

MAIN ROADS THROUGH PAINSWICK

By COLLEEN HAINE

The First Main Road through Painswick

The most ancient main route recorded through Painswick was from Gloucester and then on to Bisley and Cirencester.(1)

It came into Painswick down Gloucester Street (which was named Barnet Street in 1429), and then went down Bisley Street, which then was called High Street,(2) and continued straight on where now there are houses to Tibbywell Lane, which was recorded in various forms as Towy, Tobbye.(3) It then crossed the Wyke Stream (now Painswick Stream) and went up Brookhouse Lane to Bull's Cross. "Broke house" was recorded in 1496.(4) It is now Brookhouse, and the lane may have been named from it. The earliest I have found "Bulcross" mentioned is 1566.(5) Why it is named Bull's Cross I have never found out! After Bull's Cross the first main road went down to cross the Slad Brook where now there are only fields with footpaths, and up the other side to Catswood Lane. In one more mile the road reached Bisley, whence most of it still exists as a road to Cirencester.

There are several interesting pieces recorded in Painswick about this first main road. In 1541 it was ordered that "None shall wash clothes at Towys Well - Fine of 20d."(6) In 1548, the Painswick mercer let his pony drink at Tibbywell, as it returned home with him from Bisley across Slad.(7) In 1607 it was published that all public springs, a list which included "Toby-well", were strictly supervised.(8) When I was young, people from cottages not far away were still collecting buckets of water at that spring on that ancient road.

The present Bisley Street, which was part of the main road, was changed to that name in 1750 according to Baddeley,(9), but I found it advertised in 1817 with furniture for sale as High Street,(10) and again in 1821 a house was advertised to be let with a shop and bakehouse in High Street,(11) so who made a mistake? In Gloucester Street, which is the only part of the first main road still used as a main road, there was in 1822 a new turnpike house.(12) The original turnpike house was by the entrance to Butt Green and nothing remains of it; the one built in 1822 is still there and is named "Pound House".

Baddeley said that the ancient road to Gloucester used the present Holcombe Lane, then went uphill again, and then down Cud Hill, to get to the bottom at Upton Hill.(13) You can still do this by footpaths, but he does not say what documentary evidence he had for this statement.

This first main road was turnpiked in 1726,(14) but I have found evidence of turnpikes only on the part of the main road between Painswick and Gloucester. In 1733 it was published, that any persons who obstructed the collecting of tolls at Painswick would be prosecuted by the Lord of the Manor.(15) This was the only time I found the Lord of the Manor responsible for tolls. After

this it was Commissioners, or Trustees, who were always in charge. In 1741 it was advertised that the posts of the turnpike at Singbridge on the road from Gloucester to Painswick had been destroyed and taken away in the night. A reward of 5 guineas was offered by the Commissioners for information leading to prosecution.(16) What a lot of money for those days!

In 1763 it was published that people travelling on the road from Painswick to Gloucester who left horses outside the Barton Turnpike to avoid paying charges, would be prosecuted.(17)

Every year for more than a century I found tollgates advertised "To be Let" at the Falcon Inn in Painswick.(16) In 1787 two persons were convicted for hauling with more than the stipulated number of horses on the turnpike road from Gloucester to Painswick.(19) I can understand how difficult it was to get waggons up Upton Hill because I can remember when in Painswick our buses did not use that road but went instead by the Cheltenham Road to Brockworth and then on to Gloucester.

In 1789 for the first time it was advertised that tolls would be let on the new road from Cheltenham through Birdlip to Painswick.(20) This road had, by a Bill of 1784, been much improved and widened,(21) which made it much easier to go from Painswick to Cirencester without going through Bisley. In 1796 there was an advertisement that 2 pieces of pasture land were for sale opposite Brookhouse, by the road from Painswick to Bisley.(22) It was not mentioned as a turnpike road, and I have found no evidence of tollgates between Painswick and Bisley, which is not surprising as Wick Street existed in 1607 and may have been even earlier.

The first main road was still of great importance between Gloucester and Painswick and in 1847 it was said to be much travelled on by "Market Gardeners, Milkmen, and Haulers of sand and gravel".(23) In 1855 a Petition to Parliament was made to remove the Barton Gate belonging to the Gloucester-Painswick Trustees.(24)

The tolls on the Gloucester-Painswick Road continued to be advertised "To be Let", at the Falcon Inn, for many years, but by the 1870s the railways caused many roads to be dispiked, and in 1878 there was an Act of Parliament that all main roads should be dispiked, but I have not found the exact date when this was done for our first main road.

