

## **T&S Canal Co Letters Reporting Activities in 1816**

Weekly letters from Brimscombe Agent J R Denyer to Company Treasurer J S Salt in London reporting on current issues, including:

Depressed sale of coal at Lechlade attributed to depressed state of agriculture and commerce. Many canals are suffering. Situation beyond precedent. Imports limited and prices reduced. Balance of the half-yearly statement is the smallest ever remembered. Repairs to Wallbridge lock gates carried out when Stroud Canal stopped for repairs. Forest coal owners introduced their coal to distant markets on the River Thames as T&S Co agreed an additional drawback. Forest coal well received.

### **9 January 1816. From Mr Procter**

On the opposite side you have the miller's account for water taken at the Barton Mill for the use of the T&S Canal Navigation, apparently to the prejudice of their mills, for the year 1815, which I will thank you to give order for payment at the usual time. Total £468 4 7d.

### **9 January 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed.

In consequence of Mr Procter having informed that he shall require nearly £500 (to pay the Churn millers for water) the latter end of this month, and being desirous of paying Corpus College for their land without drawing upon you, together with half year property tax which I expect to be called for every day, I have commenced increasing the balance of cash at this place to answer the same and hope to be able to do it out of the monies to be received.

With the stamps mentioned in my letter of 26 ult, I shall be obliged by receiving a card of the Committee meetings - if enclosed in the first parcel to Mr Miller will be quite soon enough.

### **16 January 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed. I should be glad to see the sales improve at Lechlade Wharf, having a capital stock of coal there. I am of course beginning to lessen the importation until a reduction in the quantity at present on hand has taken place.

Bills drawn:

14 January 1816. To Thomas Ball or order 2 months £94 46 11d.

8 January 1816. To William Collett or order 2 months £72 11 3d.

11 January 1816. To Hughes & Powell or order 2 months £38 10 3d.

### **23 January 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed. The Bankers book is also returned, the ledger at this place being made to agree therewith.

### **6 February 1816**

The cash account, weekly return etc are enclosed.

De Grave & Son bill for repairing steel yards £2 7 0d you will be so good as pay. I have enclosed the bills.

Mr Hipsley informs me in his return you have enquired the cause of the dull sale of coal at Lechlade and that in reply thereto, he, amongst other reasons, stated it to be partly in consequence of the Company's charge for Housage of Grain. This however I must beg leave to remark is completely erroneous. The principal and almost only cause as it regards Lechlade being the unprecedented depressed state of Agriculture and Commerce, one fire being made to answer the purposes of three or four even in most respectable houses. This Mr Hipsley might readily imagine if he for one moment recollected that most of the wagons which formerly took 2 tons now only take 10 hundredweight of coal from the wharf. With

respect to the grain trade, there never was so little business done in it during the period I have been at this place. Indeed all business appears to have received a most severe shock universally, and I believe most canals feel it in a greater or less degree. Indeed I know many of them do, viz the Oxford, Kennet & Avon and the canals in the North generally. Most of the grain sold at Cirencester market is now delivered to the purchasers' homes by the grower, who thus finds employment for his horses, and in all cases where the delivery is to Bristol or Bath, the wagon is loaded on its return from the Sodbury pits. The consequence is a very great falling off in the sale of coal at Cirencester Wharf, but has no reference to Lechlade with regard to Sodbury coal.

I shall be much obliged by your paying the Sun Life Assurance Office annual premium £14 5 0d on the 23rd of this month.

### **13 February 1816**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

On the other side you have a copy of an advertisement which appeared in the Gloster Journal of yesterday respecting Forest Coal. Bilston & Newport will no doubt experience a similar reduction. The present severe weather will I hope tend to considerably reduce the stock at Lechlade. I desired Mr Hipsley to commence the present week with a reduction upon Bilston & Forest of 2s per ton in order, if possible, to increase the sales, still however retaining a sufficient profit to remunerate for interest of money and expenses, in addition to its having paid the full tonnage of 4s 3d. The stock at this place belonging to the Company is but trifling, and the Bilston & Forest was purchased subject to any reduction that might take place.

PS. The stocks of coals belonging to individuals at the different wharfs is very considerable. Mr Baker's at this place is very great. The prices prior to the reduction stated in the advertisement Low Delf 12s, High Delf 9s 6d.

