

## **Thames and Severn Canal Company: Letters Reporting Activities in 1822 (Gloucestershire Archives TS/223)**

Weekly letters from Brimscombe Agent J R Denyer to Company Treasurer J S Salt in London reporting on current issues such as the coal trade, effects due to weather, ongoing maintenance work, shortage of water, Richard Miller's bankruptcy, Lechlade agent Hipsley replaced by Jeffery, the Wilts & Berks Canal, the Stratford-on-Avon tramroad and a proposed steam vessel.

### **7 January 1822**

Enclosed you have the halves of sundry cash notes, value £50, the remaining halves by coach this day.

### **7 January 1822**

The corresponding parts of cash notes remitted by post this day are now enclosed amounting to £50 to the credit of the proprietors of the T&S Canal, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge by return. Mr Hipsley has paid me the whole of the balance due from him when he quitted the company's employment, and I hope the present weather will soon enable me to ascertain the correctness of the stock of coal at that period, when of course he will expect his bond returned.

### **14 January 1822**

With this you will receive the usual weekly papers. I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to pay you £100, part of the balance in their hands this week. In consequence of Mr Miller's late misfortune with his Bristol trow, he has not been able to do so much work for the Company as he otherwise would have done in conveying coals for them to this place, and his account which ought to be ready money (but which I am fully persuaded if insisted upon must totally destroy him) amounts to £122, notwithstanding all my endeavours to prevent it by repeated applications for payment in part. He now states that he will give me his acceptance on Monday next for the amount at two months, at the expiration of which period he shall be in receipt of monies to meet it. I must therefore beg directions how to act; he certainly appears to do all in his power to meet his difficulties, but whether he will be successful I am at a loss to conjecture.

Newport coal was reduced one shilling per ton at Newport on the 1st of this month. This is a circumstance very unusual at this season of the year and I fear is a further proof of the depressed state of the times in conjunction with a mild winter.

PS. Since the period Mr Miller was allowed to work out his old

Bills drawn to pay for coal:

7 January 1822. To Powell & Co or order at 2 months £35 6s

10 January 1822. To John George or order at 2 months £50

### **25 January 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed with the account of water taken for the supply of the canal from the river Churn during last year amounting to £336.6.4, and as I have fixed the 11th February for paying the same, I shall be obliged by the usual order for so doing being made at the meeting on the 31st instant. You will perceive by the cash account, I am prepared to meet the claim and shall defer transferring any further sums to you until after payment of the same.

You also have enclosed Mr Miller's note mentioned in my letter of 14<sup>th</sup> instant which he assures me he shall be fully prepared to meet when due, amount £124.8.0. I beg to refer to my letter of 14<sup>th</sup> instant upon the subject and to receive directions from the Committee how I am to act as to taking similar payments in future. He states (and so far I am satisfied he is correct)

that being compelled by the Company to pay ready money for his tonnages as they arise would put a total stop to all his proceedings and prospects.

Bill drawn to pay for coals;

16 January 1822. To Parkend Coal Co or order at 2 months £127 14 8d

### **28 January 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The late repairs under the direction of Mr McIntosh having presented a most favourable opportunity for examining the whole length of the summit level, I desired Mr Jones (my own time during that period being principally employed in attending to the rebuilding part of the Bell Lock at Chalford and to the repair of lock gates and other works between the tunnel and this place) to embrace the advantage such repairs afforded and inform himself of the real state of that part of the canal and report to me, together with any other matter connected therewith, for the information of the Gentlemen of the Committee, and I now beg leave to hand them the same together with the following observations. I perfectly agree with Mr Jones that (having repaired the heaviest work last summer) the residue of the summit repairs can be accomplished as effectually and much more reasonably without the aid of a contractor. Mr Jones remarks upon the springs in the bottom of the Tunnel near to the valley pit accord with those I have always entertained and expressed as to their giving and taking water, and the remedy he proposes I may call a union of ideas, the result of numerous conversations we have had upon the subject. The plan is practicable and likely to answer the purpose, but it will be expensive. With respect to the leakage, I must beg to differ with Mr Jones. That it has been and still continues in the unrepaired part very great I fully admit, but not to the extent of 4/5ths as he states. The subject of widening the locks or making side ponds, I shall pass without comment at present conceiving it would be most advisable and all circumstances to ascertain whether, after thoroughly repairing the summit level and lock gates, such alterations can or cannot be done without. Mr Jones has omitted noticing a most essential repair that must speedily take place, which I imagine arises from his attention being principally directed to the saving of water. I allude to the arching in the tunnel, several parts of which are exhibiting signs of failure to a considerable extent which the late very wet season has considerably increased. This work from its peculiar situation is always attended with nearly double the expense of common work.

