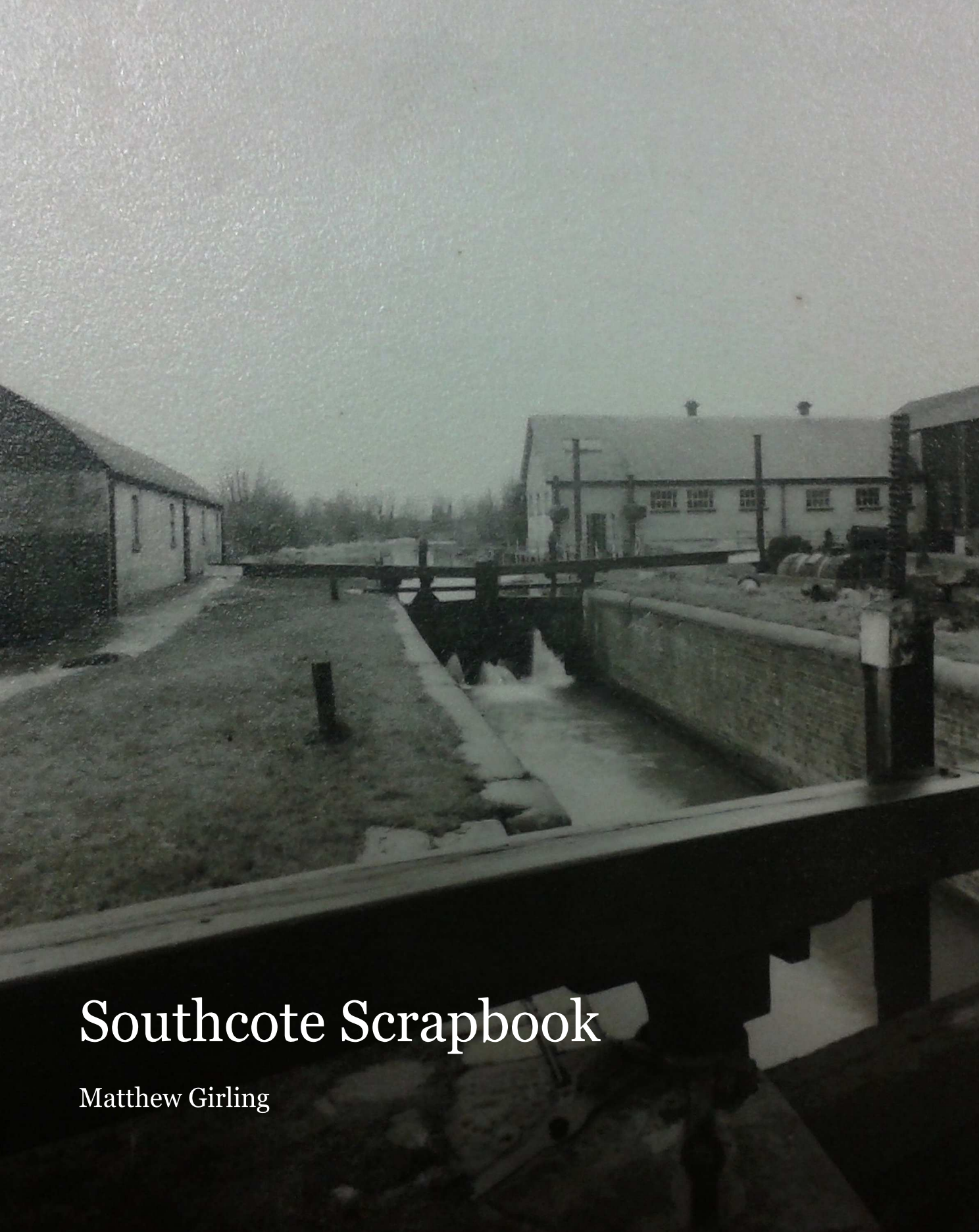


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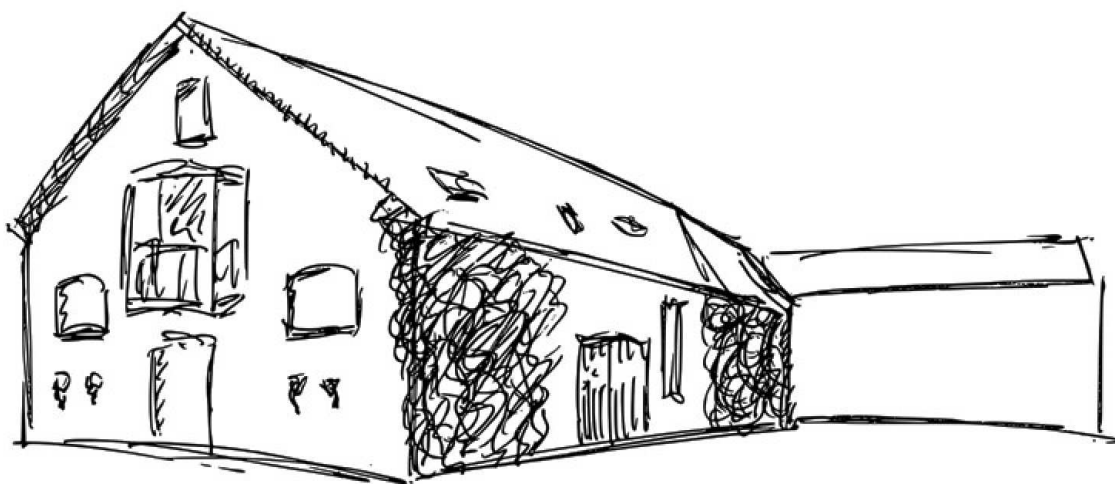
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# Southcote Scrapbook

Matthew Girling





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Thanks to Elaine Kirby and Jeremy Hogwood at the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, and Margaret Lord, Gill Gough and Lisa Spurrier at the Berkshire Record Office.



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# Table of Contents

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Southcote and Kennet Timeline | Page 4  |
| John Rennie's notebook        | Page 6  |
| Articles                      | Page 7  |
| Miscellaneous references      | Page 17 |
| Maps                          | Page 21 |
| Photographs                   | Page 43 |

## Southcote and Kennet timeline

- 1715:** Work to make the River Kennet navigable between Reading and Newbury approved
- 1718:** Work commences on Kennet Navigation (supervised by John Hore)
- 1723:** Kennet Navigation (Reading–Newbury) opens
- 1765:** Charles Pocock Sr. born in Reading
- 1790:** Map shows no canal buildings at Southcote site. Canalised navigation labelled as "Homer's Cut". Land south of canal (between canal and river) labelled "Ten Acres Fobney", land north of canal labelled "Little Fobney Meadow". Line of trees/hedge marks rough location of current track to Circuit Lane.
- 1792:** Charles Pocock Jr born in Beaulieu, Hampshire
- 1794:** John Rennie begins work on the rest of the canal
- 1800:** John Rennie's notebook lists a wire mill with waterwheel(s) and a "new" mill building
- 1810:** Kennet and Avon Canal opens
- 1811:** Wire Mill shown on map, two mill races (one at western end, one at eastern), mill shown as further west of lock as at present, at least 3 buildings shown approx. 200m upstream on south bank as well as bridge/crossing
- 1817:** John Wilmot (20) convicted of stealing 60lb (27.2kg) wire from Pocock, Golden and Pocock worth 38s (approx. £100 in 2012), sentenced to be confined for 6 months
- 1818:** Company formed of Charles Pocock Sr., Thomas Golden and Charles Pocock Jr., based at 11 Bouverie St, London, dissolved as Pocock Sr. retires; company to be continued by Golden and Pocock Jr.
- 1821:** Partnership of Thomas Golden and Charles Pocock Jr. dissolved
- 1830:** Mill marked on map, at least two buildings on wire mill island
- 1833:** Charles Pocock Sr. dies at Lock's Farm, Wokingham aged 68. Agreement between Kennet and Avon Canal Company and L Pocock (possibly Pocock's wife, Lucy, or his daughter, Louisa) drawn up to surrender the mill's lease
- 1847:** Reading to Hungerford railway opens
- 1848:** Reading to Basingstoke railway opens
- 1850:** Reading Union Water Company apply to Parliament for permission to construct works at Southcote
- 1852:** Southcote Water Works (pumping station) begin operation in conjunction with Bath Road Works
- 1868:** Reading Corporation acquire the water works
- 1870:** Charles Pocock Jr. dies in Islington, London aged 78
- 1878:** Water Works shown on map, mill house extant, wire mill marked as disused—divided into three adjoined buildings, mill race at western end, building(s) and bridge still extant upstream; Fobney works established
- 1883:** Water Works shown on map, mill house extant, wire mill marked as disused
- 1896:** Southcote water-driven wheels and pump become redundant to Fobney's new steam pump(s)
- 1899:** Water Works shown on map, mill house extant, wire mill shown—divided into three adjoined buildings, mill race at western end, building(s) and bridge still extant upstream. Covered filters installed at Southcote, water wheels and pumps "overhauled" and delivery mains cleaned
- 1902:** No buildings labelled on map
- 1912:** Water Works shown on map as operated by Reading Corporation, mill house extant, two buildings (one large, one small separate to SE) marked on wire mill island, no mill race, building(s) and bridge still extant upstream
- 1913:** Water Works shown on map as operated by Reading Corporation, mill house extant, building(s) (either one or two as above) marked on wire mill island, no mill race, building(s) and bridge still extant upstream
- 1931:** Water Works shown on map as operated by Reading Corporation, mill house extant, building(s) (either one or two as above) marked on wire mill island, no mill race, structure at rear (south) of wire mill running width of building, similar SE structure as 1912, building(s) and bridge still extant upstream
- 1932:** Water Works shown on map as operated by Reading Corporation, mill house extant, two building (one large, one small as 1912) marked on wire mill island, structure at rear (south) of wire mill labelled as "tanks" running width of building, SE building depicted as more square than 1912, building(s) and bridge still extant upstream
- 1935:** Water Works shown on map, mill house extant, at least one building on wire mill island
- 1936:** Water Works shown on map, mill house extant, at least one building on wire mill island
- 1946:** Water Works shown on map as operated by Reading Corporation, one large building marked on

