



Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

Cotswold Canals Restoration

Phase 1b. Saul Junction to The Ocean, Stonehouse

Project S23

The Wharfs on the Stroudwater Canal

Interim Report

by Ray Wilson April 2007 Issue 1

This is an interim report of a project focussing on each of the main wharves on the Stroudwater Canal. The aim is to integrate the results of several studies such as historical and modern photographs of the sites, tithe map and census information, details of employees, the vessels that called there and traffic studies.

Ultimately this should provide a clearer picture of the impact of the canal on the community in the 19th century.

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Introduction

This is an interim report on a new project which will focus on each of the main wharfs on the Stroudwater Canal. The idea for this particular project has emerged as a result of the work being carried out on more general ones which were started in October 2006 or later.

The aim of the project is to integrate, for each wharf, the results of several studies such as historical and modern photographs of the site, tithe map and census information, details of employees, the vessels that called there and traffic studies. Additional research will be needed for each site. Ultimately this should provide a much clearer picture of the impact of the canal on the community in the 19th century.

Not surprisingly, most of the major wharfs were located near a bridge over the canal. Today these bridges are among the main access points to the towpath. This will remain the case when the canal is restored and so these locations will be excellent places to place suitable interpretation panels. The space available on the panels will be limited but it is important that the research is carried out to a high standard so that the necessarily concise information provided on the panels is also to a very high standard. A list of the main wharfs is given in Appendix A along with a list of some of the less important sites where cargoes, predominantly coal for a particular mill, were unloaded.

The main sources that are expected to be used are given below. The numbers in square brackets, e.g. [S07], refer to the present projects. A list of the relevant projects is given in Appendix B.

- The Canal Company's tonnage books [S02], [S03], [S07], [S08]
- Records of vessels using the canal [S09], [S10]
- Censuses [S05], [S06]
- Personal reminiscences [S22]
- Social History resources [03], [11], [12], [13]
- Tithe maps [S05], [S06]
- Any large scale maps [S27]
- Cotswold Canals Heritage Survey [S15], [S16]
- Modern photographic surveys [S20]
- Historical photographic collections [S21]
- Other resources [17], [18], [19], [20]

The output of the project will be a series of articles (one per main site) which will be posted on a website. It is intended that at least one article will be forthcoming from this work to be published in the annual journal of the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology. In addition to the provision of information for interpretation panels it will be possible to produce an illustrated information sheet in the form of a mini trail guide for two or three of the sites which the interested public can download from the Internet before visiting the canal.

Appendix A List of Locations of the Coal Wharfs

A1 The Main Wharfs

Bristol Road Wharf or Whitminster Wharf (SO 772074)

On north-west corner of the present roundabout on the A38 Gloucester to Bristol main road.

Eastington Wharf (SO 783061)

On north-west side of Pike Bridge which lies on the road from Eastington to the M5 Motorway.

Stonehouse Wharf (SO 804049)

North-west side of Bridgend Bridge which lies on the road from Stonehouse to Stanley Downton.

Ryeford Wharf (SO 813046)

On north-west side of Ryeford Bridge on the old road which is now a cul-de-sac.

Ebley Wharf (SO 825046).

On north-west side of Oil Mills Bridge (on minor road leading to The Snow Mill - formerly Ebley Oil Mill). A small wharf on the towpath side served Oil Mills via a short tramroad until a siding from the Stonehouse and Nailsworth Railway was provided to the mill.

Dudbridge Wharf (SO 834047).

The wharf was on the southern side of the canal and the canal crane dating from 1856 is still in-situ.

Wallbridge Wharf, (SO 846050).

This was the terminal basin for the canal but has been long since filled-in. The 18th century Company offices and warehouse survive.

A2 Other Locations where Coal and other Cargoes were Handled

Saul Bridge Wharf (SO 750100)

Coal Wharf on the eastern side of the canal north of the bridge.

Meadow Mill, Eastington (SO 781061)

Coal pen for Meadow Mill between Westfield Lock and Dock Lock.

Bonds Mill, Stonehouse (SO 793052)

Coal depot built to serve Bonds Mill.

Ryeford Coal Pens, Stonehouse (SO 053046)

Coal pens beside towpath to west of bridge. It was built 1864 to serve Stanley Mill.

Ryeford Mill, Stonehouse (SO 05404)

Ford Bros at Ryeford Mill had their own wharf on towpath side to east of the bridge.

Stroud Gasworks, Ebley (SO 839049)

On south-west side of Gasworks Bridge (now Chestnut Lane).

Appendix B Related Projects Relevant to the Wharfs Project

- S02. Research into the Stone Used in the Canal and the Stone Carried as Cargo
- S03. The Importance of the Canal to the Cloth Mills at Eastington
- S05. Stonehouse Parish: Tithe Survey 1839 and 1841 Census
- S06. Eastington, Whitminster and Fretherne with Saul Parishes: Tithe Surveys and 1841 Census
- S07. Traffic on the Stroudwater Canal: 1775 to 1822
- S08. Traffic on the Stroudwater Canal: 1881
- S09. Some Vessels Associated with the Stroudwater Canal
- S10. Some Vessels in the Purton Boat Graveyard Associated with the Stroudwater Canal
- S11. Servants (Employees) of the Stroudwater Company
- S12. Public Houses Along the Line of The Stroudwater Canal
- S13. The Ford Brothers of Ryeford
- S15. Review of Heritage Database (Structure and Implementation)
- S16. Review of Heritage Database (Content)
- S17. Review of Archive Sources in UK Record Offices for Stroudwater Canal Records
- S18. GSIA Journal Articles Relating to the Stroudwater Canal
- S20. Photographic Record of the Stroudwater Canal (Phase 1b Section)
- S21. Survey of Historic Photographs Relating to the Stroudwater Canal
- S22. Recording Mr Les Pugh's Memories of the Canal in Operation in the 1920s
- S25. Stroudwater Canal Inspection Reports (1908-1978)
- S27. List of Maps Relevant to Stroudwater Canal Research Projects
- S28. "The Trow" 1990 – 1995: Articles Relating to the History and Archaeology of the Canals
- S29. Tithe Map Information for Areas Affected by Possible New Line of Canal (Phase 1b)