I must now beg to conclude by remarking that the subjects alluded to require the Gentlemen of the Committee's most serious and immediate consideration and instructions in order that requisite preparations may be made according to the extent the repairs are to be carried out during the ensuing summer.

From the length of time the canal has been finished, great accumulations of mud have taken place, particularly in those lengths that are occasionally supplied from the brooks and other streams, and as nothing more than temporary removals have hitherto taken place, a serious expense must very soon be incurred upon that head.

### **4 February 1822**

The regular weekly papers are enclosed. I hope the usual order to pay the Churn millers was made on Thursday last, the period fixed for settling with them being Monday next the 11th instant.

### **11 February 1822**

The usual weekly papers accompany this.

I have communicated to Mr Miller the instructions of the Committee relating to his tonnage payments and shall act conformable thereto. I pay the Churn millers this day and for that purpose am going to Cirencester.

### **18 February 1822**

With this you have the usual weekly accounts.

I have directed Messrs Bramah & Son to apply at your house to whom I shall be obliged by your paying the sum of £12.15 on account of the T&S Canal Co, being for a water closet ordered by the Committee to be put up at this place.

The enclosed draft upon J Platt for £71-9 -4d, I will thank you to have presented and when paid, placed to the credit of the Company advising me of the same.

Parliament having assembled, I hope to be excused for observing that some attention should be paid to private Bills, particularly the one for making a railway or tram road from or near Stratford-on-Avon into Oxfordshire, as advertised in the Oxford Journal of the 8th of September last and mentioned in my letter of 10th of that month. I am perfectly satisfied, if carried into effect, the consequences will be most serious to the T&S Canal.

Bill drawn to pay for coal:

7 February 1822. To Powell Williams or order at 2 months £31 13 9d.

### **19 February 1822**

I have this moment heard that Mr Miller has absented himself in consequence of a threat made by the Bullo Pill Coal Company of striking a docket against him unless payment was made them within a given time and which he has not been able to do. No doubt his name will be gazetted in a day or two. The post will not allow me to say more, and of course little is at present known.

### **25 February 1822**

Your letter accompanying certificate of registry of Mr Walhouse will have come duly to hand. By his death, one of the lives by which the Company hold Sapperton Mill under Earl Bathurst ceases, the only life remaining is Mr Chambers. The subject will therefore require the consideration of the Committee as to adding another life. The mill is at present let upon lease for a term (which expires at Michaelmas 1823) under certain conditions of repair etc at £4 annum, but I consider it worth about 20 or 25 guineas per annum. I think Lord Bathurst charged £40 for adding the last life. The original intention of the Company in taking the Mill was to have a right to control over the mill stream for the supply of the summit level, but in consequence of the bad state of the reservoir it has of late years been almost useless in that respect, but we take the same water into a level below. The mill, I consider, will yield a fair profit after the lease expires, and by adding another life the Company will continue their right to go upon the premises, a right which under all circumstances I must beg to observe ought not hastily to be given up.

The amount of Mr Miller's debt to the Company cannot be exactly ascertained until the return of some of his boats, as we cannot tell what portion of the drawback on the coals they carried they are entitled to until their certificates are delivered in, but as near as I can make it out, it will be, including the £124.8s bill in your hands, about £500. This sum would have been reduced about £50 but for the unfortunate circumstance of the sinking of one of his trows (as mentioned in my letters at that period) as that vessel would have earned that amount in carrying Newport coal for the Company. The instant I received Mr Lane's letter containing the Committee's positive instructions, I put them in execution and thereby saved a considerable sum being added to the above amount. When Mr Miller paid me the £124.8s bill, he assured me in the most positive manner that he should be amply prepared to pay it when due, and I certainly did think (notwithstanding his being now absent) that at the time he gave it me, he fully purposed realising his promise, but circumstances have come out since that cast a very suspicious appearance respecting that transaction, viz that he has given bills and acceptances to the amount of £9,000. If this is a fact (and I much fear my authority is too good to be doubted) he must have known the impossibility of his paying the bill in question

and have been preparing for what has since occurred. The bill includes half-year rent £13.7.3; can I seize for that amount upon the bill not being paid?