wire mill island

**1947:** Water Works shown on map as operated by Reading Corporation, mill house extant, one large building on wire mill island, building(s) upstream still extant (as 1811)

**1952:** Southcote Lock deemed unsafe

**1955:** Transport Commission approach Parliament to close canal

**1958:** Bowes Select Committee find “no justification for restoring [the canal] from Reading to Bath”

**1959:** Water Works shown on map, no evidence of mill house, one large building on wire mill island, building(s) upstream still extant (as 1811)

**1962:** Parliamentary Advisory Committee recommend the canal reopen, allocating £40,000 for maintenance and restoration work. Kennet and Avon Canal Trust formed

**1963:** British Waterways established, restoration work begins

**1967:** Water Works shown on map as operated by Thames Valley Water Board, mill house extant, small building marked to east of garden flat (north of midpoint of wire mill), two buildings (one large, one small as 1912) marked on wire mill island, structure at rear (south) of wire mill labelled as “Tanks” running width of building, SE building depicted as more square than 1912, no bridge nor buildings shown upstream

**1971:** Water Works shown on map, mill house extant, no evidence of eastern building, one large building on wire mill island with south structures, no bridge nor buildings shown upstream

**1974:** Navigation reopens between Reading and Hungerford

**1977:** Water Works shown on map, mill house extant, no wire mill marked or labelled

**1982:** Fobney Water Works reopened with ozone treatment, Southcote Pumping Station no longer used

**1983:** (At earliest) Southcote Mill now marked instead of Water Works, mill house not extant, no evidence of eastern building, one large building on wire mill island with some south structures

**1990:** Full navigation from Reading to Bath officially reopened

**2011:** Navigation designated a “national cruiseway” by Defra

## John Rennie's notebook

While surveying the route for the Kennet and Avon Canal (joining the River Avon to the existing Kennet Navigation, on which Southcote was situated and a lock was in use), lead surveyor and engineer John Rennie kept a detailed notebook of points of interest.

### Page 34–35

May 28th, 1800

Southcot wire mill is situated on the River Kennet. It works four pairs shears or tongs for drawing wire. Each forge makes 60 strokes a minute. There are also several barrels for drawing wire each of which are about 2 feet diameter. They are made of wood cornered on the rim with cast iron, one side of which or rather a segment is moveable on a joint which being covered [illegible] way and lets the wire come off. They are engaged by a clutch or disengaged by it at pleasure.

Their wheel when in work makes about 32 items per minute. There is a new mill building in addition to the above to work wheels [illegible] make wire and some tongs. But it was not finished when I saw it. Another water wheel works a tilt for beating out the iron of a scouring machine. At the tail of this [illegible] there is also a scouring machine for wire.

### Page 174

[No date]

Of tonnage kept since ---- has been accounts of barges which makes an average of 87 – there being always loaded ---- and in case of £18,88.17

|                                               |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| Wharfage rent & Docks                         | 449.5.6    |
| Southcot Mill                                 | 10         |
| Do Wine Mill [sic]                            | 0          |
| -----                                         | 1.1        |
| Brewhouse wharf and<br>cottage at Aldermaston | 10.-       |
| Willows in the island<br>at Greenham          | 2.10       |
| Sundries                                      | 2.10       |
| [No heading]                                  | 8.3        |
| Willows                                       | 24.16      |
| Asburne Wharf at Reading                      | 10.0       |
| Acres of land in Bear Meadow                  | 40.0       |
| Income                                        | £2476.12.6 |

# Articles

## 1814: The Post Office Annual Directory

The fifteenth volume of the Post Office's directory of London merchants and tradesmen lists Charles Pocock as operating a wire warehouse near Fleet Street:

Pocock Charles, Wire-warehouse, 11, Bouverie-street, Fleet-str.

Author: The Post Office  
Title: The Post-Office Annual Directory  
Page(s): 255  
Date: 1814  
URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=L9Q9AAAAcAAJ>

## 1817: The Proceedings of the Old Bailey

In early 1817, there was a theft of wire (produced at Southcote) from the Pocock—Golden—Pocock premises in central London. The thief, 20-year-old John Wilmot, was sentenced to six months in prison in a trial at the Old Bailey:

552. JOHN WILMOT was indicted for stealing, on the 28th of March, 60lbs. of wire, value 38s. , the goods of Charles Pocock and Thomas Golden.

GEORGE POCOCK. I am the son of Charles Pocock , who is in partnership with Thomas Golden , they are wire manufacturers , and live in Bouverie-street, Fleet-street . On the 28th of March I was out, and on my return I met the prisoner about two yards from the door, with the wire upon his shoulder; I asked him where he got it; he said he came from Mr. Muggeridge for it. I asked him if he had a written order for it, he said, no. I gave him in charge. Mr. Muggeridge is not a customer of ours.

(Property produced and sworn to)

GUILTY. Aged 20.

Confined Six Months .

London Jury, before Mr. Recorder.

Author: The Proceedings of the Old Bailey  
Title: JOHN WILMOT, Theft > grand larceny, 16th April 1817  
Page(s): n/a  
Date: 1817  
URL: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18170416-15&div=t18170416-15>

## 1818: The London Gazette

In April 1818, Charles Pocock Sr. retired from the partnership at the age of approximately 53. The company was signed over to Thomas Golden and Pocock's son Charles Jr.:

Notice is hereby given, that the Copartnership lately subsisting between us the undersigned, Charles Pocock, senior, Thomas Golden, and Charles Montague Pocock, Junior, Iron-Masters and Iron Wire-Manufacturers, trading under the firm of Pocock, Golden, and Co. at No. 11, Bouverie-Street, Fleet-Street, in the City of London, at Southcot-Mills, near Reading, in the County of Berks, and at Sowley-Forge, near Lymington, in the County of Hants, was dissolved by mutual consent on the 3d day of April last, so far as regards the said Charles Pocock, senior, who retires ; and that the business is and will continue to be carried on by the said Thomas Golden and Charles Montague Pocock, who are to receive and pay all debts due to and owing from the said late Partnership : As witness our hands this 4th day of April in the year of our Lord 1818.

Chas. Pocock, sen.

Thos. Golden.

Chas. Montague Pocock, jun.

Author: The London Gazette

Title: Notices

Page(s): 845

Date: 9 May 1818

URL: <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/17358/pages/845>

## 1821: The London Review

In late 1821, a little over three-and-a-half years after Charles Pocock Sr. retired, Thomas Golden and Pocock Jr. wound up the company, as noted in the European Magazine and London Review:

DISSOLUTIONS OF PARTNERSHIP.

FROM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, TO SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1821

POCOCK, C. M. and Golden, T. Bouverie-st. Fleet st. Iron-masters.

Author: The European Magazine and London Review

Title: Volumes 79–80

Page(s): 491

Date: 1821

URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=9x8YAQAIAAJ>

## 1833: RAIL 842/205

In 1833, a draft agreement between L Pocock (possibly Charles Pocock Sr.'s wife, Lucy, or his daughter, Louisa) and the Kennet and Avon Canal company is drawn up to surrender the lease of the wire mill at Southcote; it can be assumed that it remained in Pocock's possession over the 12 years since the company was dissolved.

Author: Kennet and Avon Canal Navigation Company  
Title: Records of the pre-nationalisation railway companies, pre-nationalisation canal and related companies, the London Passenger Transport Board, and successors  
Page(s): n/a  
Date: 12 October 1833  
URL: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C2740000>

## 1833: RAIL 842/206

In February 1834, the previous year's surrender of the lease was corroborated by an agreement between William Grimble (under direction of L Pocock) and Thomas Merriman. Merriman was a lawyer and magistrate who lived in Lockeridge near Marlborough in Wiltshire. Along with his legal partner, John Ward, Merriman was heavily involved in the Kennet and Avon Canal Company from its inception, later becoming its Principal Clerk.