Milestones

In 1820 there was an Act of Parliament for milestones on main roads which also said that "Victuallers (were) not to be officers or act as Trustees".(26) I can remember seeing a milestone in Catswood Lane which said "Gloucester 9, Bisley 1", but when I was taken there by car in 1986 I found it had gone. Now from Bull's Cross there is no road straight on to Bisley, and where the ancient road once went is a footpath through fields, where you can cross the Slad Brook and get up to Catswood Lane, which now leads to the Slad road to Stroud.

The part of the first main road between Painswick and Gloucester is still in use as a main road and is busy with traffic. The only big alteration made to it was in the centre of Painswick where in the early 1930s Gloucester Street was made into a one-way street, and Pullens Road was built through fields to join Cheltenham Road, so now if you are driving back from Gloucester, you have to come that way, where you can see modern houses - but nothing like the enormous new estates you can see near Gloucester!

The Second Main Road through Painswick

The second main road through Painswick was to connect Gloucester with what is now part of Stroud, but until 1894 was still in the parish of Painswick, (27) which until then included all the land between the "Wycke Stream" and the Slad Brook, also called the "Badbrook", down to the River Frome.

The earliest route from Painswick to Stroud is thought to have gone as far as Bull's Cross and then over the summit of Wickridge Hill to what is now Stroud. (28) There is still a footpath there along which I have walked many times in the past. The first main road to Stroud was through Painswick by the New Street (first recorded in 1426, (29) and then down Stamages Lane, up Stepping Stone Lane and along the Wick Street. It was recorded as the "Via Regia" as early as 1607 (50) but may have existed much earlier. Whether Stamages Lane was named after a Stamage family is not proved, but in 1607 on 20th October there was exchange of a cottage between Thomas Gardner and Thomas Stamage by the "Via Regia" to Stroud (31), and I found other Stamages recorded later owing property there.

Stepping Stone Lane, which leads from the stream up to what is now Juniper Hill, was probably so named because, as there is a very steep slope at first, just at the top of this slope there are still remains of stone steps which were probably used by people getting back into a waggon after having to walk up the hill, because it was too steep for the horses to carry them all. I cannot find documentary evidence for this, but as I have walked there hundreds of times I can understand how difficult it must have been for horses drawing loaded waggons.

There is no doubt about why Wick Street was named, as it was for centuries a main road to Painswick, which was "Wyke" in 1064 and later in mid-13th century named Painswick after a Lord of the Manor, Pain Fitzjohn, who died in 1137. (32)

You can still travel by car along the Wick Street now, and it enters the present Stroud Road just opposite Stratford Park, but there have been many theories (with which I agree) that just after the old Grove House, now a college, where there is a footpath through fields was once the old Wick Street. It takes you out on the main road right on the hill, but you cannot walk along to the end of the hill now but have to go downhill on the main road, and then go along Merrywalks, once called "Muddywalks", where you see the hill still on your right. Near the end of the hill there is a lane by which you

can climb up, and soon you can see a building where once a Painswick clothier, "Webb de Hill", lived. You can see his initials for Thomas Webb and the date 1634 on a porch.(33) I saw them still there a few years ago, and as the Webbs were still clothiers at Painswick for a least a century and a half, I think the first Wick Street may have gone that way.

In 1726 the road which linked Stroud to Painswick and Gloucester was turnpiked,(34) which was obviously along Wick Street. A few years later, in 1737, it was advertised that a "Flying Waggon" to London would leave the Bull Inn (at Juniper Hill) every Monday morning at 12 o'clock, by Daniel Niblett, the Painswick carrier.(35) It must have gone along the Wick Street to Stroud and over Rodborough Common to get to Cirencester, as the London Road in Stroud was not then built.

In 1763 the inhabitants of Stroudend Tithing in Painswick were ordered to mend the road to Stroud through "Stepping-stone Lane" and the Wick Street.(36) It seems that a lot of traffic was using that road! This is not surprising as it came from Gloucester as well as Painswick, and all the cloth mills from King's Mill down to Salmon's Mill had lanes up to Wick Street, where a number of clothiers had houses (which are still there).

