

In the Journal for 1985 it was mentioned that Stroud District Council had commissioned a report on the local mills; this was finalised in June 1986 and published as a booklet titled "Making the most of the Industrial Heritage of the Stroud Valleys". To discuss the document, the Council called a conference at the end of November at which many members were present representing various bodies (including the GSIA). At the conference, after several speeches the delegates divided into five discussion groups, corresponding to the five chapters in the booklet, and the chairmen of these groups reported back their findings before the conference ended.

Of great interest in the book are the appendices, especially the Gazetteer of 33 mills which, for each mill, gives a description and history together with the environmental condition and present use, also including a location map and occasional sketches. These mills exclude those in the Painswick and Slad valleys, nor are smaller mills included.

The restoration of the Stroud mills has up to now only been considered on a one-off basis, and a good example of this is Egypt Mill at Nailsworth, which has had an excellent conversion into a restaurant. It is good to see that the large water-wheels have been preserved and are actually turning. The report however, is considering all the main mills and their possible future use; uses suggested include - a textile museum, time-share flats, offices, craft centre, retail areas, workspaces for innovative firms, hotel, hostel, restaurant and residential accommodation. It is also particularly concerned with cleaning up and landscaping the mill surroundings, as has been carried out at Churches Mill, Woodchester.

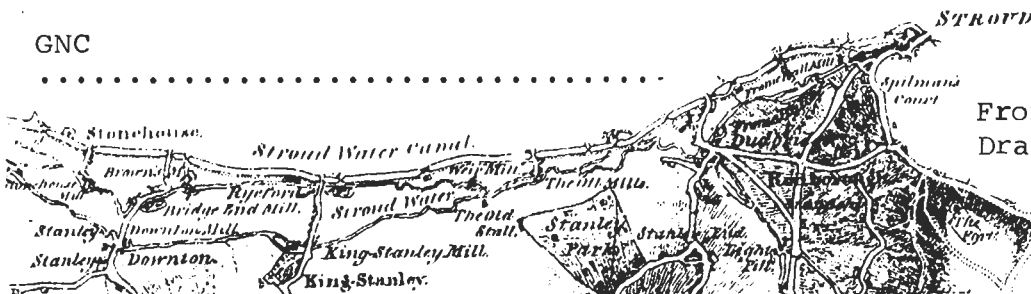
At the conference it was stated that the restoration of the canal was not going ahead quickly enough, and it was considered that efforts should be increased, together with creating a linear conservation area along the line of the Stroudwater and Thames & Severn canals. The District Planning Officer said that he was hoping that the main mills, with their surroundings, would be declared as conservation areas.

Mention was made of a 'string of pearls' idea, when various mills would have attractions for visitors and these could be linked by mini-buses running at weekends, starting from the proposed council carpark at Ebley Mill. Ebley Mill itself, the future Stroud District headquarters, could have an introductory exhibition.

It was suggested that a small steering group be set up under the District Council to co-ordinate all such schemes and work: your Secretary has written to the Council requesting that GSIA be represented.

Now that work on further offices for Gloucester Council in converted warehouses, and the British Waterways Museum, are under way, and also that there is an overall scheme for the full development of Gloucester Docks, it is good to know that the Stroud mills are similarly (hopefully!) going to be restored.

GNC



From OS Preliminary Drawings c. 1810.