Author: Kennet and Avon Canal Navigation Company  
Title: Records of the pre-nationalisation railway companies, pre-nationalisation canal and related companies, the London Passenger Transport Board, and successors  
Page(s): n/a  
Date: 25 February 1834  
URL: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/details?Uri=C2740001>

## 1851: Reading Waterworks Act

The Reading Waterworks Act, 1851 was introduced to provide Reading with a pumped water supply. The act outlined the need for a pumping station upstream of the town to supply water before it became polluted further downstream.

Author: The Proprietors of the Law Journal Reports  
Title: Public General Acts  
Page(s): 654  
Date: 1868  
URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=g8ouAAAAIAAJ>

## 1865: The Post Office Commercial Directory

The 1865 Post Office directory has a listing for J Tylor and Sons, the engineering firm who built the metalwork and pipes used in the wire mill:

[J Tylor and Sons,] engineers (hydraulic, mechanical & pharmaceutical), brassfounders, brass finishers, cockfounders, braziers, coppersmiths, plumbers, pottery dealers, manufacturers of pumps, water closets, soda water engines & machines, diving apparatus, baths & patent bath boilers, hot water apparatus, fire engines, hose pipe, garden engines & syringes, chemical apparatus for laboratories, brass manufacturers, pewterers & beer engine makers, ice mould makers, manufacturers of moderator & belmontine lamps, lamps for India & colonies, standard weights & measures for corporation use, condensing apparatus for distilling salt water for ships' use, Warwick lane, Newgate street EC, & 1 Warwick square EC"

Author: The Post Office Commercial Directory

Title: J. Tylor & Sons

Page(s): n/a

Date: 1865

URL: <http://www.stamp.demon.co.uk/Philately/ProtectiveOverprintsAndUnderprints/UserPages/JTylor&Sons/JTylor&Sons.htm>

## 1867: The London Gazette

The Reading Waterworks Act was reviewed in the late 1860s, with a view to "amend and enlarge the provisions of [the act]; to make further and better provision for supplying the town of Reading and the adjoining districts with water." The review also sought to give the Local Board of Health (at which Thomas Rogers held the position of Clerk) the power to buy or otherwise transfer ownership of the Reading Waterworks Company's "undertakings, works, land, plant, property, and effects of whatever kind or description", giving them the ability to buy the Reading Waterworks Company. It also gave provision for the Board to levy various tolls, fees and taxes related to the Waterworks. The intended act was deposited in the Private Bill Office at the House of Commons on 12 November 1867.

Author: The London Gazette

Title: Notices

Page(s): 6162–6163

Date: 19 November 1867

URL: <http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/23325/pages/6162>

## 1902: Gas Manufacture and Works Journal

By 1902, Reading had been relying on Southcote for its pumped water supply for half a century. Over this time, the facility had become out-of-date and was superseded by the works downstream at Fobney:

Up to 1896, Reading depended solely upon its water-driven plant; but in that year steam power was added to the Fobney works—the old water-wheels and pump at Southcote lying idle. In 1899, a system of covered filters was, however, constructed here; the old mill being utilized for the purpose. At the time, the water-wheels and pumps were overhauled, and the delivery mains cleaned.

Author: Gas Manufacture and Works

Title: Gas Journal, Volume 80

Page(s): 403

Date: 1902

URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=g-wiAQAAMAAJ>

## 1903: Institution of Water Engineers

The construction of the pumping station following the 1851 Reading Waterworks Act was commented upon by the Institution of Water Engineers:

[The act covered] the extension and improvement of [the Local Board of Health's] works, including the purchase of the old Southcote mill and its rights of "user of water power," and also of adjoining lands for the erection of a pumping station. These works are situated on the River Kennet, about two miles further away from the town than the original pumping station. The pump-house and pumping plant were constructed from plans prepared by the late James Simpson, C.E., and consisted of two "breast type" water-wheels, each 15 1/2ft. diameter, 8 1/2 ft. wide, working with a head of 6 ft., and each giving about 15 effective horse power. Each wheel operated a set of three single-acting pumps, 12in. diameter, with a 36in. stroke, delivering from 800,000 gallons to 1,150,000 gallons per day of 24 hours against a head of 90ft. This plant continued to supply Reading with water from 1852, when they were started, up to the year 1878; the original water power being used up to the same date for street-watering purposes during the summer months. In that year (i.e., 1878) an additional water-power pumping station was constructed nearer the town, at " Fobney Lock," also on the river...

Author: Transactions of the British Association of Waterworks Engineers, Volume 7

Title: Gas Journal, Volume 80

Page(s): 173

Date: 1903

URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dYhqAAAAMAAJ>

## 1905: British Progress in Pumping Engines

Fobney's pumps were upgraded to steam in 1896. Philip R Björning detailed the new system in a 1905 lecture to the Board of Trade:

Steam pressure pumps [...] Duplex plumps : Vertical duplex single cylinder boiler-feed pump by J. H. Carruthers & Co.—Vertical compound duplex boiler-feed pump by J. H. Carruthers & Co.—Combined vertical low-service duplex steam pump, vertical boiler and vertical duplex feed-pump by J. H. Carruthers & Co.—Reading Waterworks triple-expansion high-duty surface condensing Worthington pumping plant by James Simpson & Co. [...]

Author: Philip R Björning  
Title: British Progress in Pumps and Pumping Engines  
Page(s): 4  
Date: 1905  
URL: <http://www.library.wisc.edu/selectedtocs/ca3345.pdf>

## 1909: The Water Works Directory

Southcote primarily used a system of gravel and polarite filters, which were later replaced by De-Clor bacterial filters.

Author: Association of Water Engineers  
Title: The Water Works Director and Statistics, Volumes 28–29  
Page(s): 297  
Date: 1909  
URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=QSsXAQAIAAJ>

## 1923: Institution of Municipal Engineers

The Institution of Municipal Engineers journal clarified Southcote's function alongside the works at Fobney and the reservoir on the Bath Road:

Up to 1896, Reading depended solely upon its water-driven plant; but in that year steam power was added to the Fobney works—the old water-wheels and pump at Southcote lying idle. In 1899, a system of covered filters was, however, constructed here; the old mill being utilized for the purpose. At the time, the water-wheels and pumps were overhauled, and the delivery mains cleaned.

Author: Institution of Municipal Engineers  
Title: Journal, Volume 50  
Page(s): 878  
Date: 1923  
URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=2jUxQAAMAAJ>

## 1924: The Surveyor

The 65th volume of The Surveyor outlined some of the purification systems at Southcote:

The average daily quantity of water pumped from [Fobney] is 2 1/2 million gallons. [Southcote works] is situate [sic] about 1 mile above Fobney. Here the purification is similar to Fobney, save that the pre-filtered water is passed through pressure filters instead of sand filters. It is treated with chlorine...

Author: The Surveyor and Municipal and County Engineer  
Title: The Surveyor, Volume 65  
Page(s): 320  
Date: 1924  
URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=JwRVAAAAYAAJ>

## 1968: The Kennet and Avon Canal

In his 1968 illustrated history of the canal, Kenneth Clew described Southcote Lock's state of disrepair in the 1950s:

In October 1952 Southcote lock was unsafe and the following month Padworth lock bottom gates collapsed.

Author: Kenneth R Clew  
Title: The Kennet and Avon Canal: An Illustrated History  
Page(s): 153  
Date: 1968  
URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=vJdIAAAAMAAJ>

## 2008: Historic Buildings Report

Reading Borough Council's 2008 Historic Buildings Report gives an incite into the establishment of the waterworks at Southcote:

The relevant history of the waterworks site at Bath Road, Reading begins in 1850 when the Reading Union Water Company applied to Parliament for permission to construct works on the River Kennet a mile above Mill Lane, Southcote for the purposes of abstracting water. On 15 June 1850 the company gave notice to commence operations to give a constant water supply to every house in the town of Reading.

The new works, which were brought into operation in 1852, consisted of a pumping station at Southcote Mill (formerly a wire mill)[...]. The unfiltered river water was pumped to the open reservoir on the Bath Road site[...]. The completion of the new water works in 1852 marks the date when the public of Reading were first provided with a filtered water supply.

In 1868 the Corporation of Reading acquired the water works[...]."

Author: Reading Borough Council

Title: Historic Buildings Report

Page(s): 4

Date: 2008

URL: <http://documents.reading.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/00096538.pdf>



# Miscellaneous references

## 1881: Local Government Board

In the 1870s, Reading suffered a diarrhoea outbreak, particularly in the urbanised areas. From 1874 to 1880, there were 200 reported deaths. The Local Government Board investigated the outbreak and the pumping station's role in the spread of the illness:

Was the town water at fault, and did it act as a factor in the unusual prevalence of diarrhoea? I think that it can be shown that this was not so. It is true that during August and September the town water, on analysis, exhibited more vegetable organic matter than usual, and the temperature of the water as drawn from house taps in the town, was over 60° F.; but it can be clearly demonstrated that the prevalence of diarrhoea in 1880 was not confined to the area supplied by the Reading Waterworks, but existed in the surrounding rural districts to a marked extent.

