwards on the left of the car park, this will bring you onto the towpath at Brassknocker boat moorings.

Turn right and follow the towpath until you are diverted down to the right **G**; continue along that path until it emerges onto the K&A Canal.

H Turn left and follow the towpath to the metal lifting bridge at the entrance to the Somersetshire Coal Canal **I.**

(Continued as Walk 11)

From Camerton Batch Nature Reserve **G**, cross the road and enter Canal View, look for a footpath **F** descending on the left.

Walk along the towpath with the infilled canal on your right until the public footpath goes into the garden of a house **D.**

In the garden, look for a left turn which will bring you out onto a roadway

tree-lined cutting.

Take the footpath **D** on the left, which runs parallel to the road.

C The path goes down steps and up the other side of the cutting, then steeply uphill between the school buildings until it reaches the road **B** through Monkton Combe village.

Turn left and walk along the road to St. Michael's Church **A.**

(Continued as Walk 9)

Things to see on Walk 10

C The road was made along the trackbed of the Limpley Stoke to Camerton Railway, which was demolished in 1958. At this site it was spanned by a handsome cast iron bridge, which the railway company had inherited from the canal company and raised on brick pillars to obtain the necessary clearance above their locomotives. A small piece of the central portion of the bridge has survived and is stored at the Canal Visitors' Centre at Brassknocker as part of the Somersetshire Coal Canal exhibition.

C to D This path runs along the bed of the canal, with the towpath on the side furthest from the road.

D to E The canal crosses the road at **D**, then loops away along the base of the hillside, following the contour. Near **E**, the railway and road cut through a loop of canal below bed level and the sectioned bed of the canal can be seen in two places by looking up the embankment.

At the Canal Visitors' Centre, the canal can be seen in a tunnel under

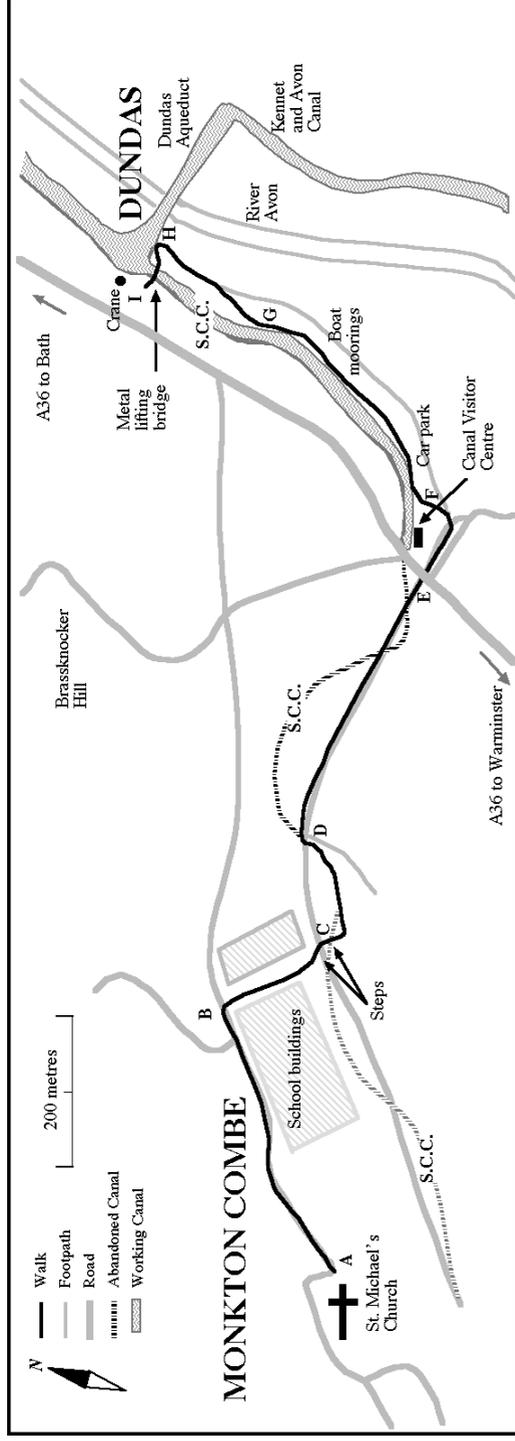
the A36 road, but the far end of the tunnel is blocked off to prevent it draining into the railway cutting on the far side of the road. The present bridge has been widened from the original structure to allow for the increased width of the modern road.

F to I This is the only length of the Somersetshire Coal Canal that is used by boats, it serves as moorings.

I The entrance lock is unusual because it is at the junction of two canals and has three sets of gates, two facing one way and one facing the other. They are arranged to close automatically in the event of rapid water flow, so as to prevent a breach in one canal from draining the other. The unique design of lifting bridge was originally constructed as a test piece for the corrosion-resistance of aluminium alloys. When it became redundant, it was installed at the entrance to the S.C.C.. On the wharfside can be seen the crane and stone blocks that were used as test weights in the 'gauging' process to allow the loading of boats to be checked..

MONKTON COMBE

DUNDAS



Monkton Combe to Dundas

1.5 km or 0.9 miles

Dundas to Monkton Combe

A With your back to the main gate of St. Michael's Church, Monkton Combe, walk directly ahead with the Village Hall up on your left and Monkton Combe School buildings on your right.

B Take a public footpath on the right which leads steeply downhill between school buildings and eventually reaches a sunken roadway by a flight of steps.

C Descend the steps and then ascend the steps opposite; turn left to follow the path parallel to the road.

D The path emerges from the trees and joins the road; school sports

alignment in the garden of a house **D**. Turn right and follow the path until it meets the main road **F** opposite Camerton Batch Nature Reserve

G.

(Continued as Walk 3)

I Start at Dundas Aqueduct Basin by the metal lifting bridge. Walk towards Dundas Aqueduct and turn right **H** along the path to the boat moorings.

Take the right fork **G** up to the canal towpath.

Follow the towpath towards the Visitor Centre but just before the Centre, take the path **F** which descends on the left.

Walk out of the the exit gateway and turn right onto the road which goes under the old railway bridge **E** carrying the A36 road.

Continue with the sports pitches on your left until the road reaches a

C.

Turn right and follow the road.

When you reach a sweeping curve **B** this section of road has been built on the towpath and the canal was to the right of it.

