

# BUILDING THE NAILSWORTH TURNPIKE

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An examination of the first three years of the turnpike road from Dudbridge to Nailsworth and Tiltups End, from 1779 to 1782.

## INTRODUCTION

On 21 March 1780 the Royal Assent was given to a Bill "for making and maintaining a Road from Tiltups Inn... to join the Turnpike Road leading from Cirencester to Dudbridge,... and several other Roads...."

This Act created the Nailsworth Turnpike Trust, which lasted for over 90 years; and its history is of some considerable interest for it produced the first completely new road alignment in the Stroudwater Hills during the turnpike era, perhaps the first new road since the middle ages.

The various road Acts for Gloucestershire up to then had been for improvements to existing roads, with occasional diversions (1) to cut out awkward stretches, or for the convenience of the gentry. These Acts can be grouped into three phases. Firstly, largely in the 1720s, come improvements to roads in the Severn Vale, notably of the road from Gloucester to Stone (2) (roughly the line of the present A38) together with cross-roads from the Severn Hills. The Stroud Turnpike, created in 1726, (3) was one of these. In the middle of the 18th century attention was paid to the roads on the Cotswold plateau, especially those radiating from Cirencester. The third and final phase was the construction of new roads linking the roads of the two previous phases, but ascending to the plateau by routes which climbed the valley sides less steeply than the earlier tracks, which generally went straight up the scarp or the ends of the various ridges. In (4) the Stroudwater Hills this phase of road improvement took place in the first quarter of the 19th century: the Nailsworth road however was built a good 20 years earlier.

The early years of this Trust provide some fascinating glimpses into how such a road was planned, built, financed and maintained. Behind the drafting of the original Bill must lie a great deal of activity; the gathering of potential supporters, the persuasion of doubters and the rebuttal of those who opposed, the preparation of documents and the approach to those who could bring influence to bear on the right people. The Trustees of the road from Cirencester through Minchinhampton to Stroud naturally objected, foreseeing accurately enough the loss of income to their road. The Painswick-Stroud road Trustees were more in favour, taking the view that traffic to Bath along this new road would also use theirs - the old way was from Gloucester via Hardwicke to Claypits, thence climbing the old route up

Frocester Hill to go past Kingscote to join the Cirencester-Bath Road near Boxwell, close to the Long Ash turnpike. Therefore the Old Bath Road was likely to lose custom. (5) Other opposition came from local inhabitants who claimed, against all the evidence, that the existing route through Woodchester was quite adequate for coach traffic. Their concern doubtless was that they would have to pay more. (6)

The original intention seems in fact to have been to improve this last route from Nailsworth to North Woodchester, and then take a line downhill and northward past Rooksmoor;(7) but this was soon given up in favour of an entirely new alignment all the way from Nailsworth itself, keeping against all accepted practice close to the valleyfloor and going boldly where no road had gone before. This was to be an industrial road, conceived, financed and administered by the local industrialists, the mill owners of the Nailsworth Valley, and serving mainly their needs and interests.

With the growth in the use of machinery in the later 18th century in the making of cloth, more and more the various processes were being concentrated on mill sites on the water. More and more what was needed was access to and from the mill: raw wool and other materials in, cloth out: that is, the development of a lateral valley route close to the places of manufacture, replacing the earlier hill tracks to the cottages of the out-workers, and the steep haul up to the main roads on the plateau top. Another inducement, especially after the building of the Stroudwater Canal, was the lowering of the price of corn and coal for the "necessitous poor" - this would also lighten the heavy burden of the "poors' rate" which pressed hard on property owners in times of industrial distress.