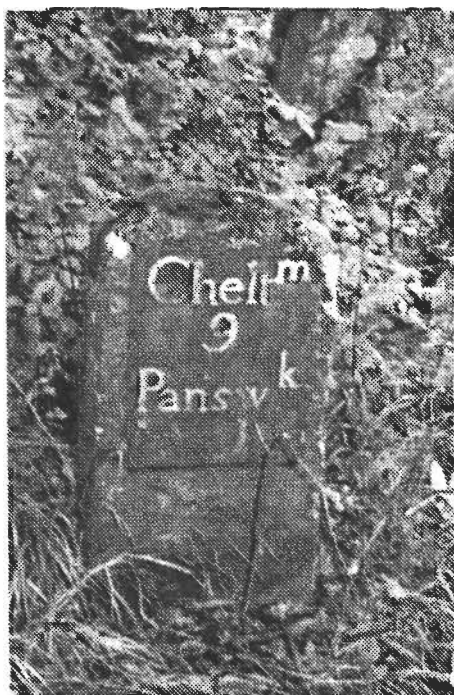
In 1779 it was advertised that a new and elegant "Post Coach" would start from Bath to go through Stroud and Painswick to Gloucester in one day, every Monday and Thursday, and return from Gloucester every Tuesday and Friday, leaving at 7 a.m. The Falcon Inn was quoted as the place to stop at in Painswick, and inside passengers from Bath to Gloucester must pay 11 shillings each!(37) This coach must have used the Wick Street as it was still the only road to Stroud, and in 1799 there was an application for widening that road.(38) In 1814 "Flying Wagons" to London were advertised, again from the Falcon Inn at Painswick, so the Wick Street was still important.(39)

In 1821 tolls were still advertised to be let for Wick Street although the new road to Stroud had been opened in 1819.(40) Tolls continued to be advertised for the Wick Street each year to 1854, but where the toll-gate was in the Wick Street I have not found out. (But see note at end . Ed.) There used to be a milestone along the Wick Street, but when I looked for it a few years ago it was no longer there; but you can still see the milestone in Stepping Stone Lane which has on it "VII miles to Glocefter". Last year (in 1986) I was taken in a car from Stroud along the Wick Street, Stepping Stone Lane and Stamages Lane and we did not meet one other car until we reached the Stroud Road in Painswick. How different that road is now!

The Third Main Road through Painswick

The third main road through Painswick is still a main road, and is the A46 from Bath through Stroud and Painswick to Cheltenham. The first time it was mentioned was in 1810, when a meeting was held in the George Inn at Stroud to consider a new road from Bath to Cheltenham through Stroud and Painswick.(41)

In 1816 application was made to Parliament for a turnpike road from Stroud to Gloucester through Pitchcombe and Edge, (42) and as this road was being used by 1818 the trustees wanted to make a branch road from Painswick to the new road at Pitchcombe, and also a road from Painswick through Prinknash Park and Shurdington to Cheltenham. The Trustees were meeting at the Falcon Inn in Painswick. (43) In 1819 the new road between Pitchcombe and Painswick was built, and the Trustees met in the Town Hall to receive proposals for building 3 miles of wall by that new road. (44) This was the only time I have found Trustees meeting in the Town Hall! This road to Pitchcombe is still the main road we use today to Stroud. At its junction with the road to Gloucester there was many years ago an inn called "The Halfway House". (45) Before the present road to Stroud was built, what a long way people had to go who lived near Pitchcombe Church to get to Stroud! They must have had to use Pincot Lane by the Eagle Inn, and having crossed the Wycke Stream climb up a long way to get to Wick Street.



In May 1820 there was an Act of Parliament for making a new turnpike road from Cheltenham to join the Bath Road at Painswick. Roads were to be measured and milestones erected. The toll-gate prices quoted in this Act were: for every Horse, Mule, Ox or Ass, drawing any carriage - 8 pence; for everyone not drawing - 2 pence; for every drove of oxen or neat cattle - 1 shilling and 8 pence per score; and for every drove of calves, hogs, sheep, lambs or swing - 10 pence per score. The Act also said that most land could be used for this new road where required, except that houses should not be pulled down without the consent of the owners. (46)

That same year the new road from Stroud to Cheltenham through Painswick was completed to Prinknash Park, and was opened on 1st August by the Commissioners who, after the official opening ceremony were given a "sumptuous repast" at the Falcon Hotel in Painswick, and on the following day upwards of 100 of the contractor's workmen were regaled with a dinner at the Bell Inn. This inn stood on Friday Street, but was destroyed by the bombing in 1941.