Descend to meet the main road by Radford Bridge **A**

(Continued as Walk 1)

Things to see on Walk 2

Between **B** and **D**, not visible from the walk, was a wharf where coal from Conygre Lower Pit was loaded onto canal boats. A tramway ran down the hill from the pit, crossing under the Radford to Tunley road. Later the canal tramway was replaced by a railway connection on the Radford side of the pit.

From **D** to **F** the walk follows the canal towpath; the canal ditch is visible in the field on the uphill side of the path.

E The Jolly Collier public house was originally built as a canal-side pub which also offered food and lodgings to the boatmen. Originally it faced the canal towpath, but after the canal closed, access was transferred to the side of the building which faced the road.

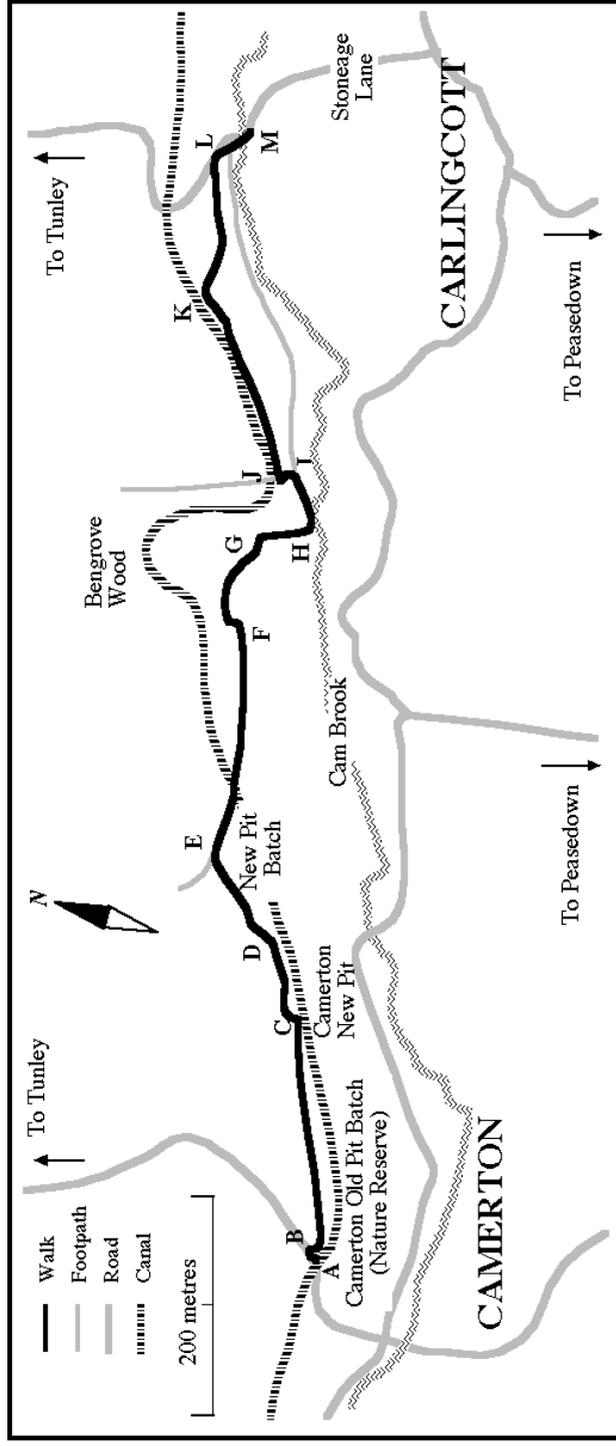
F Coke Oven Copse was the site of a group of ovens which took the coal from Camerton Old Pit and heated it to drive off the volatile impurities to leave coke. Coke was a purer form of carbon than coal and burned with a hotter flame and less smoke, which made it suitable for iron-melting furnaces and other blacksmithing work where greater heat

was needed with fewer impurities. Later, the coke-making process was transferred to gas works, where the volatile impurities were collected and treated to give 'Town Gas' (a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen) and many useful chemicals - the coke then being a less-valuable by-product.

G This was the site of Camerton Old Pit, the pit shaft is now sealed to prevent accidents, but its location and the history of the pit are marked by display boards. The 'batch' or waste tip is maintained as a nature reserve; it is long and low, showing that it was tipped by horse and cart as opposed to the later conical batches which result from mechanical tipping. The fibreglass statue of a miner was an exhibit at the Festival of Britain in 1951, which was purchased by The Jolly Collier and displayed in the car park until the pub closed, then moved to its present site. The canal ran very close to the northern side of the pit; this is the only pit in Somerset which was so close to the canal that it didn't need any sort of intervening tramway or other transport.

CAMERTON

CARLINGCOTT



Camerton to Carlingcott

1.6 km or 1 mile

Carlingcott to Camerton

From Camerton Batch Nature Reserve **A** go up the road and take the first turning on the right **B**. Go straight on through the alleyway and along the track to Camerton New Pit **C**.

The public footpath continues straight ahead through the garden of a house and through a gateway to the left of the pit batch.

F of St. Michael's Church, Monkton Combe.

At the top of the slope, take the road to the right, then a right turn brings you down a short hill to the Church **G**.

(Continued as Walk 10)

From the bridge over the Cam Brook at Stoneage Lane **M** walk towards Tunley and then turn left through a gate **L** opposite the first house into a field.

Look for a gateway **K** in the hedgerow of the embankment up the slope on your right.

Things to see on Walk 9

B Behind the Hope & Anchor pub, the footpath diverts around the site of the Weigh-House **C**, a boat weighing machine that was used to measure the weight of cargo carried on each boat and calculate the payments to be made to the canal company. It was one of only three in the country. The boat was floated into a lock with a cradle at the bottom; when the lock was emptied, the boat settled on the cradle and could be weighed by balancing its weight against weights in a pan hung from a compound lever system inside an office beside the lock. To withstand the weight of a boat, the machine was supported on the tops of six pillars which were roofed-over in the style of a Greek temple (See logo on front cover).