A great many rumours are afloat respecting Mr Miller, as may naturally be supposed, but until the Commission is opened, which it will be on Friday next at Rodborough, nothing correct can be known respecting his affairs, which I much fear are bad beyond any imagination that has been formed respecting them.

I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to pay you £100 on Wednesday next.

#### **4 Mar 1822**

The usual weekly papers accompany this.

Mr Millers Commission opened on Friday last when he was duly declared a bankrupt and the days for the creditors to prove their debts were fixed for 21st and 22nd instant and 16th April at The Fleece Inn Rodborough. Of course nothing more was done than was necessary previous to his name appearing in the Gazette, which I apprehend will take place tomorrow.

At the particular wish of several of his creditors as well as himself, I accepted the office of professional assignee, and as a desire I hope has been expressed that I should ultimately become the general or one of the general assignees (if more than one is appointed), I beg to know whether my doing so would in any wise be disapproved by the Gentlemen of the Committee to enable me to give an answer upon the subject that some other person may be thought about in the event of your considering my accepting it would not be agreeable.

Mr Stone, the solicitor, requested me to say he would either see you or write upon the subject of your debt previous to the meeting and at the same time to assure you that he shall be happy to adopt any plan or measure that you may suggest upon this unfortunate affair.

So many rumours are afloat, I cannot mention one as I am fearful of starting untruths, and I think I was led into an error (at least I hope so) last week, although my authority was very good, but I think the sum must allude to losses sustained by bills etc and not to bills now running, but nothing can in reality be relied upon until he makes out his statement.

Bill drawn to pay for oak timber:

1 Mar 1822 To Thomas Hayes or order at 2 months £150.

PS. I shall be happy to save you any trouble and expense in proving your debt (if it can be done by power of attorney or otherwise) or in transacting any thing that has reference to Miller's bankruptcy, provided you do prove the propriety of doing, which Mr Stone seemed to doubt.

#### **11 Mar 1822**

The weekly papers accompany this.

Mr Lane wrote to me last week upon several subjects to which due attention will be paid. The Gloucester and Berkeley Canal Company I perceive have a bill pending in Parliament, the particular object of which I do not know.

I have written to Earl Bathurst's steward upon the subject of Sapperton Mill. On the other side are particulars of a bill drawn to pay for coal. It is I believe determined that Miller's guinea notes are not provable under the Commission. What quantity are out I cannot imagine but the amount cannot be very great; the Company hold £64 of them.

#### **18 Mar 1822**

The usual weekly papers accompany this together with a copy of a letter from Mr Anderson (Lord Bathurst's steward) in reply to the one I mentioned I had written him on the subject of adding a life in the lease on Sapperton Mill in the place of Mr Walhouse deceased. The whole of the business will I think be better explained and discussed at the Annual Meeting at this place in June, when the attendance of Mr Anderson can be requested. I will thank you to return me R. Miller's note for £124.8 to enable me to prove upon it on Thursday or Friday next.

Copy of letter from Lord Bathurst's steward. In reply to your letter of 9th instant, I beg to say that it has been in contemplation to make some alterations in and about Sapperton Mill, and for those reasons I do not think his Lordship would consent to renew the term to the Company. I believe they have still one life on it. It must at any rate remain till I have an opportunity of speaking to his Lordship on the subject. I take this opportunity of asking if the Company have any objection to exchange the old useless reservoir above the mill for the land they have taken from his lordship in the Common etc

### **25 Mar 1822**

Enclosed you have Hobhouse & Co on Jones Lloyd & Co £24, on £5 Tetbury note £5, one £1 Salop, total £30 to the credit of the T&S Canal Co, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge by return. I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to pay you £100 during the present week.

### **1 April 1822.**

The corresponding halves of two £10 and four £5 cash notes per post this day are now enclosed together £40 to the credit of the T&S Canal Co, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge by return.

