

What Happened Was 19

Bryco Concrete came back to me about some more pre-stressing heads, "We have the steel", they said, so without thinking I said see you next week. When I arrived at the works the steel was massive. They were R.S.J. sections again, 36inches by 18inches by 1 inch thick and 24inches by 18inches by 1 inch. Several lengths about 40 foot long. They had been part of "Goliath" the big gantry crane that straddled the construction site at Hinkley Point, which had become redundant. This was to be the granddaddy of recycling jobs. It took three weeks to cut and shape all the parts and a month to weld them together. Uprights to go into the ground with 45-degree bracing struts welded to them, four on each end of the casting bed. They were huge and would be loaded to 750 tons.



Once again I "conned" dad out of retirement to sort out the holes for this job. The steel work was all set up, welded together with a load of re-enforcing bars and was ready for concreting in.

This was some task in itself. The ready mix was ordered with the plants within a 20-mile radius of Creech tied up for a day to supply this one job. The first pour was at 6a.m. and the lorries just kept coming until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. There were 120 loads in all plus countless dumper loads from the batch mixer on site.

The concrete was still fairly hot a week later and a few small cracks appeared despite a regular hosing.

The casting bed was laid three hundred feet long this time. Then I had the job of making several hundred clamps to hold the moulds in place. It was testing time; this went well and I felt good. Later it was loaded to 1500 tons and I felt even better.

Next to something lighter! I had just finished repairing the railings at Over Stowey church for Geoff Grandfield and he said the lantern over the gate looks a bit sad, can you do something about it? Not only was that the start of a long association with Geoff but the start of a long line of making and repairing lamps including several on the West Somerset Railway.

I made a new one for St. Margaret's in Spaxton and not to be left out Stephen Barks the rector wanted one for his garden. A follow on from this was those big old keys for church doors and lots of other ecclesiastical ironwork (I liked the sound of that).

SLB

SPAXTON PARISH COUNCIL NEXT MEETING DATES

APRIL 25th at 8.00pm and MAY 23rd at 8.00pm

Everyone welcome

Some of the issues discussed at last month's meeting were:

- 4 wheel drive vehicles taking delight in churning up verges and banks.
- Surface water runoff from arable hill fields causing flood concerns.
- Digestate lagoons being constructed and no safety fencing put up around them.