The contractor, Mr C Kemp, on 5th August was given the job of extending the road to Cheltenham, and it was said "great credit is due for the masterly way in which the work has already been carried on". (47)

That same year, the Commissioners decided that a toll gate must be erected between Painswick and Prinknash Park wall. (48) It was recorded in 1822 at Paradise, but that same year it was advertised that "the Paradise Gate will be removed to the new Turnpike House near to Painswick". (49) There is no evidence of exactly where the Paradise Gate stood, but the one near to Painswick was by the cottage now named "Melrose" in the Cheltenham Road (50). After that for many years it was named "Washwell Gate".

(51). There were some other toll gates between the Washwell Gate and Cheltenham, and the first one mentioned was at Prinknash Park Corner.(52) Another one was recorded by the Bell Inn at Shurdington,(53)but there were others, though I have not found evidence of them.

On this third main road between Painswick and Stroud, which was opened in 1819, there was for many years advertised the "Pitchcombe Toll Gate", but I only found exactly where it was in an advertisement of 1859, when repairs were needed. It was described as being on the corner of the highway leading down to Small's Mill,(54) which is Pincot Lane by the old Eagle Inn. There was another toll gate before you got to Stroud, at Salmon's Mill.(55)

In 1823 coaches from Cheltenham to Bath were going through Painswick every day.(56) That same year tolls were advertised to be let for Washwell Gate, Pitchcombe Gate and Wick Street Gate, and it also says, "Last year they were let for £600".(57) This shows that the new main road was being used very much - but nothing like it is now! In 1835 a nasty accident took place at Painswick with the Cheltenham to Bath coach. A boy named Peter Munden, who was only 14 years old, fell out of the coach and its wheels passed over him, which caused his death.(58) And in 1839 carriers to London were leaving the Falcon Inn at Painswick every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.(59) This must have been much easier than going along the Wick Street, as also the London Road in Stroud had been built before this time.

In 1850 another serious accident took place on this main road. "Mr Goodlake, Surgeon of Painswick, was going to Cheltenham in a 'gig' drawn by a young horse. Just after passing Prinknash Park, a dog jumped out of the hedge and frightened the horse, which rushed off at a terrific speed, and at the next corner the 'gig' was turned over and broken to pieces. The horse did not stop until Horseferry Bridge. Mr Goodlake escaped with only serious bruises, but the friend with him broke his nose and was severely injured".(60) A 'gig' in those days meant a light two-wheeled, one-horse carriage. The next year, in 1851, an application was made to Parliament to make a branch road from Upton-St-Leonards to join the Cheltenham-Stroud road in Cranham, and extend it to Birdlip. It was opened in 1852.(61) You can still use this road today, and it is still the easiest way to get from Painswick to Cirencester. There are several lanes between this and Painswick which are much older: they existed in early days to lead down to mills by going over Painswick Hill from the ancient Gloucester Road.

In 1853 it was advertised: "To Road Surveyors - Persons willing to undertake Superintendence and Repairs of Highways and Byways in the Parish of Painswick, apply 21st April, 11 a.m. Salary £40 per annum".(62) How different from Payment to-day!

In 1860 tolls were advertised "To Let" at the Falcon Inn for the Cheltenham-Painswick Road. The previous year they had made £375 above expences.(63) This was the last year I found them advertised.

For most years since 1820, carriers were advertised going from Stroud to Cheltenham through Painswick, but in 1895 an advertisement appeared that the "Omnibus Service" from Stroud to Cheltenham would leave Painswick from the Post Office.(64)

The old Post Office was in New Street where now is Walklett's shop. The advertisement also says that the "Omnibus Service" would have connections with G.W.R. trains, which implies that they were G.W.R. Omnibuses, and these were still being used in the 1930s when I was at Stroud High School. In fact they left from the Falcon Hotel where today buses still leave.