[...]

In Earley where a large portion of the population is supplied by the Reading works, 7 out of the 22 deaths [of 1874] occurred.

Author: Local Government Board

Title: Tenth Annual Report

Page(s): 231

Date: 1881

URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=3o8aAQAAIAAJ>

## 1992: Reading Places, Reading People

Stuart Hylton describes the history of the pumping station at Southcote:

The water was pumped to the reservoir from Southcote pumping station. This was near Fobney Lock and upstream of where most of the pollution of Reading poured into the Kennet. This was opened in 1850 and was only replaced by the new waterworks nearby in 1982.

Author: Stuart Hylton

Title: Reading Places, Reading People

Page(s): 101

Date: 1992

URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=j4lnAAAAMAAJ>

## 2007: Footprints on a Global Landscape

In 2007, Hyder Consulting celebrated 100 years of business. They produced a booklet, Footprints on a Global Landscape, that outline the origins of the company lying in the partnership of John Taylor and Sons in the mid-19th century. Taylor was James Simpson's chief assistant at his consulting engineering office in Westminster:

As all the significant engineering schemes required an Act of Parliament, consultancy offices were established in or close to Great George Street to be convenient for frequent attendance at Parliamentary Committee meetings which discussed proposed schemes. Taylor prepared most of the parliamentary schemes for Simpson and was responsible for the design and supervision of many of his projects. Amongst these were waterworks for [...] Reading [...]

Author: The Surveyor and Municipal and County Engineer

Title: Hyder Consulting

Page(s): 4

Date: 2007

URL: <http://www.hyderconsulting.com/en/editorial/Downloads/Footprints%20on%20a%20Global%20Landscape%20-%20Part%202.pdf>

## 2007: The Canals of Britain

Stuart Fisher notes that Southcote Pumping Station became a private residence, presumably no earlier than 1982:

Beyond the lock is Southcote Mill, now converted to an attractive house. A pumping station was built here in 1850 to supply water to Reading.

Author: Stuart Fisher

Title: The Canals of Britain: A Comprehensive Guide

Page(s): 97

Date: 2007

URL: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=NQy3wKzMpecC>

## 2013: Pistonheads

A couple of users of the Pistonheads website (a news site and messageboard for car enthusiasts) were former tenants at Southcote Mill:

**Sym7:** About 20 years ago I rented a small annex to a water mill in the middle of nowhere by the Kennet in Southcote near Reading. It was a one bedroom place and the water from the taps would often start to change orange over time and then suddenly revert back to being clear again. I found out that the mil used to provide water to much of Reading prior to WWII.

My girlfriend (at the time) and I got to know our neighbours quite well who lived in the main Mill next door.....

Anyway, my neighbour Chris and his girlfriend invited us round for dinner one night. Their place was amazing....it had an indoor swimming pool literally in the lobby as you walk in and a bridge inside that connected the two halves of the building (an architect's dream I'm sure). Chris was a bit eccentric (in fact, probably the most eccentric person I have ever met). Many many stories about him but this is just one.

We started drinking (sherbets as he called it) heavily before going into the dining room for dinner. It was a great and somewhat conventional night and we were all pretty pissed. Eventually the subject of orange water came up and he said that it was his fault. He explained that it was down to him to change the filters every few weeks but often forgot. So I asked 'what filters?' With that he said, 'come on, let's do them now then'. He asked me to give him a hand with the dining table. So I helped him move the heaviest oak table I've ever known just a few feet to one side. There, where the table once sat, was a very neat carpeted square which turned out to be a man hole cover. Between us we lifted it up and he shone a torch light down the hole. I was staring at what looked like a huge underground reservoir brilliantly constructed with thousands and thousands of red brick (like a Victorian sewer). On the edges of the initial 'hole' into the reservoir was about 1" of protruding brickwork making a small ledge all around the circumference on which balanced a plank of wood (turned out to be a bendy plank of wood too). Chris said, "come on then". With that I found myself climbing down an old ladder onto the plank of wood and bending under an overhang where four modern looking filters hung which required unscrewing and replacing with new ones.

What a bizarre night.....I had gone from eating an Eton mess and quaffing some lovely wine one moment to finding myself in an Alice in Wonderland type experience. God knows what would have happened if I had fallen into the lake below me under the table.

**BraveSirRobin:** Southcote Mill? I used to rent one of the flats there! Suffered from murky brown water a few times. Tricky to get to when the surrounding land flooded as well! When I was there the owner of the Mill drove a Porsche 928.

**Sym7:** Yes, Southcote Mill. You are probably referring to Malcolm who had the Porsche (and owned Reading Marina). I didn't live in one of the flats in the block.....I lived in the annex between the Mill and the flats. I had a MR2 mk1 at the time (lived there about 1991 or 1992 I reckon). When it was flooded around the area I used to have to create a bow wave with the MR2 and then keep a steady speed for 1/2 mile following a wall of water. All very odd and surreal.

Author: Pistonheads

Title: Interesting things that most people don't know are there

Page(s): 5

Date: 2013

URL: [http://www.pistonheads.com/GASSING/topic.asp?](http://www.pistonheads.com/GASSING/topic.asp?h=0&f=210&t=1254463&mid=0&i=80&nmt=Interesting+things+that+most+people+don%27t+know+are+there%2E&mid=0)

[h=0&f=210&t=1254463&mid=0&i=80&nmt=Interesting+things+that+most+people+don%27t+know+are+there%2E&mid=0](http://www.pistonheads.com/GASSING/topic.asp?h=0&f=210&t=1254463&mid=0&i=80&nmt=Interesting+things+that+most+people+don%27t+know+are+there%2E&mid=0)

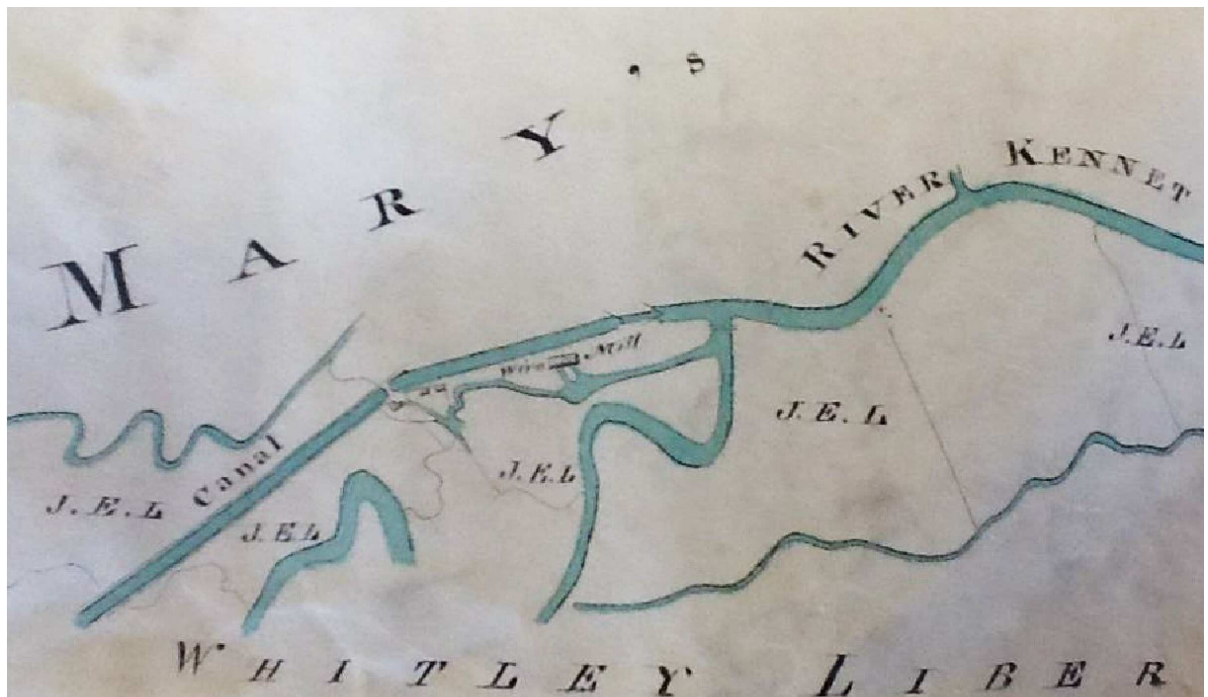
# Maps



**Map 1: 1790**

In this map of 1790, no canal buildings are shown at Southcote. The canalised navigation is labelled as "Homer's Cut". The land south of canal (between the canal and river) is labelled "Ten Acres Fobney", and the land north of canal is labelled "Little Fobney Meadow". A line of trees or a hedgerow marks the rough location of current track to Circuit Lane.