I will thank you to send me as early as convenient the banking book, also a card of the meetings for the present year.

Since writing above I have read a letter of which the enclosed is a copy. I thought the concern was quite dropped, and I feel this movement is only for the purpose of satisfying some of the subscribers that something is doing, as I really cannot see the utility of sending the engine before there are any vessels for her to navigate, and I very much question her passing the tunnel. Of course I shall render every assistance and information I can to the parties. Captain Sandham, the person that exhibited his sketch of his steam vessel at this place to the Committee, I find is become insolvent and that the subscribers have seized his beautiful steam passage boat at Gloucester.

Copy of letter from Benjamin Bradley, Shrewsbury, 30 March 1822. You will think us long before we carry our design into operation of conveying goods from hence to London by the Thames and Severn Canal. We have a steam boat that was launched at Stourport about a fortnight ago that will have the engines fitted in a few days, and we should be glad to take her through the canal to Lechlade and back for the purpose of making observations, but as she is built much higher than the barges will be, we shall be obliged by your giving us the dimensions of the tunnel. The vessel is built 60 ft long 12 foot wide but her height above the water is considerable. I have left Birmingham and fixed myself at this place where I shall be much obliged by your early reply.

### **1 April 1822**

Enclosed you have the halves of sundry cash notes £40, the remaining halves by coach this day.

### **10 April 1822**

Enclosed you have: draft Innell on Pearse £22, one £10 cash note, three £5 cash notes, total £47 to the credit of the T&S Canal Co, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge per return. I will further reduce the balance as fast as the balance in Cirencester bank becomes cash, and I can receive various sums which, although not paid me, I am obliged to enter as received to enable me to close the half years accounts.

### **15 April 1822**

The usual weekly accounts are enclosed. The yearly accounts etc shall be forwarded the earliest day possible.

**6 May 1822**

Herewith you will receive the usual weekly papers for the period I was in London. Nothing out of the common course of business occurred during my absence.

Upon reference to the canal shares register at this place, I cannot find any transfer from Mr Whitworth to Mr Loveden, and consequently I presume the certificate of the transfer of the first five shares was omitted to be sent here. I have mentioned it to Mr Lane.

Draft drawn to pay for coal:

6 May 1822. To Parkend Coal Co or order at 2 months £133 7 7d.

**13 May 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

I have arranged for stopping the canal on Monday next for 14 days for the purpose of proceeding with the repairs in several places when I intend having it again navigable for about a similar period and then stopping for repairs again; by this method I do not imagine any or but trifling interruption will arise to the trade. If so, I propose carrying on the repairs during the summer upon this plan. The receipts of course will be but small and the outgoings considerable, and I have in consequence deferred remitting you until they are ascertained in preference to having to draw upon you for the same.

**20 May 1822**

Enclosed you have a draft W & G Lewis on Lewis & Davis London £50 to the credit of the T&S Canal Co, the receipt I will thank you to acknowledge. You also have the usual weekly papers with this.

The repairs mentioned in a former letter commence this day with, at present, a prospect of fine weather. Mr Protheroe has reduced the price of his coals 1s per ton and a further reduction has also been made in the freights.

**27 May 1822**

The usual weekly papers accompany this.

The repairs are proceeding under very favourable weather. I have heard the Wilts & Berks Canal is to be stopped for repairs (to commence in a day or two) for 4 or 5 weeks. Provided such stoppage is in a situation to interfere with the T&S Canal, I purpose continuing on the summit repairs and lock gates much longer than I before stated in my letter, as I do not consider such stoppage would affect the local trade of the canal. Some of the work done by Mr McIntosh last year does not stand so well as could be wished, particularly in those parts where united to the original work.

**5 June 1822**

Upon my return home on Friday evening from Lechlade (to which place and to the other repairs going on along the line of the canal I went on the preceding Wednesday and remained with them till that day), I received a letter acquainting me with the expected immediate death of a relation and most intimate friend, and my absence from home upon that unpleasant business will account for you not receiving the weekly accounts before. They now accompany this. The Gloucester and Berkeley Canal Act has received the Royal Assent and it is expected they will go on again directly.

**10 June 1822**

The usual weekly papers accompany this.