#### **(Copy of Advertisement) Coal Trade**

The public are informed that Forest of Dean coals are selling at Lydney on the wharfs at the following reduced prices, viz:

Best Low Delf Hard Coal 10s per ton

Best High Delf Hard Coal 8s per ton

Lime Coal 4s per ton

### **19 February 1816**

The weekly papers are enclosed.

In the Oxford Paper are some remarks upon the subject of the Kennet & Avon Canal Co applying to Parliament for an increase of tolls. This appears to me to be favourable for the T&S Canal, if I understand the thing right from the statement in the paper, as it affects coal passing into the Wilts & Berks and will consequently give the T&S greater advantages by means of the North Wilts. I have also enclosed a printed bill issued by the Stroud Canal Co reducing the price of coal by which they will suffer a loss of nearly £200, their stock being considerable, but being situated at what may be called the mouth of the market, they are compelled to do so to prevent the public being served by individuals who have purchased at the late reduced prices. I perceive by Hipsley's return that he did not lower the price of Bilston & Forest (as stated in my last) in consequence no doubt of the severe weather.

I have drawn upon you since my last advice as under to pay for timber and for repairs:

14 February 1816. To Joseph Dowson & Co or order 2 months £96 8 5d.

### **27 February 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are sent herewith.

The alteration that has taken place within the last few months in the trade on this canal, both in coal and merchandise, is beyond all precedent and will be seriously felt, I am afraid, in the net proceeds for the present year. The quantity of coal sold along the line during the winter is much less than I ever remember, consequently the wharfs have all great stocks upon them. I am discontinuing all importation on the Company's account as fast as the different agreements and circumstances will admit it until a reduction has been made in the quantity on hand.

### **12 March 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed.

I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to transfer £130, part of the balance in their hands, to you on account of the Proprietors. The balance remaining is not yet all in cash, being bills upon Bristol which when due are paid by the Bankers of that place by other bills upon London at 21 days. I shall be at Cirencester in a few days by which time a sufficiency will be near enough due to enable us to remit you their bill at one month for £70. I must however beg leave to observe that I shall require a very heavy sum, from £200 to £300, to make the cash payments, due on and about the 25 inst, towards which I am afraid but little will be received in tonnage etc, trade upon the canal being I think less than I ever remember it. With respect to the balances at the wharfs, I am fearful I shall have to pay instead of receive. This is the case upon most canals as well as this. The W&B Coal Co. I learn have discontinued all their boats but three, and not a fourth of the Kennet & Avon boats have employ and it's the same in the North.

Having discontinued importing coal, I shall not have occasion to draw upon you for any serious sum after the present quarter and which is not so much as usual by very considerable(sic), so that what money Mr Hipsley may remit will not be required for the payment of drafts but disposable in such other ways as may be required.

### **19 March 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed. You have also enclosed Pitt & Co on Esdaile & Co at 1 month £70 to the credit of the Proprietors of the T&S Canal. the receipt be pleased to acknowledge per return.

### **26 March 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed. The undermentioned bill has been drawn upon you to pay for coal:

20 March 1860. To Parkend Coal Co or order 2 months £93 9 10d.

### **2 April 1816**

Enclosed you have E L Loveden on Child & Co for £78 11 6d to the credit of the Proprietors of the Thames & Severn Canal Co, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge. You will also receive the cash account and weekly papers with this. I shall be obliged by receiving the Bankers book or particulars of such entries as may come in prior to this day

### **14 April 1816**

With this you will receive the Bankers book, half-yearly statement of receipts and payments, balance sheet of Proprietors' Ledger, list of Proprietors, two cash accounts and two weekly returns.

I am sorry to have to observe that the balance of the half yearly statement is the smallest I ever remember, being only £382 3 5d. The deficiency arises entirely from the depressed state of Commerce so universally felt throughout the kingdom and not from an increased expenditure. This will be seen by a comparison with the corresponding half year of 1815, the amount of receipts for that period being £1158 more than the present, the expenditure also

being about £20 beyond the present, thereby fully proving the deficiency to be attributable to the loss of trade, arising from the cause before mentioned. I am very fearful the ensuing half year will be infinitely worse unless an unexpected alteration takes place with respect to the commerce of this Kingdom.

On the other side are particulars of a bill drawn to pay for coal had last quarter. This, with the exception of about £40 to the Speedwell Coal Co, is the last bill I shall have occasion to draw upon you for coals purchased, and I do not purpose buying any (except a cargo of Tenby) for some months to come, unless a reduction in the stock at Lechlade takes place sooner than I expect.