Source: Berkshire Record Office  
Date: 1790



### Map 2: 1811

In 1811, William Church of Abingdon published his Map of the Parish of Tilehurst in the County of Berks. It shows the wire mill with two mill races (one at the western end, one at the eastern); it is depicted as being as further west of lock than at present. At least three further buildings are shown approximately 200 metres upstream on south bank, as well as some sort of bridge or other crossing.

Author: John Church

Title: Map of the Parish of Tilehurst in the County of Berks

Date: 1811



**Map 3: 1830**

On this Ordnance Survey map of 1830, the mill north of the canal is marked on the map, and at least two buildings are shown on the wire mill island. Buildings are still marked upstream.

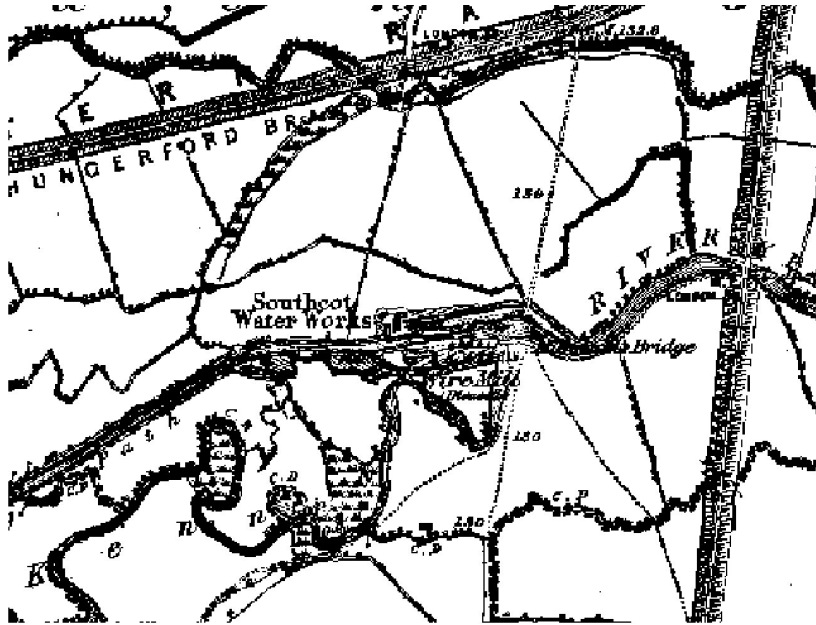
Source: Ordnance Survey  
Title: First Series, Sheet 13  
Date: 1830



**Map 4: 1878**

On this 1878 map of Berkshire, the water works is shown, now with a mill house. The wire mill is marked as disused—seemingly divided into three adjoined buildings with one mill race at the western end. Building(s) and a bridge are still extant upstream (see insert below); Milkmaids Bridge is identified as the crossing downstream of the lock.

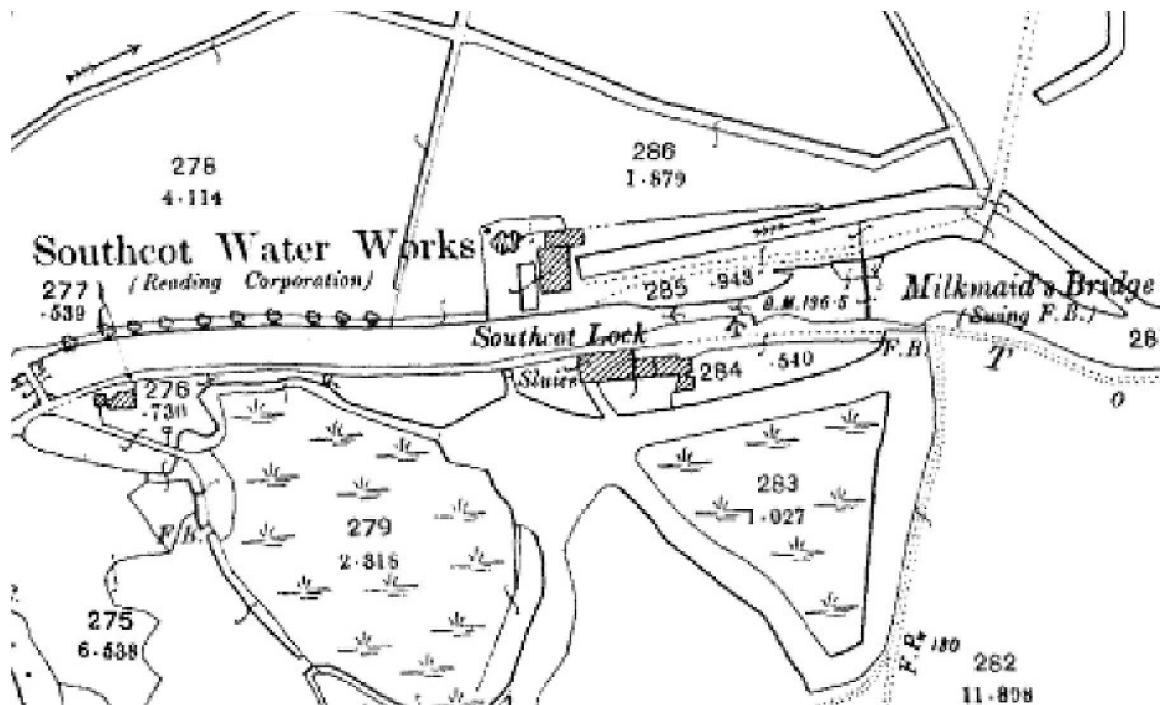
Source: Berkshire Record Office  
 Title: 1:2500 Berkshire Pre-WWII  
 Date: 1878



**Map 5: 1883**

On this Ordnance Survey map of 1883, the water works shown on the map, the mill house extant, and the wire mill marked as disused. This is an early depiction of the railway (the Hungerford Branch opened in 1847, the Basingstoke Branch in 1848). Milkmaids Bridge is labelled but it is unclear which bridge the label refers to—either the bridge at the foot of the lock or the bridge over the river that flows south of the wire mill.

Source: Ordnance Survey  
Title: 1:10560 Epoch 1  
Date: 1883



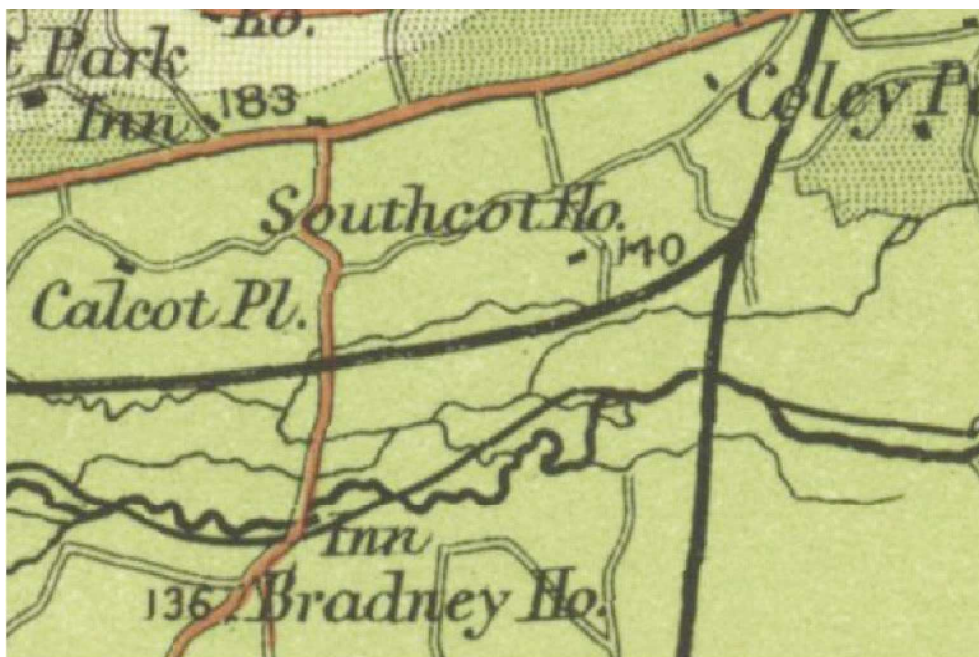
**Map 6: 1899**

On this map of 1899, the water works is shown, the mill house extant, and the wire mill shown—again (as in 1878) it is divided into three adjoined buildings, with a mill race at the western end. Building(s) and a bridge are still extant upstream, and Milkmaid's Bridge is identified as swing footbridge. The footbridge crossing the Kennet (flowing south of the wire mill) is aligned latitudinally, unlike on all other maps previously.