The repairs are proceeding with very favourable weather, and I doubt not will be satisfactory to the Committee at the annual visit. I shall be glad to have the earliest information of the period in order that I may make such arrangements as may not prevent the boat passing along the line of the canal.

**24 June 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The canal is open as stated in my last, and my present intention is to keep it so for the through trade for five weeks from this day. The Cirencester branch I purpose commencing repairing on Monday next and calculate it will occupy one month, after which I shall again attack the main line, and at the same time several of the lock gates.

**10 June 1822**

With this you will receive a bill and catalogue of Miller's property offered for sale on Thursday and Friday last. The result you will see by the remarks I have made upon them and what steps to take with the real property, I am at a loss to determine. The sale of the vessels was most wretched indeed, worse, much worse, than under all circumstances I had anticipated. The bad state they are in coupled with the badness of trade at present naturally led me not to expect very gay prices but I certainly did expect to obtain considerably more than they fetched. The fact not only is the want of trade, but the ruinous low prices which those that are employed are receiving. The whole of the vessels and other articles in the catalogue brought only about £460. Mr Miller bought most of the vessels, Mr George (for Parkend Coal Co) some and one was sold to a stranger. One of the London boats (The Western Lass, Lot 11), Mr George last year offered Miller £150 for but he would not then sell under £200, and Mr George bought her on Friday for £43. She cost Miller by auction two or three years since £175. I hope I shall do better with those at Abingdon. I have disposed of the coach concern to several persons at a valuation amounting together to £269, a price under all circumstances tolerably satisfactory. One horse is since dead and several others obliged to be turned out of their work. I mean to do everything in my power to close the business as speedily as possible, but I much fear it will be a long time before I shall be able to affect so desirable a circumstance. And whenever it does take place, a very trifling (if any) dividend will be the result.

**17 June 1822**

The usual weekly papers accompany this.

I intend having the canal navigable for a short time after this week, unless the visit of the Committee to this place may make it necessary for a different arrangement.

**1 July 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The repairs upon the Cirencester branch commence this day.

I am sorry to observe by the Gloucester Journal this day the Stroud Canal Co have reduced their price of coal at their wharf at Wallbridge so as to barely cover the charges upon that article. This I consider they have done with a view to prevent the sale of coal at the T&S Canal wharf at that place as much as possible, and thereby securing 3s 6d per ton for less than 8 miles, but which is reduced to 2s 3d upon entering the T&S Canal. This like most other of that company's proceedings I consider extremely illiberal.

Mr Bevin the successor to Mr Pitt's' business at Cirencester is completely broken up and his goods sold.

**8 July 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The repairs on the Cirencester branch are proceeding under very favourable weather, and the carpenters are preparing for a further repair of the lock gates to commence with the next general stoppage of the canal in about a month or five weeks.

### **15 July 1822**

I have at length been enabled to fix the period for disposing of the residue of Miller's boats etc at Abingdon, the sale of which will take place on the 29th inst. I am fearful great difficulty will be experienced in getting rid of the houses and land to leave any surplus beyond the encumbrances. I have already paid the annuitant £80 arrears and have further to pay him £25 per quarter, having first taken counsel's opinion respecting my right to do so under all the circumstances. I cannot at present form any other than a bad opinion as to the ultimatum of the business. I am very desirous of making enquiries as to the responsibility of two persons at Surinam indebted to Miller's estate, together £1050, as probably part if not the whole may be recoverable. If you can put me in a way to do so through the medium of some respectable house in London, I shall be much obliged. I have received of Miller Earl Egmont's acceptance at 6-months for the articles he purchased at the late sale.

### **22 July 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

Mr Jones, under my direction, has been trying some experiments in order to ascertain the condition of the tunnel, and I am sorry to say the result is too satisfactory as to the springs taking water in dry seasons, (like the present) in no trifling degree. I expect the branch to Cirencester will be finished in a fortnight when I purpose giving the traders at that place an opportunity of replenishing their stocks of coal by keeping the canal open for a fortnight previous to a general stoppage taking place. The direct line, which is at present open, and has been during the repair of the branch, will of course not be stopped for a month from this time. After which I do not think the work intended to be done will allow of the summit being navigated for six weeks, when I presumed principal repairs must be discontinued for this year to allow the traders to forward coals to meet the winter. During the six weeks stoppage, it is my intention to have the tunnel thoroughly examined.