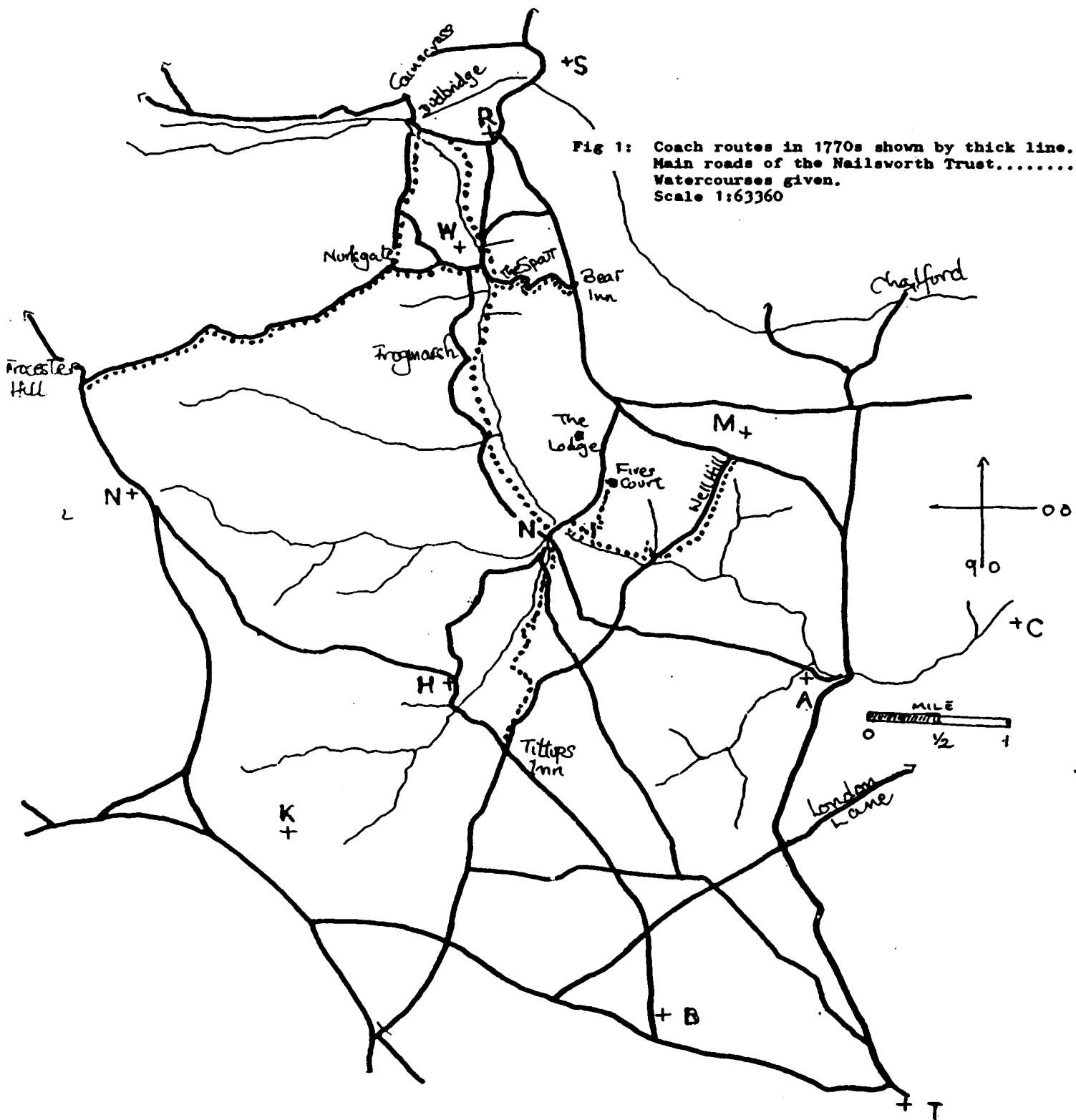
The Petition for the Bill had been presented to the House of Commons on 26 Nov 1779. The Bill became an Act on 21 March 1780, and the first meeting of the new Trust was promptly held (in the Lodge on Minchinhampton Common) on 30 March. At this meeting, the assembled Trustees agreed on the order in which to build the various roads of the Act. (8) At the second meeting (on April 7) Mr Weston (who had presumably surveyed the route) was instructed to stake out the line of the road, and on 19 April it was decided to advertise for an engineer to build it.

This last decision shows a business-like attitude which contrasts strongly with the normal rather haphazard method of having parish roads repaired by gentlemen amateurs. Here, the Committee is seeking a professional, and on 13 June they appointed Denis Edson "of Chester", giving him 12 months to get the first, and main, job done - the road from a stile at Barton End to Dudbridge - for an estimated cost of £1400.

The road was officially opened on 30 May 1781.

#### ROAD CONSTRUCTION

On Monday 25 June 1780 some of the Trustees walked along the line of the proposed road, reporting back to the Committee the following day. Then the Secretary proceeded to treat with landowners on compensation of land taken. (9) Most accepted the given valuation, but a few were less accommodating, and a special jury had to be called from a remarkably wide area of the county to arbitrate. The most difficult of these disputed awards concerned land near Inchbrook held by Nathaniel Webb. (10)



**Building the Nailsworth Turnpike**

**FIG 1**

**Abbreviations**

- GRO Gloucestershire Records Office
- GJ Gloucester Journal (18th century spelling)
- NTMB Nailsworth Trust Minutes Book (3 vols in GRO)
- ECJ House of Commons Journal

Note on names : Tiltups Inn = Tiltups End  
 Fives Court = Half Way House, Minchinhampton Common  
 The Lodge = Minchinhampton Golf Clubhouse.

On maps Parish churches are shown by + and the initial of the parish: e.g. Stroud Minchinhampton Cherington Avening Beverstone Tetbury Kingscote Horsley Nymfield Woodchester Rodborough (the Woodchester site is the old one) N= Nailsworth, which was not then a separate parish.

The Agreement (11) with Edson was made on 13 June: he was given instructions to start on 7 August, and to overlook the fact that a number of stakes marking the route had disappeared ( 1 guinea was offered as a reward for information as to who had removed them). The Agreement laid down very definite instructions on the way the road should be built.

Width The road to be 30 feet wide - only the centre 15 feet were to be "stoned" or metalled.