Masses of cars and lorries are still using this road, and it is a good thing that we no longer have toll gates! but you can still see a milestone on this road at Paradise, near the old Adam & Eve Inn.

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- 13 Baddeley, 26.
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- 19 Ibid. 15 Jan 1787.
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- 23 Ibid. 23 Jan 1847.
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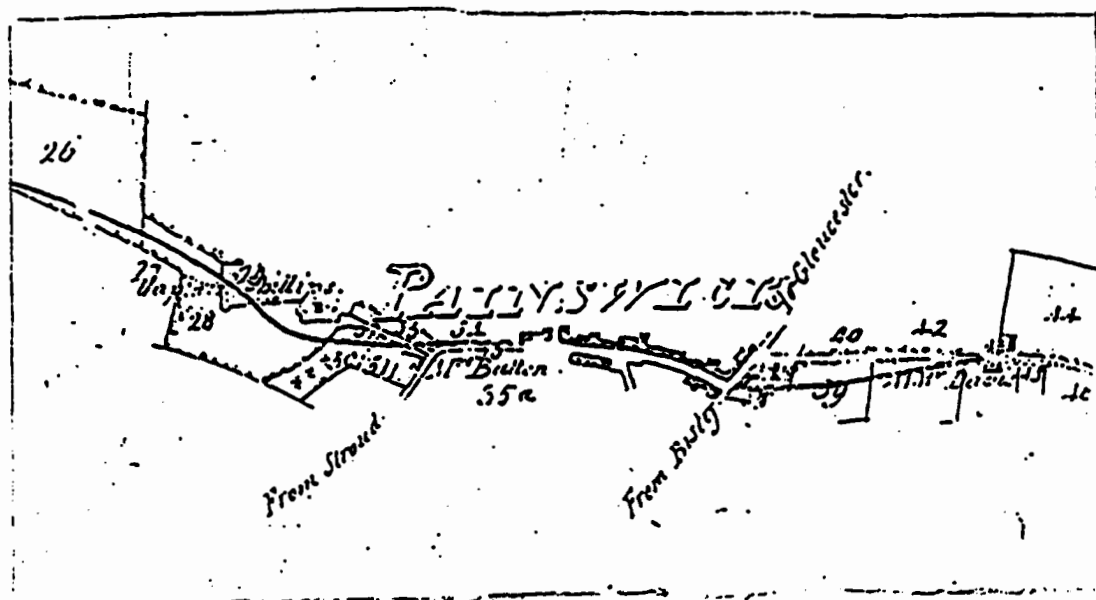
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- 31 Ibid. " "
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 - 45 Personal remembrance.
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 - 63 Ibid. 29 Sept 1860.
 - 64 Painswick Church Magazine
for December 1895.
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From a Plan of the Intended New Road from Pitchcombe to Painswick ... by Charles Baker, dated 1818. GRO Q/RUM 63 of 1818 and 66 of 1819. This shows existing roads and the projected new course. Note that the present cross-roads in Painswick, where the A46 crosses the Gloucester road, did not then exist. It is interesting to note that the present one-way system more or less follows the former track (more or less!).

Where was the Wick Street toll-site?

Bryant's map of 1824 shows a tollbar up Wick Street just before the link-road with Culls Farm and the "paper mill". This however could not have been the original site, but was a result of the building of the new Stroud-Gloucester road through Pitchcombe. The original Stroud Turnpike of 1726 had three sites: at Whitminster crossroads, Cainscross and "Stroud". This last site must have been where Wick Street met the road from Cainscross through Paganhill to Stroud, just before Beeches Green, as the present Cainscross road did not then exist. The toll-site was moved to Salmons Springs, and a bar presumably set up Wick St. to catch traffic from the mills. Similarly, when a new road was cut through Alkerton to Frocester Hill in the mid-18th century, the Whitminster toll-site seems to have moved to Claypits. The former route lay through Westend, where a milestone or two still betray its earlier importance.

(If I may be permitted to sound a squeak on my own trumpet, full details of these, and other local turnpike roads are given in my thesis on The Development & Decline of the Turnpike System in the Stroudwater Area of Gloucestershire, 1725-1875; copies of which can be seen in the County Records Office and the Stroud Library.) CC