D William 'Strata' Smith, the "Father of English Geology" bought a large plot of ground at Tucking Mill, stretching from the

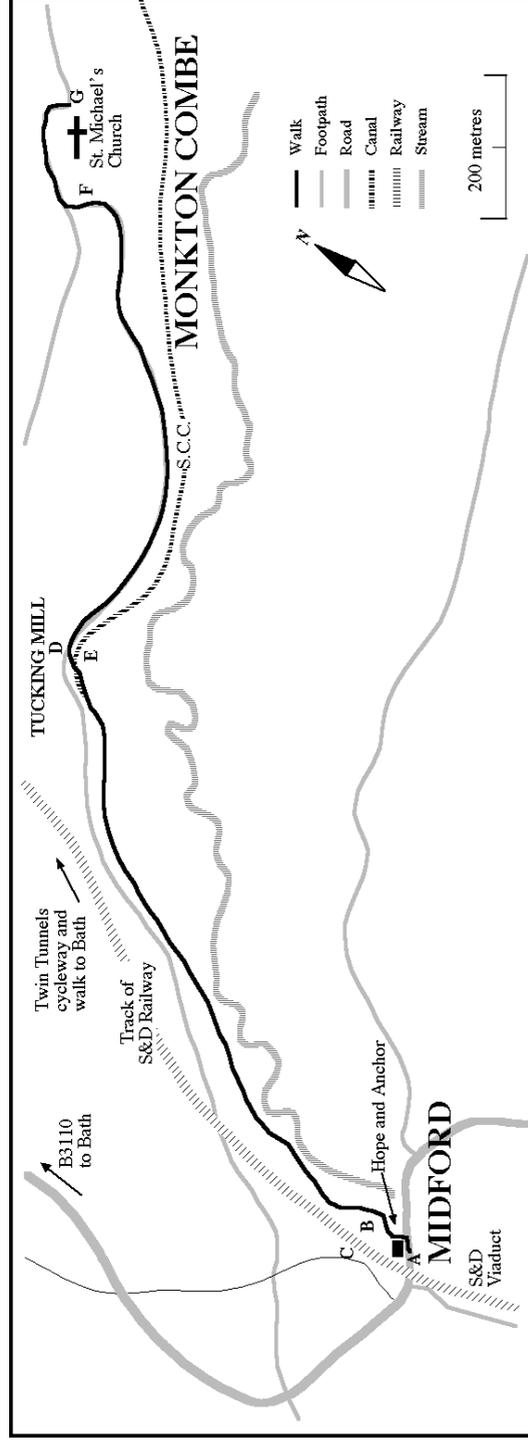


William Smith's House
at Tucking Mill

Cam Brook to the edge of Combe Down. He re-sold some of the ground to the Somersetshire Coal Canal Company and then established a number of enterprises on the remainder. From a quarry at Combe Down, he built a tramway to bring the stone down to the canal, from where it could be dispatched to buyers anywhere in the South of England. For access to his land, and possibly to extend the tramway, he built a stone arched bridge over the canal. He designed a watermill-power sawing machine for cutting and facing the stone to increase its value, built a handsome cottage for the miller to live in and a house for himself, both of which still survive. The mill was later converted to many other uses that required a source of power and was only demolished relatively recently.

Smith's main contribution to commercial geology was the realisation that different strata and rock types which had previously been given a general classification could be more accurately described by the fossils they contained. Once they were more precisely classified, he could see that they usually followed a set order and it was possible to predict which minerals might be found at depth by means of shallower test borings. (See Walk 5 for more details)

F The grave of Harry Patch, the last survivor of the First World War, is to be found in Monkton Combe graveyard.



1.9 km or 1.2 miles

Midford to Monkton Combe

A From the Hope & Anchor pub in Midford, walk down the road, noting the parapets of the canal bridge. Just below the bridge turn left onto a footpath which eventually becomes the canal towpath **B**.

Follow the towpath as far as Tucking Mill where it joins the road **D**. Continue up the road in the same direction as before. The road continues to a sharp left turn which uphill leads past the cemetery

Follow the fence on your right along the edge of the batch, through a gateway **D** and onto a track **E**.

Go down the track, following the fence on your left to a gate **F**. Through the gate continue in the same direction as before, following the fence on your right to a gateway onto a track **G**.

Follow the track to the left, around a right-hand bend and straight on towards a bridge across the Cam Brook **H**. Just before the bridge take the footpath to the left. Up the slope **I**, take the steps up through a gateway on the left **J**.

Turn right and follow the track along the hedgerow until it reaches steps **K** leading down to a kissing gate.

In the field below the gate, veer leftwards and down to a gateway **L** leading onto Stoneage Lane.

Turn right towards the bridge **M** over the Cam Brook. (Continued as Walk 4)

Monkton Combe to Midford

G Go uphill from the church main gates, then, after a left corner, take the downhill lane on the left, which goes past the cemetery **F**. At the bottom of the slope, the road turns right and continues to Tucking Mill **D**.

E Opposite William Smith's house at Tucking Mill, take the footpath to the left. Continue to follow the path until you get to the B3110 at Midford **A**. (Continued as Walk 8)

Climb the steps through the gateway, turn left and follow the level track. At the end of the track **J** turn left down steps through a gate onto a footpath **I**.

Follow the footpath down to the right until it emerges onto a lane **H**.

Turn right and follow the lane until it turns a left corner; go around the corner and through a gate **G** on the right.

Follow the fence on your left up a slope and down again to a gate **F** on the left.

Through the gate follow the fence on your right uphill to Camerton colliery batch **E**.

Follow the fence on your left around the batch, continue following the fence through a gate **D** until you come to a gateway into a garden **C**.

The public footpath runs through the garden and out of the drive gateway. Go straight ahead along the track; where it turns right, carry straight on through an alley and emerge onto the road **B**.

Turn left to the Camerton Batch Nature Reserve **A**. (Continued as Walk 2)

Things to see on Walk 3

B to C The track runs along the alignment of a tramway which connected Camerton Old and New pits.

C The buildings around the pit head have been demolished, although the foundation stonework for the pithead gear is still in place. The pithead baths and canteen alongside the track have been converted into a house.