Source: Unknown

Title: 1:2500 Berkshire Pre-WWII

Date: 1889



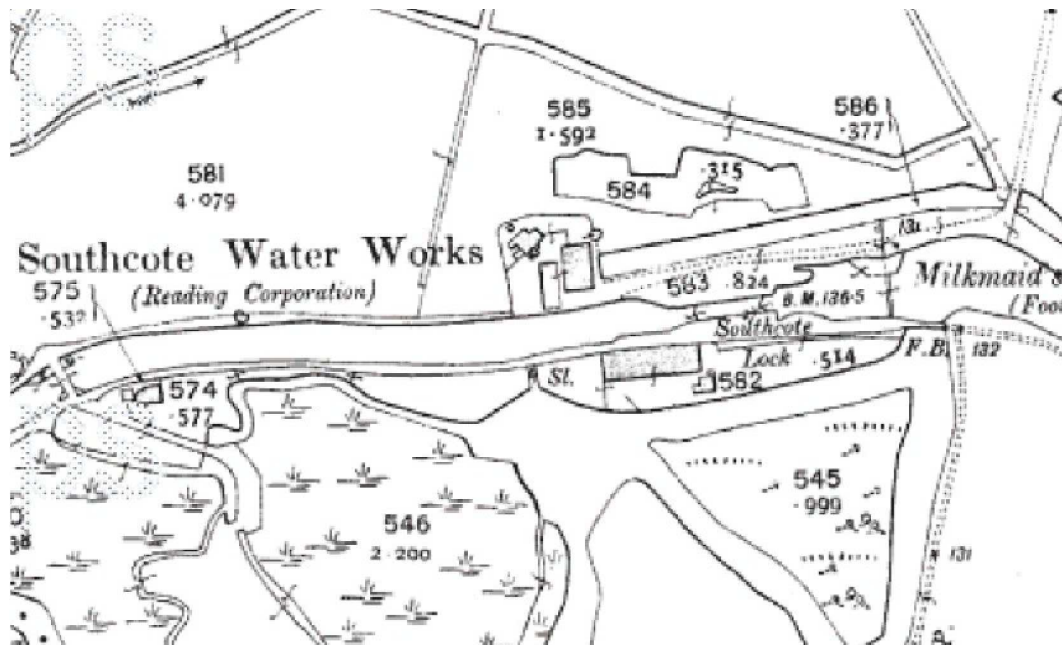
**Map 7: 1902**

On John Bartholomew's 1902 "Half Inch to the Mile" map of England and Wales, no buildings or labels are included at Southcote Mill.

Author: J G Bartholomew

Title: Half Inch to the Mile Map of England and Wales

Date: 1902



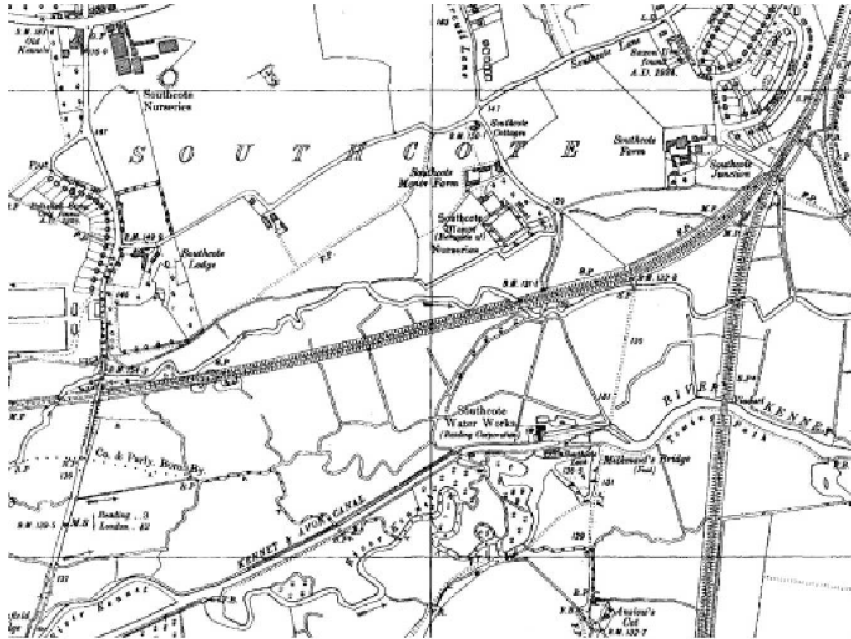
### Map 8: 1912

On this map of 1912, the water works is shown as being operated by Reading Corporation. The mill house is extant, and two separate buildings (one large, one small) are marked on the wire mill island. No mill race is shown, and the building(s) and bridge are still extant upstream. Milkmaids Bridge is identified as the crossing at the foot of the lock.

Source: Unknown

Title: 1:2500 Berkshire Pre-WWII

Date: 1912



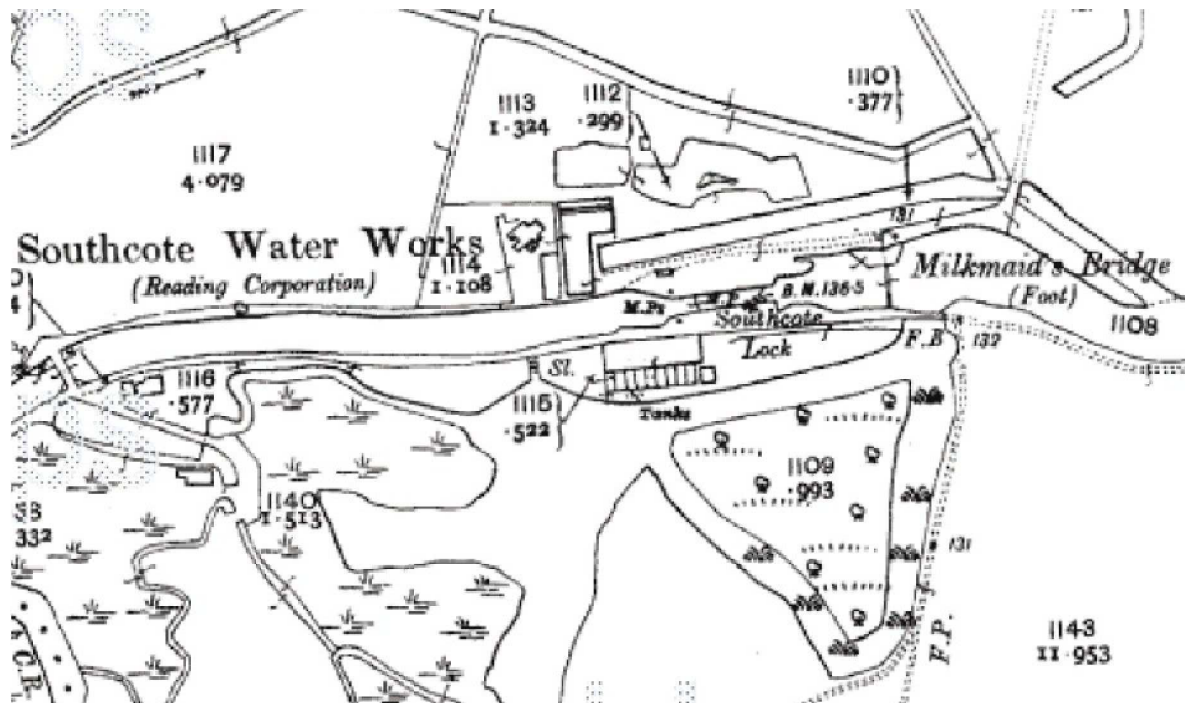
**Map 9: 1931-2**

On this map from the early 1930s, the water works is again shown on map as being operated by Reading Corporation. The mill house is extant, and building(s) (either one or two as before) are marked on the wire mill island. The tanks south of the wire mill are shown. No mill race is shown, and the building(s) and bridge are still extant upstream. Milkmaids Bridge is identified as the low bridge over the River Kennet that flows south of the wire mill. The original "V"-shaped course of the Kennet here is beginning to become marshy, and a shorter route running directly from west to east has formed.

Source: Unknown

Title: 1:10560 Berkshire Pre-WWII

Date: 1931-2



**Map 10: 1932**

On this 1932 map, the water works is again shown as operated by Reading Corporation. The mill house is extant, and the building(s) at the wire mill are shown; the smaller building appears more square than on earlier maps. There is no mill race, and the tanks are shown and labelled. The building(s) and bridge upstream are still shown. Milkmaids Bridge is identified as the footbridge below the lock. The low footbridge is still shown as running west to east.

Source: Unknown

Title: 1:2500 Berkshire Pre-WWII

Date: 1932



**Map 11: 1935**

On this 1935 Ordnance Survey map, the water works is shown, the mill house is extant and at least one building is situated on the wire mill island.