PS. I shall be obliged by you ordering an export book of Thomas & Co to pattern sent herewith.

Since writing the annexed, I have observed an advertisement in the Gloucester Journal of this day announcing the sale of all the effects of the steamboat speculation ('by direction of the Committee of the Severn Steam Yacht Co who are breaking up their establishment') at Gloucester on the 1st August next.

### **5 August 1822**

Herewith you will receive the two last weeks papers.

The canal will be again navigable tomorrow, and I have directed Mr Jones to take all the water he can possibly obtain from the River Churn during the period allowed for the boats to pass previous to another stoppage taking place which will be in about a fortnight. It is necessary for me to observe that when the canal is again closed, it will be impossible to allow any boat to pass under six weeks. Consequently, unless the Gentlemen of the Committee visit this place previous to the stoppage, they cannot do so till the beginning of October, a season of the year by no means adapted for a water excursion. Delaying the repairs even for a short time would not only be attended with a considerable increased expenditure, but it would be driving the conclusion of them too far into that part of the year when every exertion is required to get a supply of coals to the wharves to meet the winter's demand. **Provided** therefore the Committee desire any alteration to be made in my present arrangements, I shall be glad to be informed as early as possible.

### **13 August 1822**

The regular weekly papers accompany this.

The water at the engine and in the River Churn is become very short in consequence of the dry season. This renders it impossible to raise the summit level to the height that could be



wished during the short period the boats can be allowed to navigate previous to the repairs again commencing. Just heard from Mr Lane respecting the postponement of the Committee's visit to this place.

### **19 August 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The approaching stoppage of the Canal has put every vessel in motion during the period allowed them to navigate, and although the quantity they have carried is (from the short state of the water) not very considerable, they have given the Canal an appearance of liveliness not recently known, and I trust it is an earnest of what is to follow after the water is again let into the Canal. The repairs will commence on Monday next.

### **26 August 1822**

With this you have the usual weekly papers.

I have received the export book and will thank you to pay Thomas & Co's bill for making it. The last I regret to say has been in use nearly six years. I hope the present one will not last one fourth of the time.

The repairs commence this day and I hope the weather will prove more favourable than it was at this period last year, although I am much afraid of it, after the long continuance of dry weather we have lately experienced.

### **26 August 1822 to J S Salt from W Davies, Lydney.**

I fully expected that a meeting would have been held at Brimscombe by the Thames & Severn Company in June last, but finding that you defer it, I wrote to Mr Denyer respecting a reduction in the charges on the Bourne Wharf, or that I should be under the necessity of giving it up, particularly at the present prices of coal, but received no answer. You were so kind to say when I took the wharf that if I should find it too high, you would take into consideration at the year end, which I hope and trust you will. It is not my wish nor intention to give up the wharf, since I have kept it all the summer and done but very little business. I am in hopes of making up for some of the past losses, during the winter half year. I shall have no objections whatever to pay 3d per ton for all coal landed on the Bourne Wharf, in addition to the present rent which I hope will meet your approbation. Your early answer will greatly oblige.

P.S. Having been informed that you hold your monthly meeting in London, has been reason the of my addressing this to you and shall an embrace early opportunity of seeing Mr Denyer in the subject after your next meeting.

### **2 September 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The experiment making to ascertain the state of the tunnel as to losing water, I feel will prove too satisfactory as to such being the case at this state of the springs, if not at other times. In certain parts of it, the fact is fully proved. The next step must be to devise some means of preventing it without endangering other parts in full water, as I have no idea that it will be possible, if desirable, to keep back springs in winter.

I perceive by the Oxford Paper, Messrs Cox & Co are about disposing of the wharfs etc at Oxford.

### **16 September 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to pay you £100, part of the balance in their hands.

Mr Jones accompanied by some navigators walked through the tunnel last week and discovered leakages of considerable magnitude which I much fear will be attended with very

serious expenses when repaired, which cannot be this season. Hitherto, when experiments have been tried to ascertain the state of the tunnel, I presume the springs have been adequate to the leakage, as I recollect a few years since no loss of water could be perceived for several successive days when at a greater depth than at present. Such is not the case in the present instance, the springs being remarkably weak and the loss of water very great. The full particulars I purpose putting into a report for the information of the Committee when the repairs and experiments at present under hand are completed.