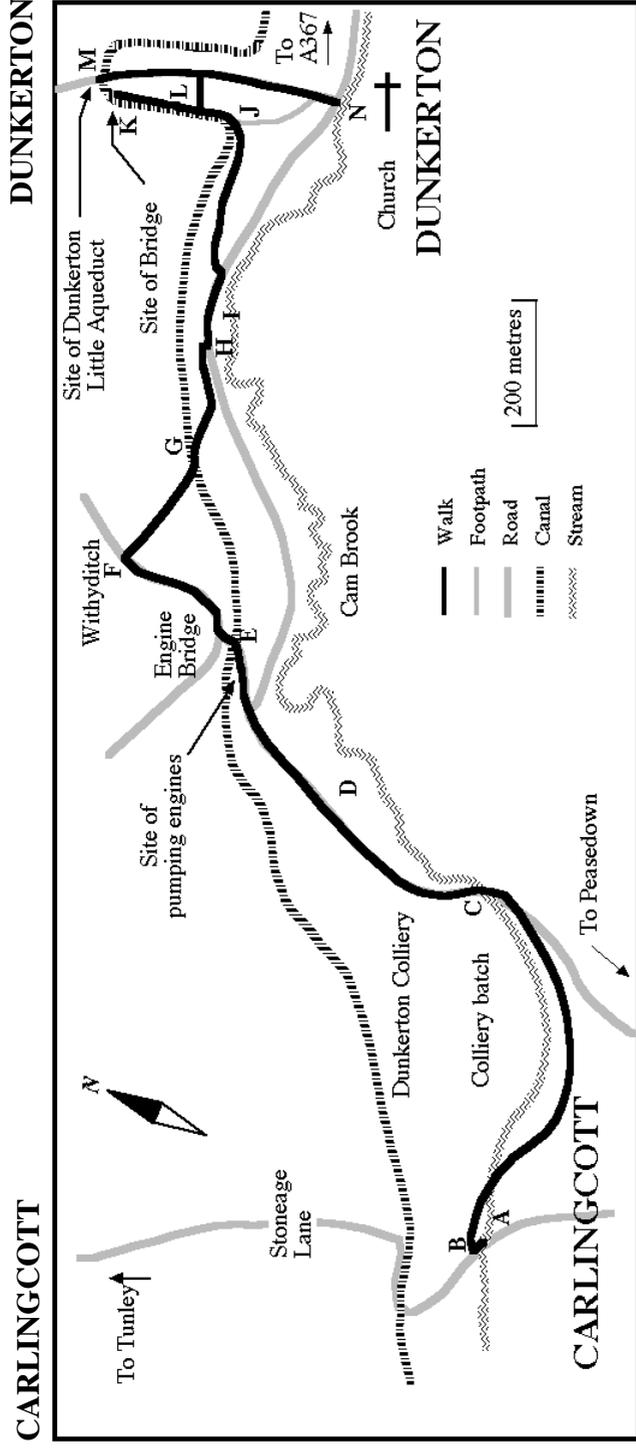
A tramway took coal up the hill towards Tunley, where a depôt was established for local sales.

D The conical batch of New Pit has spilled over the canal, obliterating it completely.

F to G The line of the canal ran along a hillside contour, but it has been infilled and nothing of it is visible today.

G The canal in Bengrove Wood formed a natural triangular lake in a small valley that ran down the hillside; the lake still appears after heavy rain.

J This track continues uphill to the site of "Cuckoo Pit", but the walk runs along the hillside on the line of the old railway just below the canal embankment.



1.6 km or 1 mile

Carlingcott to Dunkerton

From the bridge **A** over the Cam Brook at Stoneage Lane walk in the direction of Tunley and take the footpath immediately on the right **B**. Follow this path alongside the Cam Brook to a road **C**. Go left over a hump-backed stone bridge, past the sewage works **D** on the right and take the left fork up to Engine Bridge **E**. Continue up hill

the canal will become apparent.

D At the point where the canal is blocked by a disused railway embankment, turn right, then follow the path left, alongside the Cam Brook under the double railway arch.

Turn left, away from the brook, then turn right to pick up the previous line of the canal **E**.

Follow the raised towpath, passing a stone bridge **F** on your left and Midford Aqueduct **G** on your right; follow the towpath until the way is blocked by a private garden **H**.

Turn left, cross the canal bed, then go right through a kissing gate and continue along the track under a metal bridge and a railway viaduct, to emerge on the B3110 opposite the Hope & Anchor pub in Midford **I**.
(Continued as Walk 9)

Dunkerton to Carlingcott

N Opposite Dunkerton Church, go up the lane past the Parish Hall, stop immediately after the first house on the right at the site of Dunkerton Little Aqueduct **M**.

Return down the lane 50 metres and climb the steps and footpath **L** on the right.

At the top of the footpath, turn right 30 metres to the site of a stone

and follow the foot of the embankment back to the canal towpath **D**.

Continue along the towpath with the canal on your right until you have passed the derelict chambers of locks 22, 21 & 20, then climb steps to reach a gate leading into Southstoke Lane **C**, a bridleway.

Turn right, up Southstoke Lane, then immediately left onto a path along the top of a stone wharf wall with the canal on your left and a derelict stone structure on the right.

B At the end of the wall, follow the path left and then right; three infilled canal locks, 19, 18 & 17, are under the paddock on your right.

Continue up this path until you emerge through a kissing gate onto a road **A**.

(Continued as Walk 7)

Things to see on Walk 8

an unusual cross-section because it was raised to form a temporary railway embankment for the contractor's locomotives bringing in materials to build the Camerton to Limpley Stoke Railway.

D to E The railway cut across the derelict canal on an embankment; no provision was made for taking the towpath through the embankment, a diversion through the nearby bridge arch being considered sufficient..

F Upper Midford Accommodation Bridge is the only surviving bridge on the canal still visible to the public. It carried the road from Combe Down to Twinhoe across the canal before the Somerset and Dorset Railway provided an alternative route next to their viaduct in Midford.

G Midford Aqueduct carried the Southern Branch of the canal from Radstock across the Cam Brook to join the Northern Branch. It became disused when the S&D Railway was built over the Southern Branch. Recently restored, this aqueduct is one of the few architecturally pleasing structures on an otherwise utilitarian canal.