Source: Ordnance Survey

Title: Unknown series

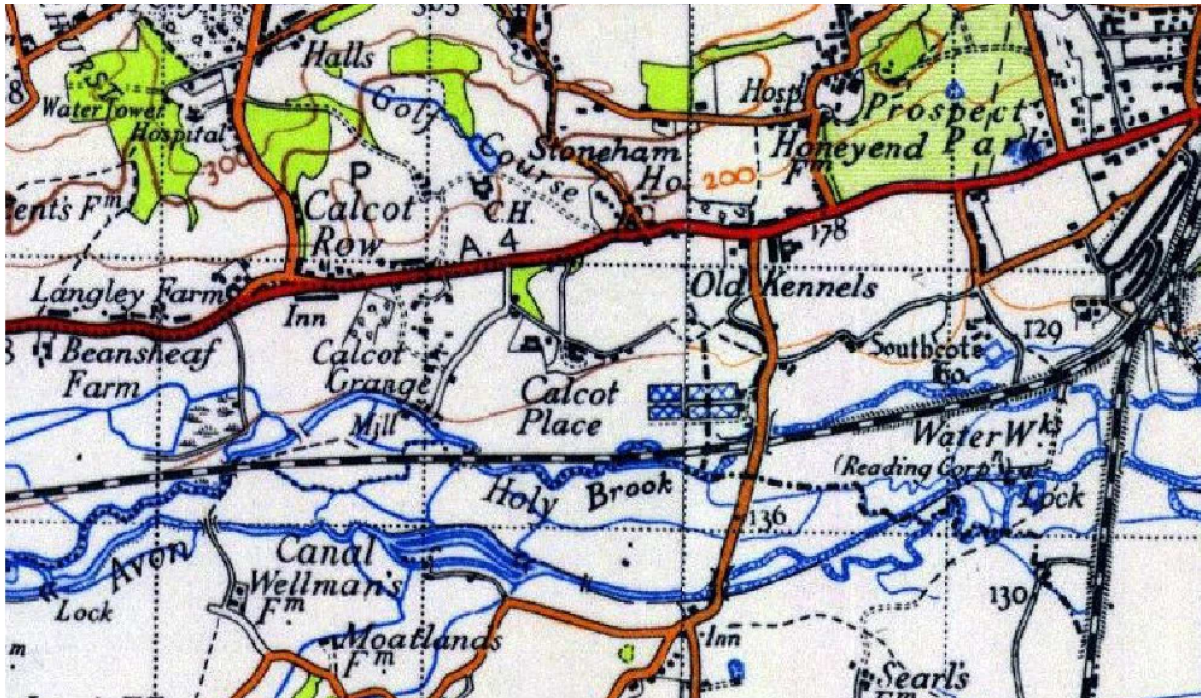
Date: 1935



**Map 12: 1935**

On this 1935 Land Utilisation Survey of Britain map, the water works is shown, the mill house is extant and at least one building is situated on the wire mill island.

Source: Geographical Publications Limited  
Title: 1:63360 Land Utilisation Survey of Britain  
Date: 1936



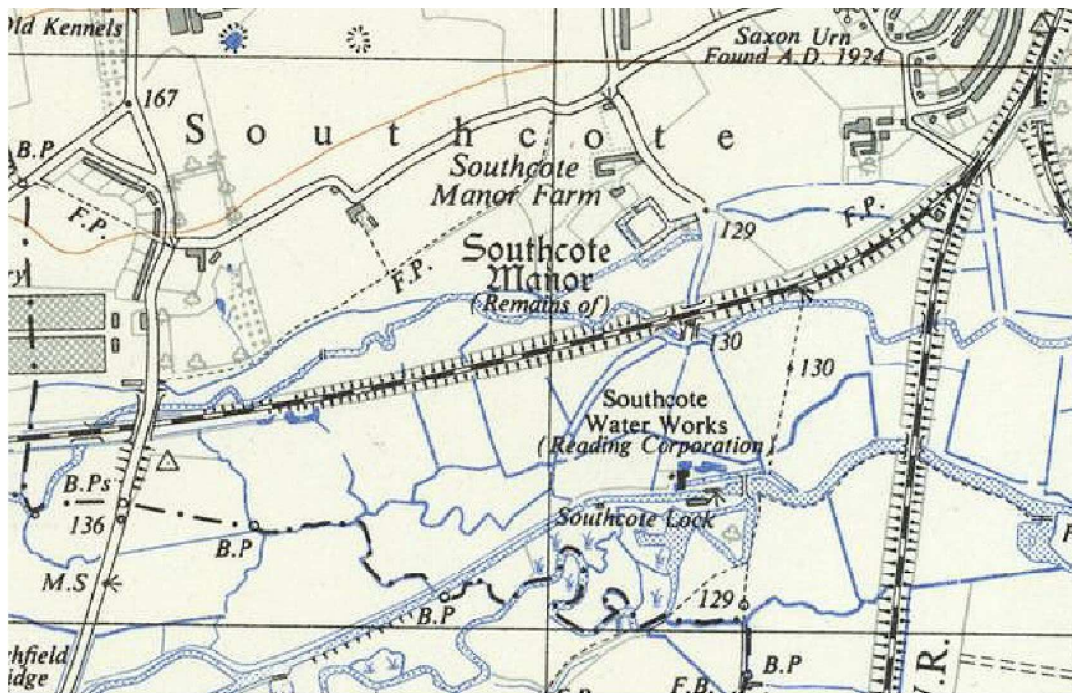
**Map 13: 1946**

On this 1946 Ordnance Survey map, the water works is shown as being operated by Reading Corporation, and one large building is marked on the wire mill island.

Source: Ordnance Survey

Title: "One Inch to the Mile" New Popular Edition (Aldershot)

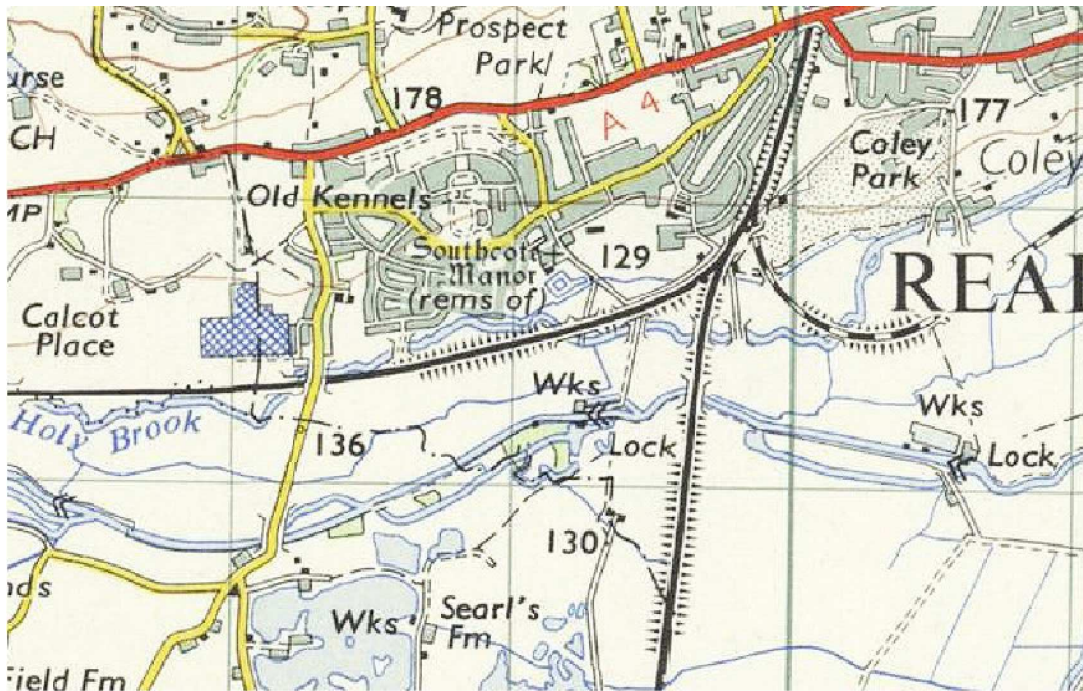
Date: 1946



**Map 14: 1947**

On this 1947 Ordnance Survey map, the water works is shown as being operated by Reading Corporation, and one large building is marked on the wire mill island. The building(s) upstream are again shown.

