



Wilton Water

Wilton Water is a small 8-acre man-made reservoir immediately north of the village of Wilton, now managed by the Canal and River Trust.

When the Kennet and Avon Canal was being constructed, one of the engineering problems was the supply of water to service the series of locks required to lift barges up to the summit of the canal at Devizes. This was partly resolved by the building of a pumping station at Crofton (**see Crofton Beam Engine**). After the canal was opened in 1810 a new problem emerged: there was insufficient water available to the pumping station. This too was eventually solved by the damming of a narrow valley by John Blackwell in 1836, creating Wilton Water.

The reservoir which is fed by springs became a natural habitat for inland wetlands wildlife, ranging from Mallard, Teal and occasional Tufted and Widgeon ducks, as well as Swans and Canada Geese, to water voles. Following the prolonged drought in 1976 the reservoir was dredged and stocked with rainbow trout. Unfortunately blanket weed has subsequently reduced the fish species to mainly pike. Nevertheless, Wilton Water remains a beacon for wildlife and steps have been taken by both the Trust and landowners to improve the ecology of the area.

A significant number of local farmers (the Southern Streams Group), responsible for some 25,000 acres of land, have banded together to improve the quality of run-off water from farmland into local water supplies. Other measures by landowners are in hand to create wildlife corridors throughout the Wilton Water local area.