A The road crossed over the canal at this point - and the hump which the bridge created can just be discerned in the road surface. There is a dip in the public footpath adjacent to the downhill corner of the railway embankment, which corresponds to the tail of Lock 16. Locks 17, 18 & 19 have been filled in, but the pound **B** below Lock 19 is still untouched. The Lower Leat can be seen leading off below the locks towards the bottom of the Inclined Plane [see Walk 7]

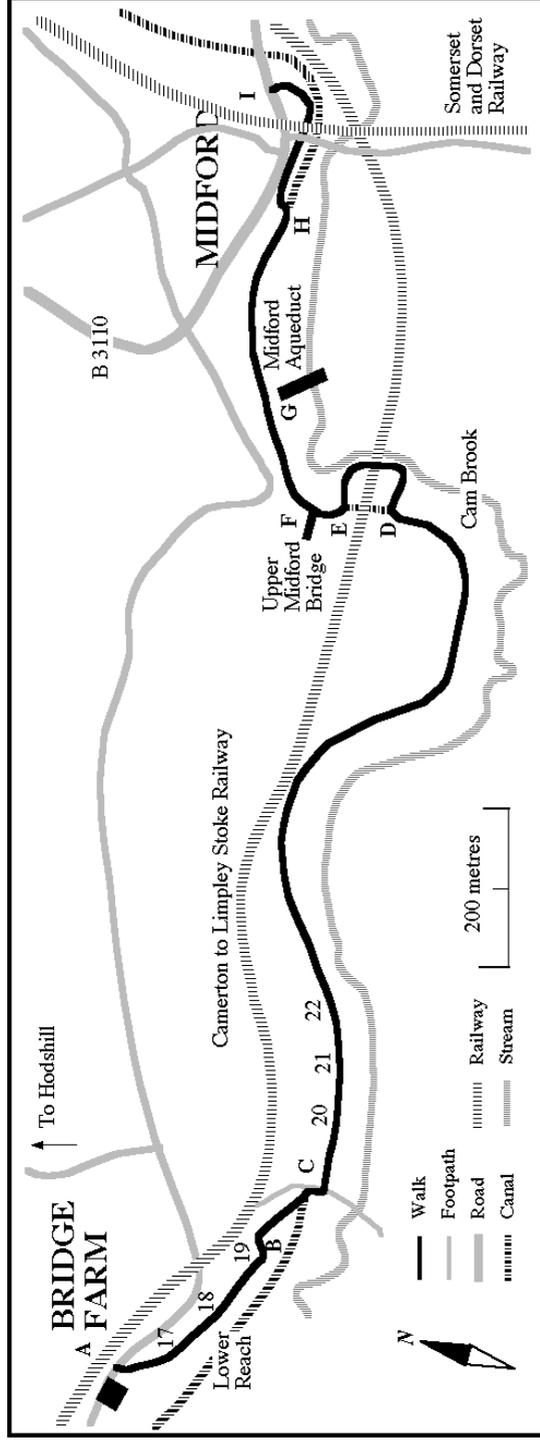
B The stone structure is believed to have been a staithe for supporting a wooden chute which loaded Fuller's Earth into boats waiting at the wharf. There was a Fuller's Earth mine at Hodshill nearby.

C Southstoke Bridge was demolished in the 1960s, but a small section of the N.E wing wall stonework can be seen from the bottom of the steps. Locks 20, 21 & 22 are in various states of decay and infilling, but their outline is clearly visible. The canal embankment along this stretch has

BRIDGE FARM

LOWER LOCK FLIGHT

MIDFORD



Bridge Farm to Midford

2 km or 1.2 miles

Midford to Bridge Farm

A From the road outside Bridge Farm, follow the downhill footpath through a kissing gate to a continuation of the towpath with infilled locks 17, 18 & 19 forming a grassy paddock on your left.

B The path turns sharp left and then right, then runs along the top of a stone wharf with a derelict stone structure on your left.

C At Southstoke Lane, a bridleway, turn right downhill and immediately left down steps, to continue in the same direction as before

On your left are the derelict chambers of locks 20, 21 & 22; gradually to the right.

Opposite Withyditch Chapel **F** go through the gate on the right, down steps, and straight down the field to another gate **G**.

Cross the old railway alignment and go diagonally leftwards down the embankment, through a gate and down to a gateway in the bottom left corner of the field **H**. Emerge onto the road and turn left.

Go through the next gateway on the left **I** and up the field diagonally to the right.

Through the gate **J** turn left up the lane. 30 metres beyond the house, come to the site of a bridge **K**.

Return down the lane and turn left down some steps and a footpath **L** just before the house.

At the bottom of the footpath, emerge onto a road and turn left to the site of Dunkerton Little Aqueduct **M**, which is immediately after the first house on the right.

Turn around and go down the road to Dunkerton Church **N**.

(Continued as Walk 5)

I From the the Hope & Anchor pub, cross the B3110 and descend the steps directly opposite.

Follow the path under the railway viaduct and metal bridge, after 100 metres go through a gate **H** to the canal bed.

Join the canal towpath and follow it past Midford Aqueduct **G** on the left and a stone bridge **F** on the right until you reach a railway embankment.

E Turn left at the embankment, then right under the double railway arch footbridge **K**.

Return down the footpath until it becomes a metalled lane, go through a gate **J** into the field on the right and keep to a path just below but almost parallel to the railway and canal embankment. Follow this path, gradually diverging from the embankment, downhill to a gateway **I** into the lane on your left.

Through the gateway turn right along the lane 150 metres, then go through another gateway **H** on the right; walk parallel with the road in the same direction as before, after 100 metres veer right and gradually climb the hill to a gateway **G**.

Cross the line of the canal and railway, then through a second gate and up the hill to Withyditch Chapel **F**, which is visible on the horizon. Turn left down the lane to Engine Bridge **E**, then continue downhill to a road junction, veer right.

Follow the road past the sewage works **D** on the left, and cross the Cam Brook by a hump-backed stone bridge **C**. Take the footpath on the right and follow the Cam Brook until you come to Stoneage Lane **B** with a bridge on your left **A**. (Continued as Walk 3)

Things to see on Walk 4

B to C The stream was diverted to flow around the lower edge of Dunkerton Colliery batch, the canal followed the upper edge and was partly covered by spill from the batch. Much of the rest of it was destroyed during the building of the colliery railway sidings.