**3 April 1816.** To Thomas Ball or order at 2 months £100.

**14 May 1816**

The cash accounts, weekly returns etc for the last three-weeks are enclosed.

**28 May 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed.

I have not heard anything further respecting the land at Oxford from Mr Cox since I attended the General Meeting in London.

**4 June 1816**

With this you will receive the customary weekly papers. I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to transfer £100 to you during the present week.

I have enclosed several reports respecting the Gloster & Berkeley Canal for the use of the Committee.

**25 June 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed.

I shall be obliged by receiving the Bankers book by Mr J Lane as I shall also £2 11 0d, the amount of dividend upon 3 shares in the T&S Canal, or it may be placed to account and I can receive it here, as you may prefer.

**9 July 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed together with the particulars of William J C Denne's shares in the T&S Canal. I have placed the £2 11s dividend to your debit and enclose the receipt

**16 July 1816**

The weekly papers are enclosed together with the Bankers book.

Mr Rolleston promised to pay £6 and Mr J Lane £21 5s to you, on my account. I shall be obliged by being informed if they have so done.

Bill drawn:

16 July 1816. Speedwell Co or order 2 months £37 2 7d.

**23 July 1816**

The weekly accounts are enclosed.

On Wednesday last a special Committee of the Thames Navigation arrived at this place in their shallop from Bristol (having gone there by Kennet & Avon Canal) upon a survey of the waters connected with the River Thames. The party consisted of six persons, members of the Corporation of London, including Mr Kirby, the Sheriff Elect. Upon my making a demand for the tonnage on the shallop, the Chairman, Mr Hulcombe informed me they had passed toll-free upon every canal they had hitherto been and wished me to state the business to the Committee, assuring me in the event of their desiring it to be paid, their surveyor Mr Leach

should immediately remit the amount upon being written to. To that effect. I shall therefore be obliged by directions how to act. The amount is £7 3 9d. The shallop I think is a complete masterpiece, having every convenience imaginable, and I hope I made proper use of the time I was on board her, with a view to the Committee boat about to be built.

**13 August 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed. I have desired Messrs Pitt & Co to pay you £100, part of the balance in their hands to the credit of T&S Co.

**6 August 1816**

Enclosed you have the cash account and weekly return. I have drawn upon you as under 29 July 1816. To Parkend Coal Co or order 2 months £14 3 6d.

**27 August 1816**

The cash accounts and weekly papers for the two last weeks are enclosed. Being obliged to attend upon the Jury at the Assizes held at Gloucester the greater part of last week, will explain the reason why they accompany each other.

I also enclose a report of the Thames Navigation Committee upon their survey stated in my letter of 23 July. I am glad to perceive that what I endeavoured to impress upon their minds, viz that the want of business upon this canal was in the greatest degree attributable to the bad navigation of the River Thames, particularly in the upper district, has not failed in its object, that of being remarked in their report, and I hope will eventually be productive of some good.

**3 September 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed.

**10 September 1816**

The weekly accounts are enclosed. I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co. to transfer £100 to you to the credit of the Proprietors of the T&S Canal.

**17 September 1816**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed

The Stroud Canal is stopped for repairs and will remain so during the whole of the present week, and I have embraced the opportunity of doing some necessary repairs to the lock gates at Wallbridge.

**24 September 1816**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

Mr Procter (of whose death I presume you have heard) was buried on Sunday last. I shall pay the requisite attention to that part of the canal until an arrangement takes place.

I shall be glad to receive the Banking book as soon after the 29th as convenient.

**8 October 1816**

Herewith you will receive the corresponding parts of cash notes remitted per post this day, total £60 15s to the credit of the Proprietors of the Thames & Severn Canal, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge per return. I shall be obliged by receiving the Banking book.

**8 October 1816**

Enclosed you have the halves of cash notes value £60 5s, the corresponding parts you will receive per coach.

**17 October 1816**

Herewith you will receive the usual weekly papers, together with the Half Yearly Statement of receipts and payments to 1 October, balance sheet to same period, and Bankers book. I fully expected to hear from Messrs Protheroe & Waters upon the subject of Forest Coal trade to Abingdon, which I intended to submit to the consideration of the Proprietors, but at present I am without any letter from them. Should one arrive in time for the General Meeting it shall be duly forwarded.

**19 October 1816**

I directed Messrs Pitt & Co to transfer this week £100, part of the balance in their hands to the Company's account with you, which I presume they have done.

The usual weekly papers are enclosed. I am yet without any letter from Mr Waters upon the subject of Forest Coal to Abingdon. Should one arrive in time for Monday's post, it shall be forwarded.