### **23 September 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

I have drawn upon you to pay for Newport coal:

11 September 1822. To Powell & Williams or order for coal at 2 months £27 6 6d.

The general want of a supply of coal along the canal and River Thames induces me to anticipate a very brisk trade the moment the canal is again navigable, which will be in a fortnight, but until a very great fall of rain takes place, boats will carry very small burdens.

### **30 September 1822**

Enclosed you have the corresponding parts of cash notes remitted by post this day, together £50 to the credit of T&S Canal Co, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge by return - directed to New Inn, Lechlade, where I shall be till Wednesday settling the quarterly accounts. I have directed Messrs Pitt Bowly & Co to pay you £200 to the credit of the same account, having received some money this morning which enabled me so to do. £100 is entered in the cash account to Saturday night, sent herewith, and the remainder will appear in that of the present week.

I enclose you Miller's circular mentioned in a former letter, presuming from the manner in which it was sent that it was intended for the inspection of the Committee.

### **30 September 1822**

Enclosed you have the halves of sundry cash notes value £50, the remaining parts per coach this day.

### **7 October 1822**

Enclosed you have as under to the credit of the T&S Canal Co, the receipt be pleased to acknowledge by return. Draft: G Franklin on D Davis £48-4-5, two £10 cash notes, four £5 cash notes, total £88-4-5d.

In consequence of several small payments belonging to the past half year remaining unsettled, I am obliged to defer sending the cash accounts till next week. Be pleased to send the banking book first opportunity.

Not a single bidding for any part of Miller's property on Friday last. I am now quite at a loss what to do with it.

### **15 October 1822**

With this you will receive as under: Balance sheet of proprietors ledger; half-yearly account of receipts and payments; banker's book; cash accounts of two last weeks; weekly return of two last weeks and two Oxford papers. Draft drawn upon you for rent of land due to the Dean and Chapter of Bristol: 11 October 1822. To George Rogers or order at 1 month £6 17 2d..

The repairs done during the past summer have necessarily caused the canal to be shut up, at different periods, for a considerable portion of the time included in the half yearly statement and consequently restricted the receipts, but I do not despair of exhibiting a fair annual statement in April next should a frost not set in too suddenly previous to the springs breaking and filling the canal. I must also beg to remark that the whole of the expenses incurred have been discharged without infringing upon the reserved net proceeds of last year. The principal

features in the repairs I will put into the shape of a report previous to the general meeting on Tuesday next, the influx of goods in consequence of the recent opening of the canal preventing it accompanying this.

### **19 October 1822**

Enclosed you will receive the usual weekly papers together with a letter to the Committee upon the subject of the repairs done during the past summer. Very little improvement has yet taken place in the water, but I hope the period is not far distant when the boats will carry full cargoes, the demand for coal being very great, full 10,000 tons are at this moment wanted along the canal and on the Thames. The Wilts and Berks are, or were a week since, in a worse state for water than the T&S, but much less rain will fill the former than the latter.

### **28 October 1822**

The usual papers accompany this.

The late stoppages upon the canal for repairs having caused the stock of coal at Lechlade to be reduced to an ascertainable quantity, I was fully persuaded there was a very considerable deficiency. In order to correctly discover the same, I ordered the residue to be weighed and find it to be as stated in Mr Jeffery's return of the 19th. The quantity deficient is certainly large, but at the same time I must observe it is upon nearly three years sale and arises nearly equal in point of time during Mr Hipsley and Mr Jeffrey's agency. It is an occurrence that never took place before, but great allowance must no doubt be made for the excessive dry weather of last summer particularly. I have written to Mr Jeffery very strongly upon the subject and have laid down a plan for his future arranging and keeping the stock which will enable him and myself at all times to ascertain the stock nearly. This he has promised to attend to and I dare say, from what has passed, he will. The deficiency having (I presume) arisen partly in his and partly in Mr Hipsley's time, makes it difficult where to place the blame of inaccuracy or inattention. Jeffrey certainly took to the stock according to what it should have been, deducting the sales from the receipts, but whether that quantity was actually upon the wharf could not be ascertained from the muddling manner in which Mr Hipsley kept his books. This subject I think you will recollect me having complained about, but out of which I never could drive him. To attempt full explanation by letter would be almost impossible, and I shall consequently reserve it till the Committee are upon the spot. I have now put Mr Jeffrey in possession of an actual stock, and shall keep a watchful eye upon his proceedings.