E This is the site of the two steam-operated beam pumping engines which kept the canal supplied with water from the mill pond below. Originally one of the engines was located in Engine Wood [see Walk 7] but it was moved here in the 1840s. It was the failure of the boilers in the late 1890s which deprived the canal of its main water supply and

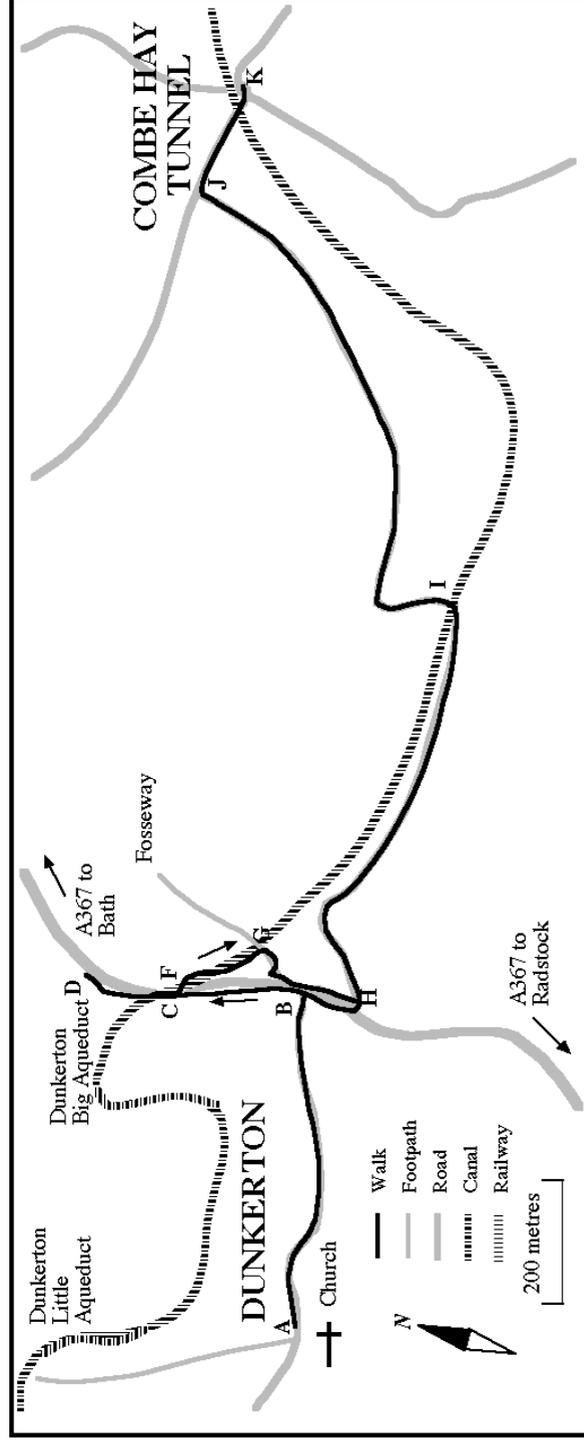
sealed its closure. The site was cleared in the early 1900s to make way for the railway to Dunkerton Colliery and the bridge was rebuilt in brick.

K The foundations and part of the parapet of a footbridge can be found on one side of the path and the canal approach to Dunkerton Little Aqueduct is visible on the opposite side.

M Dunkerton Little Aqueduct carried the canal across The Hollow. The archway was demolished in the 1960s but some stonework is still visible at one side of the road and the canal bed is high up on the other.

DUNKERTON

COMBE HAY TUNNEL



1.2 km or 0.82 miles

Dunkerton to Combe Hay Tunnel

- A** With your back to Dunkerton Church, turn right and go along the road to the A367
- B** Turn left uphill to the layby **C** and then continue a further 100 metres to view **D** Dunkerton Big Aqueduct in the valley on your left. Return downhill to the bottom of the layby, then cross the A367 to the track **F** opposite.

Combe Hay Tunnel to Dunkerton

- With your back to the thatched cottage **K** and the grassy triangle on your right, go up the lane which is in front of you but slightly to the left. Turn left at the first junction **J**.
- Continue past a left hand bend and a right hand bend **I**, after which the canal embankment wall will be seen gradually emerging above the right hand side of the road.
- At the junction **H** with the A367, cross the road and turn right uphill.

Rowley Farm to Bridge Farm

- A** The public footpath continues straight through Rowley Farm, then follow the track until it reaches private property.
- B** Turn right downhill following the field boundary fence to meet the canal at the bottom **C**.
- Turn left and follow the canal towpath until you reach the site of the pumping engine **D**, the path veers to the right of the engine site and then descends very steeply.
- E** At the bottom of the slope, cross the small wooden plank bridge over "The Bull's Nose" stream.
- Turn right and walk down the path past the locks.
- Pass locks 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15 **F** on your right, then go through the railway arch **G** to the road **H**.
- (Continued as Walk 8)

Bridge Farm to Rowley Farm

- H** From the road go through the railway arch **G** to a view of Lock 15.
- F** Take the path on the right of Lock 15.
- Pass locks 15, 14, 13, 12 & 11 on your left, then follow the path which branches to the left.
- E** Cross the small wooden plank bridge over "The Bull's Nose" stream. Climb the steep path to Engine Wood **D**; at the top, the site of the pumping engine is on your right and the Upper Reach of the canal leads away to the left.
- Follow the towpath along the Upper Reach of the canal.
- C** When you reach the end of the accessible towpath, turn right and follow the track to the top of the field.
- B** At the top of the field, turn left and take the track to Rowley Farm **A**.
- (Continued as Walk 6)