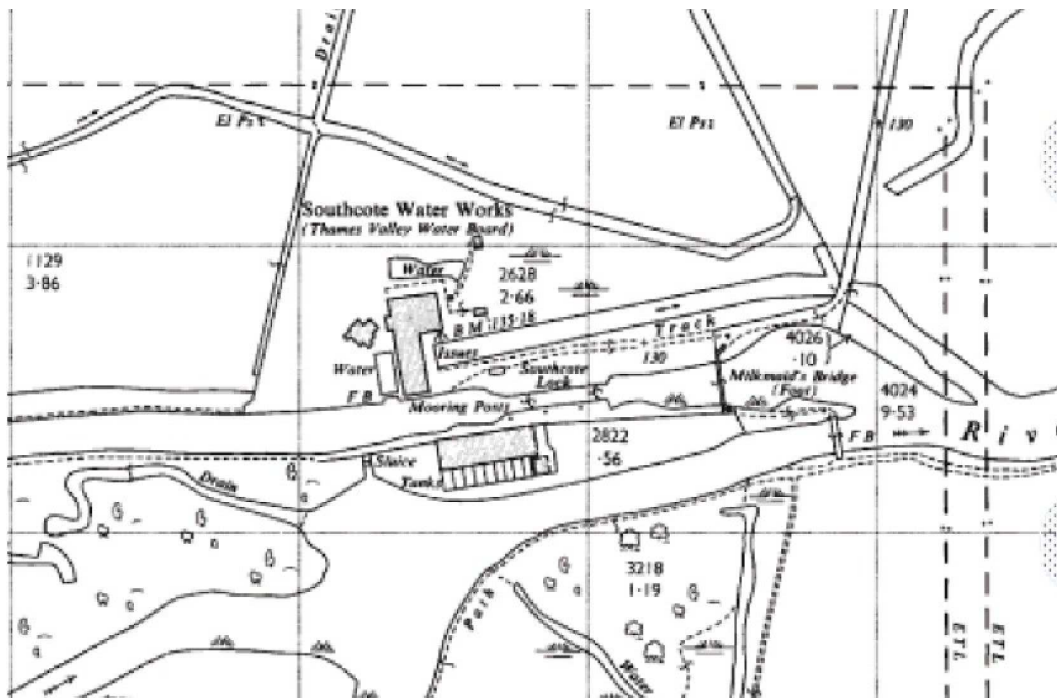
Source: Ordnance Survey  
 Title: 1:25000 map of Great Britain  
 Date: 1947



**Map 15: 1959**

On this 1959 Ordnance Survey map, the water works is shown but there is no evidence of the mill house. One large building occupies the wire mill island, and the building(s) upstream are again marked. The “V”-shaped meander of the Kennet (as in the 1931–32 map) is now depicted as cut off from the main course and is shown as an oxbow lake.

Source: Ordnance Survey  
Title: “One Inch to the Mile” Seventh Series  
Date: 1959



**Map 16: 1967–8**

On this map from 1967/8, the water works is shown as operated by the Thames Valley Water Board. The mill house has reappeared on the map, and there is now a small building marked to the east of garden flat (north of the midpoint of the wire mill). Two buildings (one large, one small as in 1912) are marked on the wire mill island, the structures at the rear (south) of the mill are labelled as “tanks”. No bridge nor buildings are shown upstream, and the oxbow lake is labelled. Milkmaids Bridge is identified as the bridge at the foot of the lock, and the low footbridge is now shown as running longitudinally.

Source: Unknown

Title: 1:2500 Berkshire Post-WWII

Date: 1967–8



**Map 17: 1971-2**

On this map from the 1970s, the water works is labelled and the mill house is again shown. There is no evidence of the eastern building. There is one large building on the wire mill island (with structures to the south). No bridge nor buildings shown upstream, and the oxbow lake is no longer labelled as such nor identified as a major body of water. Milkmaid's Bridge identified as the low footbridge. The course of Circuit Lane runs south-west from where the gate is now, and leads under the railway at the bridge to the east of the one on the lane to the mill.

Source: Unknown

Title: 1:10000 Berkshire Post-WWII

Date: 1971-2



### Map 18: 1977

On this Geographia map of 1977, the water works and the mill house are shown. No wire mill is marked or labelled, and the “V”-shaped water course is identified as linked to the main river course. Milkmaid’s Bridge is identified as the low bridge. The track from the Circuit Lane gate is missing (showing that the access to Southcote Mill is via Southcote Farm Lane) and the course of the southern end of Circuit Lane is the same as in previous maps—bearing south-west towards the railway line.

Source: Geographia

Title: Reading

Date: 1977



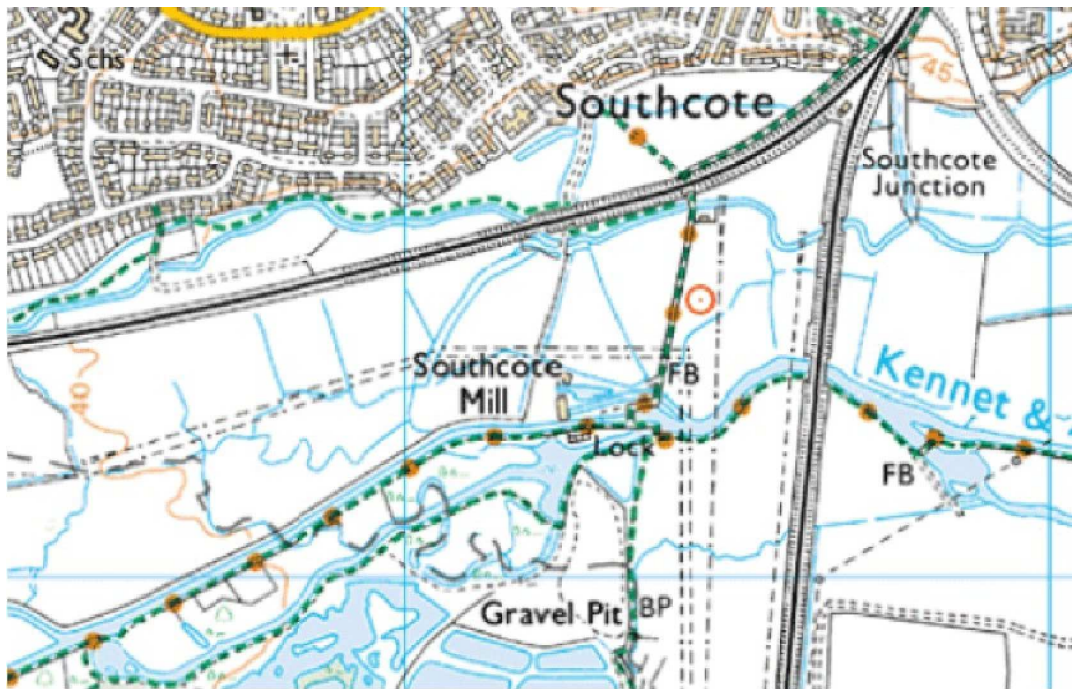
**Map 19: 1983**

On this map of no later than 1983 (as the Coley Branch line has been removed), Southcote Mill now named as such instead of “Water Works”. Again, the mill house is not marked, and there is no evidence of the eastern building. One large building is shown on the wire mill island with some southern structures. The “V”-shape water course (south of wire mill) is still identified as a minor body of water. Milkmaid’s Bridge is identified as the low footbridge.

Source: Unknown

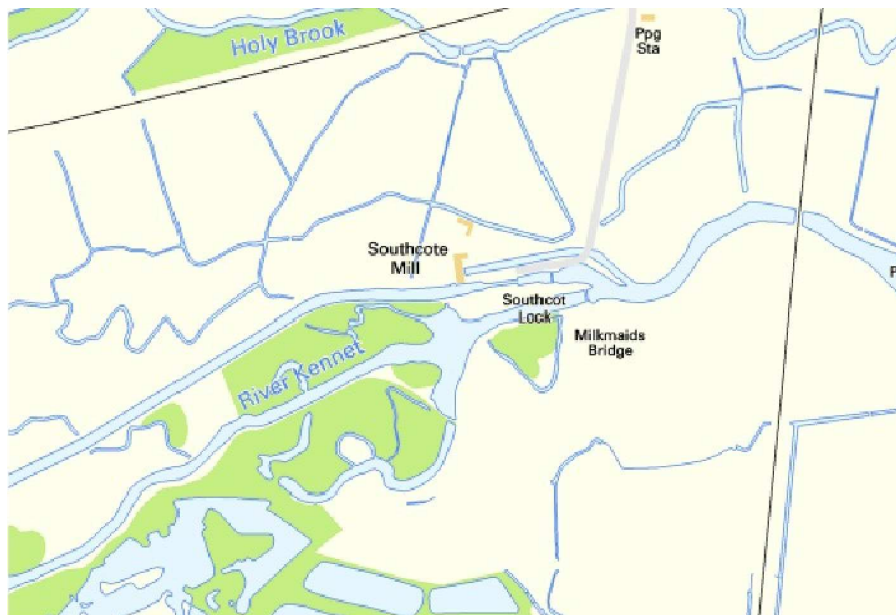
Title: 1:10000 Berkshire Post-WWII

Date: 1983 (latest)

**Map 20: 2012**

On this 2012 Ordnance Survey map, Southcote Mill is marked with the stable block added. One large building on the wire mill island (with southern structures) is shown, the “V”-shaped water course is still identified as such.

Source: Ordnance Survey  
Title: Explorer Active  
Date: 2012



**Map 21: 2013**

On this 2013 Ordnance Survey map, Southcote Mill is marked with the stable block added. One large building on the wire mill island (with southern structures) is shown, the “V”-shaped water course is still identified as such.

Source: Ordnance Survey

Title: OpenData

Date: 2013

# Photographs



**Photo 1: Southcote Lock (1975)**

Author: Neil Clifton



**Photo 2: Southcote Lock (1982)**

Author: Tony Clayton



**Photo 3: Southcote Lock (12 January 1948)**

Author: Walton Adam and Sons Ltd.

Source: Berkshire Record Office



**Photo 4: Southcote Lock (12 January 1948)**

Author: Walton Adam and Sons Ltd.  
Source: Berkshire Record Office



