

THE LANGDEN CULVERT

In a year when water, or lack of it, has been at the forefront of our daily news, it would seem an appropriate time to look at the building of the Langden Brickwork Culvert, in the Forest of Bowland.

The summer of 1868 was dry and in the 1991 Longer Sen (green) we printed the newspaper story of the emergency water supply from the Hodder. The Preston Corporation seem to have acted quickly after this and in 1869 the Preston Improvement Act was passed. This gave the Preston Corporation power to take water from the Forest of Bowland. It also empowered the building of intake works upon the Langden and Hareden streams and a brickwork culvert, which would convey the water to the storage reservoirs at Longridge.

Work began in 1869 and was completed sometime between 1871 and 1875; accounts vary. The water was carried from its intake in the Langden and Hareden Valleys, by stoneware pipes to a junction near the Hareden Bridge. Here it entered the brickwork culvert for its journey to Longridge, a distance of approximately 13 miles.

From the Hareden Bridge the culvert was 3ft in diameter until it reached a point near the Countess Hey, Chipping, where it joined an existing, but abandoned, older culvert. From this point the culvert was 4ft in diameter until it entered the Longridge reservoirs.

During the 1920s repair work on the culvert was carried out. Huts were erected near Hareden for use by the workmen and women. Our photograph shows one of these huts with a group of workers in the forefront. Many of these were local people.

The Whalley sisters (Wardsley) had memories of the huts, and the light railway that was constructed at the time, for the contractors, at Fair Oak and Wardsley. The sisters earned extra money by providing snacks for the workmen repairing the culvert. They also recalled that there was a watchman at the huts and the local lads used to tease him and block his stove chimney.

In 1936 a 30inch diameter steel pipeline was completed, to provide an alternative to the old culvert, which was showing signs of serious deterioration.

"Mortar was dropping from the brickwork joints, the roof in many places was sagging dangerously, bricks were disintegrating, and leakages were increasing in number and extent. Quite frequently at the maximum flow (latterly only 9 million gallons per day were possible) one million gallons would be lost in transit between Hareden Bridge and the reservoirs; and in many