Things to see on Walk 7

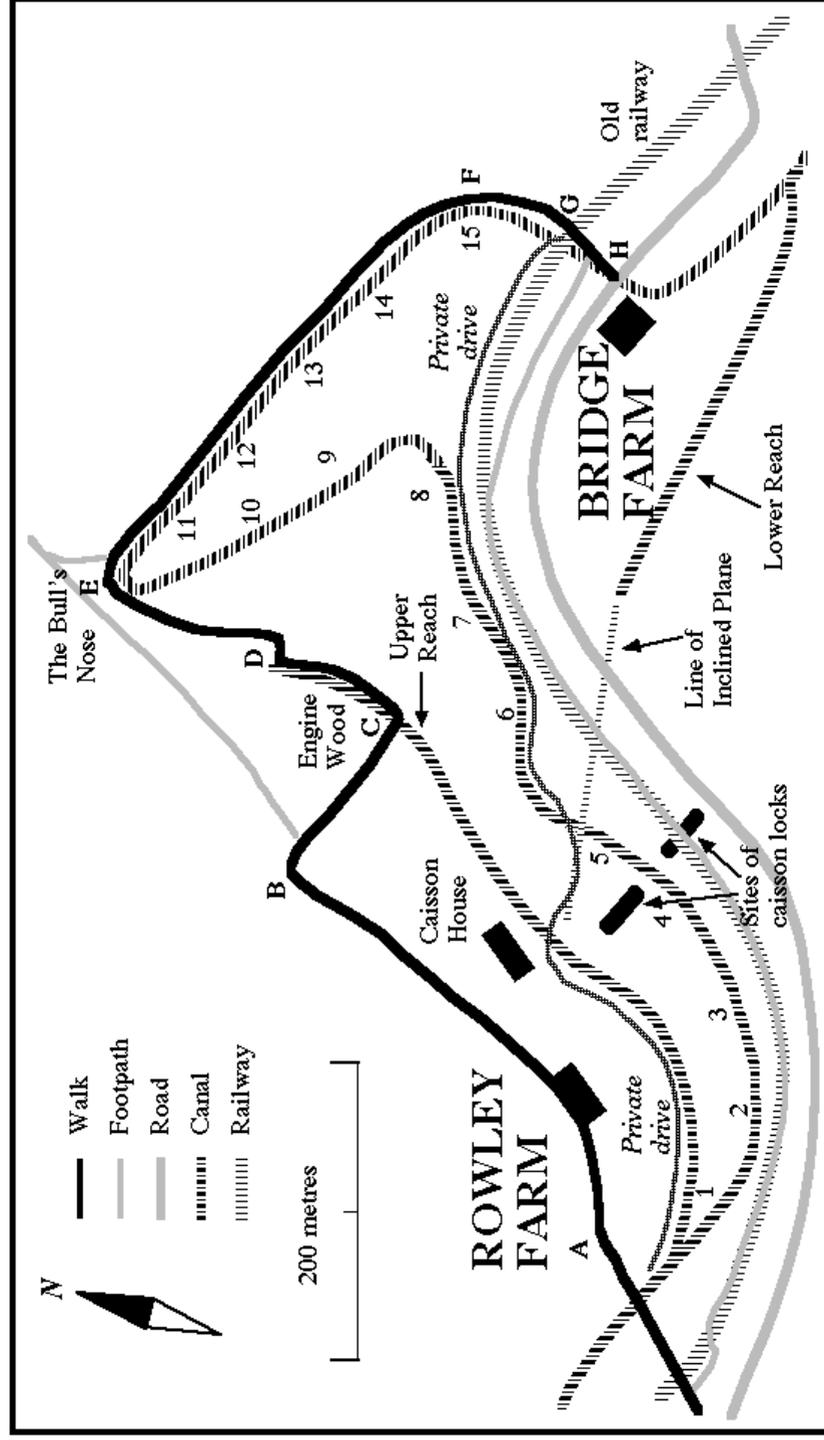
The upper and lower sections of the canal differed in height by 135 ft (41 metres) so a lock flight was planned to carry boats between the two levels. Before construction could begin, a newly-invented boat lift, Robert Weldon's Hydrostatick Caisson Lock, promised a more economical solution. One Caisson Lock was built and work begun on a second when problems caused by geology and the available materials of the day caused a catastrophic failure. A temporary Inclined Plane (gravity-operated funicular railway) was installed to get the coal trade going while funds were raised to build the previously-planned lock flight. The Lower Reach extended the canal to an unloading platform at the bottom of the plane and was fed with water by a leat from the Cam Brook.

The lock flight needed a water supply, so a Boulton & Watt beam engine

was installed to raise water to the Upper Reach, constantly replenishing the top level of the canal above Lock 1. The water came from the Cam Brook Leat, with a cut-off section of the Lower Reach acting as a silt settlement pond. From there it was conveyed by a tunnel dug deep underground to the bottom of the pumping engine well.

When the canal closed, a railway was built along the valley, cutting into the towpath below Locks 2 & 3 and crossing the lock flight at Lock 16, which has been lost underneath the embankment **G**.

NOTE: When the Caisson failed it was demolished and the area landscaped, there is nothing left on the surface or for some considerable depth, so please do not be tempted to trespass or for some considerable search of any remains.



1.5 km or 0.9 miles

Follow the track to a laneway **G** and turn right, downhill.

Rejoin the A367 and continue downhill to turn left **H** into the Combe Hay road.

Follow the road down and then up to a right hand bend, continue with the canal embankment wall on your left as far as the first left corner **I**. Continue to follow the road through a right hand corner and then turn right, downhill, at the 'T' junction **J**.

The road reaches a crossroads **K**, underneath which is Combe Hay Tunnel. (Continued as Walk 6)

Continue uphill past the Dunkerton road **B** to the layby **C** and then continue a further 100 metres **D** to view Dunkerton Big Aqueduct in the valley on your left.

Return downhill to the bottom of the layby, then cross the A367 to the track **F** opposite.

Follow the track to a laneway **G** and turn right, downhill.

Rejoin the A367. Continue downhill to cross the A367 at **B** into the Dunkerton Road.

Walk along the road to the church **A**.

(Continued as Walk 4)

Things to see on Walk 5

C Originally the canal ran through a bridge under the old road, one parapet is still visible in the grass between the layby and the modern road, the other forms part of the layby wall.

D Dunkerton Big Aqueduct spanned the Severcombe Valley and the arch was big enough to take laden farm carts. A stream which runs down the valley was diverted through the archway in an underground stone conduit.

F A milestone (minus its plate) survives on the bank beside the canal

G This was the site of Fosseway Bridge over the canal.

H The row of houses here was once The Swan Inn, where William Smith lodged whilst surveying the canal route and one evening wrote in his diary a note about something he had discovered during his work on the canal that day. He wrote that fossils were laid down in a consistent order and could be used to identify strata in a much more accurate way than the previous approximate classification. This meant that he could identify the position of samples from trial borings in the succession of

strata and predict the probability of striking valuable coal seams and other minerals. This discovery founded the modern science of Geology.