### **4 November 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

Since I wrote upon the subject of the Severn & Wye Railway, I am informed a proposition was made at the last general meeting of that company and carried in the affirmative to discontinue the drawbacks allowed upon coal. I have written Mr Disney upon the subject and recommended that the T&S Co should immediately advance their tonnage upon all coal going below Radcot Bridge on the River Thames 1s per ton. This will be putting the coal, upon which we now only take 1s 6d for the whole length of going to Ensham or below, upon a footing with the sum allowed by Act of Parliament for coals going into the Wilts & Berks Canal. Going beyond this may not be prudent to advance at present, but for other parties deeply interested in a large and extended sale of Forest coal to endeavour to obtain it, by the sacrifices of others alone, is what I consider a dereliction of my duty to the T&S Co unless made known to them.

Mr Disney has written me respecting meeting him, to which I shall pay due attention.

PS I shall be obliged by you ordering a cash book for this office of Thomas & Co as per pattern sent herewith.

**11 November 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

I am glad to say Mr Jones was enabled to discharge all extra hands on Saturday night last from the summit level.

In acknowledging the receipt of Mr Jefferies next remittance, I will thank you to caution him as to giving credit upon coals sold by him and that, as the Company are desirous of selling only for ready money, he must be in a certain degree considered responsible for any he may sell otherwise. This I think will make him particular, not that I am aware of any bad debt at present, but these are not times to have large outstanding balances, nor will the present state of the coal trade afford it.

**25 November 1822**

With this you will receive the two last week's cash accounts and weekly returns, the first of which my absence from home to Lydney prevented being sent at the proper period. Mr Disney and Mr Protheroe will attend the meeting on the 28th, when the subject will be fully explained, together with my letter to Mr Lane of this date.

I have directed Messrs Pitt & Co to pay you £100 on Wednesday next.

I expect a large supply of coals from all parts during the present week.

**2 December 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed

Bills drawn to pay for coal:

7 November 1822. Powell & Williams or order at 2 months £30

30 November 1822. William Ball jnr or order at 2 months £27

Every exertion is being made to push coals along the canal and down the Thames, in proof of which I beg to refer you to the weekly returns of arrivals and dispatches. I hope the present week will be equal to the one alluded to, although I fear some detention will arise to the boats returning in consequence of the flood upon the Thames.

**9 December 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The arrivals and departures of vessels will be read with pleasure as a proof that exertion is making to push coals along the canal; at most of the wharfs on the Thames the coals are taken away direct from the boats without leaving any for stock. I will direct further transfers to be made from Cirencester Bank as the balance in their hands becomes cash.

**16 December 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The late high winds together with the floods and fogs have much interrupted the navigation of the Rivers Severn and Thames, and consequently prevented the arrival of many vessels last week, and I begin to fear the canal must be stopped by ice in a day or two if the present frost continues.

Messrs Charlie & Richard have sent me their bill £10-17-6 for sherry wine for use of the Company which I shall be obliged by your discharging.

**23 December 1822**

With this you have the weekly papers. Bill drawn to pay for coal:

17 December 1822. To John George or order at 2 months £50.

The canal has been partially impeded the latter part of the last week by ice, but I hope a change in the weather is about to take place or a total stoppage must be the consequence.

Lydney (Forest of Dean) coals were advanced in price on the 20th inst, 6d per ton for the canal district, but such advance I am informed is not to interfere with coals sent down the Thames.

Mr McIntosh I am informed has undertaken the completion of the Gloucester & Berkeley Canal.

**30 December 1822**

The usual weekly papers are enclosed.

The canal has been totally stopped by the frost for several days past and no appearance at present of any alteration. Coals are very deficient at most of the wharfs on the canal, and scarcely any upon the line of the Wilts & Berks or the River Thames.