**21 October 1816**

Mr Miller yesterday sent a man to Mr Waters at his residence near Chepstow, who is this moment returned and says I shall receive a letter from Mr Waters by this day's post upon the subject of the Forest Coal trade to Abingdon but, as our post leaves Minchinhampton at 2 and we do not receive letters till 1:30, it will be quite impossible for me to make any remarks should they be necessary. I have therefore on the other side sketched out such resolution (agreeably to Mr Disney's instructions at Swindon) as appears to me to meet the application, presuming the letter to be conformable to the conversation that took place between Mr Waters and myself. Should it not be so, I shall not send it, otherwise I shall redirect it, as time will not permit more, and even then a man must overtake the post prior to its leaving Cirencester. The ..... left will be 1s 6d per ton at which price the Company in April seemed willing to let it pass in order to give it an introduction.

Messrs Protheroe and Waters having stated to this Company that they are now fully prepared to introduce Forest of Dean Coal to distant markets on the River Thames but that they cannot do so unless a further drawback of tonnage is allowed them than at present (see order 1 June 1814). In order therefore to promote the introduction of such coal, it is resolved that an additional drawback of 1 shilling per ton be allowed out of the tonnage upon all Forest of Dean Coal passing the whole length of this canal and going below Eynsham Bridge on the River Thames, between the first day of October 1816 and the 1st day of October 1817 upon the production of proper certificates that the same has been landed below the said Eynsham Bridge.

10 October 1816. Letter to J R Denyer from Parkend Coal Co, Lydney

We beg to remind you, preparatory to the General Assembly of the Thames & Severn Canal Company, that we have been and are forwarding coal to Abingdon on the faith of a drawback from them that will subject us to no more than the actual payment of 18 pence per ton for the whole length of their canal, and we feel pleasure in having to add that we have reason to believe a great proportion of the sale of coal at Abingdon will be supplied from hence, as long as the arrangements lately made are supported.

We succeeded in getting the Severn & Wye Railway Company to pass a resolution to take only 6d per ton tonnage for the whole length of the railway and canal in the event of the T&S Co taking only one shilling for theirs, but we think so great a sacrifice would only be necessary for one year unless the Oxford Canal Company have the power and means of a great reduction in their present rate of tonnage on coal passing down the Thames.

(The resolution to remain as stated in my letter, viz only 1s additional to be allowed) agreeable to the first part of this letter, the latter part not to be attended to.)

**29 October 1816**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed. I have drawn upon you at 1 month to George Rogers or order dated 22-inst for £6.10 5d, being for one year rent of land in the canal etc due to the Dean and Chapter of Bristol.

**5 November 1816**

The usual weekly papers are sent herewith. I have directed Pitt & Co to transfer £100 to you this week.

**12 November 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed.

The present rains with what has already fallen will, I have but little doubt, cause the springs to break and thereby do away the purchasing of water from the Churn and working the Engine. I have every reason to believe the expenses attending keeping water in the summit level for the last summer will not amount to so much as that preceding it by upwards of £300 (Engine and River Churn). The Coal is becoming very brisk along the line and down the Thames.

**19 November 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed.

**26 November 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed.

The canal which has experienced a stoppage of 2 or 3 days in consequence of the last frost will be again navigable throughout this day. Forest Coal appears to give general satisfaction down the River Thames. The demand for it at Abingdon is very great, so much so that I am afraid the parties concerned in that trade will not be able to put a stock there to meet any delays that may arise to navigation from frost or flood, which may be naturally looked for at this season of the year.

I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to transfer £100 to you this week

**3 December 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed.

I am sorry to observe the late frosts have so much checked the springs as to compel us to have recourse to the River Churn for a supply of water but which I trust will be but of short duration.

**10 December 1816**

The cash account and weekly papers are enclosed. I have drawn upon you as under to pay for coal.

9 December 1816. To Parkend Coal Co or order at 2 months £96 2s.

**16 December 1816**

The weekly papers are enclosed.

I should have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to have transferred part of the balance in their hands to you but for some considerable payments I have to make in the course of next week which heretofore were paid by the late Mr Procter.

**23 December 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed. I have drawn upon you as under to pay for coal. The canal I expect will be navigable again tomorrow. The demand for Forest Coal down the Thames is very great indeed.

23 December 1816. To Thomas Ball or order 2 months £100

**31 December 1816**

The cash account and weekly return are enclosed.