[See Walk 9 for more details]

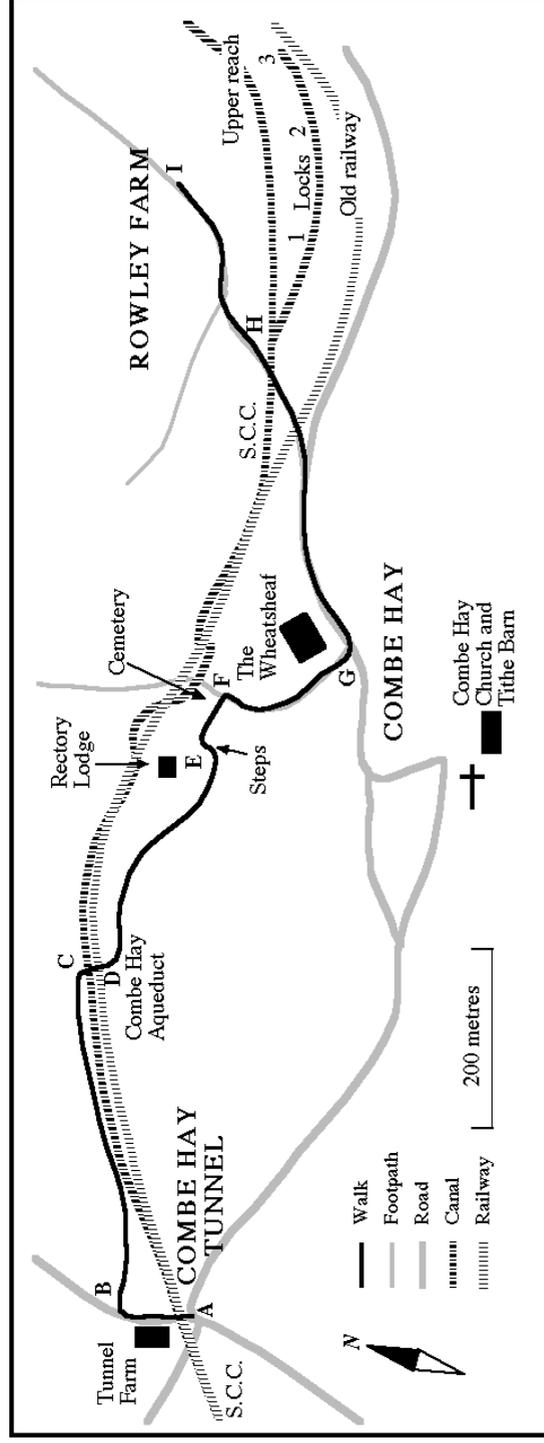
I This was the site of a swivel bridge across the canal, the road was diverted from its original straight line so as to cross at right angles. In the stable yard nearby is a milestone recovered from the canal.

I to K The line of the canal was obliterated by the railway, which has in turn been obliterated by landfill.

K Combe Hay Tunnel, which runs diagonally underneath the cross roads, was originally built as a canal tunnel, but was later deepened and widened to take the railway line. Some of the canal stonework is still visible behind the eastern portal and forming the back wall of the tunnel 'refuges'. When the railway was being built, the main 'base camp' for the contractors was established in temporary wooden huts alongside the canal on the Combe Hay side of the tunnel.

COMBE HAY TUNNEL

ROWLEY FARM



1.3 km or 0.8 miles

Combe Hay Tunnel to Rowley Farm

A With the thatched cottage behind you and the grassy triangle in front, walk across the triangle and up the road, look for a permissive path on the right.

B Take the permissive path, keeping close to the boundary fence on your left (this diverges from the made-up driveway).

The path slopes down the side of an embankment **C** then turns right into the tunnel of Combe Hay Aqueduct, which is shared with a stream.

D Emerging from the tunnel, turn left and follow the woodland path to some steps.

E Climb the steps and turn right, along the drive of Rectory Lodge.

F At the laneway, turn right and go downhill to meet the road at The Wheatsheaf pub.

G Turn left up the road, then take the next left fork uphill to **H**, Lock 1, and Rowley Farm **I**.
(Continued as Walk 7)

Rowley Farm to Combe Hay Tunnel

I Walk down the track from Rowley Farm past Lock 1 **H** and bear right at the road junction.

Continue downhill until you reach The Wheatsheaf pub **G**, turn right and walk up the steep lane on the left of the pub car park access road.

F At the cemetery gates turn left down the drive of Rectory Lodge.

Before the Lodge entrance, go down steps **E** on the left and follow the path through woodland.

D The path turns right into the tunnel of Combe Hay Aqueduct, which is shared with a stream.

C At the far end of the tunnel, turn sharp left and follow the permissive path up the embankment slope with a boundary fence on your right.

Continue following the boundary fence until you reach the road **B**.
Turn left down the road to Combe Hay Tunnel **A**.
(Continued as Walk 5)

Things to see on Walk 6

B The permissive path runs alongside a driveway which was built on the course of the railway which, in turn, was built on the course of the canal.

C to D The railway re-used the alignment of the canal, but a wider embankment was needed at this point for greater strength. The existing aqueduct tunnel was left in place, but lengthened at each end to allow for the wider base of the embankment. Inside the aqueduct tunnel the central section is the original canal structure which was arched with stone, whilst the two outer sections are made of brick and were added later during the railway construction. There is evidence that part of the central stone section was strengthened at some time by an additional stone ring. The railway engineering plans show that the stream was intended to run in a conduit underneath the stone slabs, but the conduit appears to be blocked and the slabs broken in places.

H The canal splits into two branches; the Upper Reach continues along

the contour leading ultimately to the pumping engine site, the main line goes down the lock flight, numbered from 1 at the top to 22 at the bottom. The Upper Reach was originally created to feed the Caisson Locks [see Walk 7] but was eventually extended to form a convenient way of taking coal supplies to the pumping engine and returning water from the engine into the highest part of the canal above the lock flight. When the Caisson Locks failed, a temporary Inclined Plane railway was used to carry coal from the Upper Reach to the Lower Reach to get the trade going while the lock flight was being constructed.

The spillways built into the top paddle stonework of Lock 1 set the level of the entire length of canal from here to Paulton. The small wharf wall has mooring rings set into the top of it and these would have been to tie up boats waiting their turn to go down the lock flight; an old photograph shows that there was a well-beaten track from here down to a pub in the valley.