

Progress on Exe Bridge scheme

GOOD progress is being made on Tiverton's "summer spectacular"—the demolition of Exe Bridge although piling work still to be done is likely to continue for a few more weeks. The last of the old bridge was demolished during the week.

At the moment the contractors, Thomas Fletcher and Son, are doing piling work to support the central pier. Then some piling will be needed at both banks. Then begins the building of the new bridge itself. That is due to finish some time next year.

That will be followed immediately by the construction of the Westexe flood barrier wall under a separate contract.

The central pier will be 23ft. high. Excavations down 14ft. were finished by last week but before pile-driving could start again a huge crane had to be edged along the river bed and under the footbridge to the downstream side.

MORE PILES

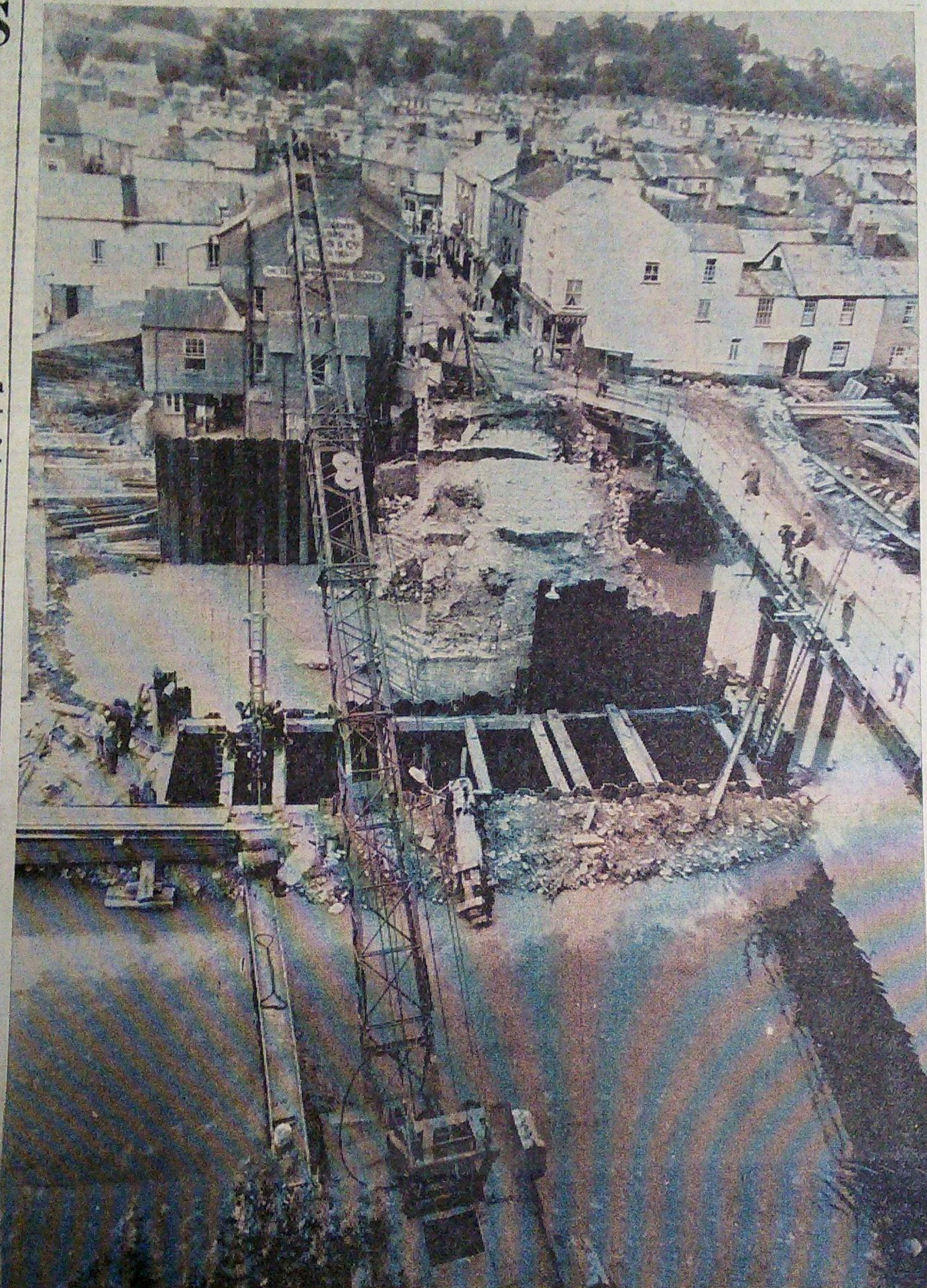
The transfer was necessary so that work could begin on hammering another 36 piles into the river bed. In all, a total of 148 will have been thumped home since the beginning of July. The Pier foundations are 57ft. long and 15ft. wide and have hundreds of reinforced steel bars and a four-feet thick slab of concrete. The pier itself will be four feet wide at its base and two feet at the top.

The aim is to get on with this phase of the contract in the next few weeks so that the coffer dam can be removed prior to mid-September before river levels rise and to ensure that the Exe will be virtually unobstructed in winter when higher water is more likely.

The bridge work is a focal point for local people. Most days the footbridge is thronged with interested spectators. There are none more interested than local traders. The Chamber of Trade, anxious to build a case for possible rate rebates at a later stage, will be discussing at the end of the month steps towards compiling a dossier, complete with photographs, of the stages in the work.

Replacement of the bridge, a £140,000 job, is the vital first part of Devon River Authority's £530,000 scheme to protect Tiverton from bigger floods from the old enemy the Exe than those which occurred in the early 1960s.

Footnote.—On Tuesday evening people in Westexe were without water for about two hours when the weight of the crane cracked a water main. North Devon Water Board were able to provide supplies from a different source.



Progress on the demolition of Exe Bridge and the excavations for the central pier of the new bridge is shown in this fine picture by staff photographer A. T. Kingdon. It was taken with a wide-angle lens camera from the roof of Messrs. Summerhill, Angel Hill. On the right is the footbridge, which is thronged most days with spectators for Tiverton's "summer spectacular." The £140,000 job by Messrs. Thomas Fletcher and Sons is the vital first part of Devon River Authority's £530,000 flood protection scheme for Tiverton.