Surface This was to be cambered: the centre to be 12 inches higher than the sides before stoning. Stones were to be laid 12 inches deep in the centre, grading to 6 inches at the sides. If gravel had to be used, it should be no thicker than 3 inches, and should be laid on a stone foundation. Stones had to be broken up to the satisfaction of the Trustees.

Gradient This was not to exceed 2 inches in 1 yard, or 3:30.

Verges The edge of the road should be at least 14 inches above the existing ground level in certain specified places, where also road metal was to be 15 and 9 inches thick: these were where the road ran along the valley bottom in areas liable to flooding. Sides of cuttings were to be made safe and secure.

Culverts & Bridges About 20 culverts under the road would have to be made, of dimensions 15 X 15 inches. Three new bridges would have to be built: one at Inchbrook of a 7 foot span, one at Frogmarsh (where the road would cross the main stream), and one at Grigshut, where the track past Woodchester Mill up to Selsley Common was to be rebuilt. In addition, the stream would have to be diverted by The George at Nailsworth, and a substantial archway constructed.

Deviations from this plan, and alterations to it where necessary, could be made at the discretion of the Trustees.

Now these careful and precise specifications were made 30 years before John Loudon McAdam was appointed Surveyor for the Bristol roads, or before Thomas Telford achieved fame for his rules on road making. While these two have justly earned their place in the history of transport, we should note that a group of local mill-owners had produced a scheme of road construction that anticipated much of the later, better-known work. A proper foundation had to be laid, the road stone properly broken, the use of gravel limited, the surface to be made convex to throw off water (McAdam at first advocated a flat surface), and other measures to be taken to prevent the accumulation of water on the road. The one great, and then unavoidable, drawback was the lack of suitable road-stone, which was not made good until the importation in the 19th century of "blue stone" from Bristol. Having to make do with local materials, Edson was given powers to enter on adjoining lands to remove stone, soil, earth, gravel etc., and was indemnified in advance for any cases for damage that might arise from his action.

Fencing Temporary fencing had to be put up alongside the road where it went through existing fields. The Secretary agreed with various proprietors to have this done at the rate of 3s. per pole, and sample fencing was asked for: quotations for the supply of post and rail varied from 4/- to 10/- per perch according to the type of wood used. Jeremiah Millwaters made an offer for this work, though he does not appear to have won the contract. He offered 2 oak posts per perch, with 3 rails of oak at 10/- per perch, 5/- if of ash, 4/10 if of elm and 4/- if of beech. But in November, £13 was spent to buy hurdles, which would be useful for protecting the newly planted quickset hedges (they were also used for protecting the sides of cuttings).(12)

A contract for hedging was given a year later to John Williams and James Townsend of Frampton Mansell to plant a quickset hedge at 9½d. per 18 feet, but quite often the fencing of lands was done either by the Trustees or by the land owners at Trust expense. The Trustees however declined to be held responsible for closing the gaps where footpaths crossed the line of the road. Gates were to be set up at certain places: 16/- was paid in July 1782 to Mr Pavey for a gate, and 15/- in May 1784 for another at Haizley Quarry.

Maintenance In the early part of the century it seems to have been assumed that roads once amended would need little further attention and might well be de-piked after a period. This delusion quickly gave way to the realisation that regular attention was essential. On the Nailsworth road, alterations were soon needed for some of the bridges as well as on parts of the surface.

Edson's contract for the main road ceased on its completion in May 1781. An advertisement was put in the Gloucester Journal in that month for a "Person in the Quality of working Surveyor of a Turnpike Road." Mr Samuel Heaven was appointed Head Surveyor 10 Sept 1782 at £20 p.a. unless "his health or other Accident should oblige him to retire." John Gunn, labourer of Rodborough, was chosen as Working Surveyor on 17 July 1781 at 9/6 a week. In April 1783 he was given a contract to scrape and clean the road before making any repair, and was allowed 8d. per square yard for breaking stone (which was to be dumped conveniently for his work), and 1d. extra for every 8 yards where ruts would have to be filled in. His equipment was to be: 2 barrows, 2 pick axes, 1 iron "barr", 1 sledge hammer, 1 scraper, 3 small hammers and 1 iron "raicke", and these would have to be returned to the Trust (in good order) at the end of the year. A somewhat more suitable arrangement was made 18 months later by giving a salary of 100 guineas a year to a new surveyor, Mr Howard, instead of the payment for piece work offered to a labourer and his gang. Perhaps Mr Heaven had only undertaken the work as a stop-gap: he is probably the Heaven who with other members of the Woodchester Vestry got the local JPs (P.Hawker, T. Escourt and T. Griffin) to ban the Woodchester Revels, held on the first Sunday after 8 September, as we read in the Gloucester Journal on 23 Aug. 1784. Howard was told to pay particular attention to clearing out and maintaining ditches, and to filling up ruts. If statute labour was used, the equivalent sum would be deducted from his salary.

This reminds us of the dual system arisen from the Tudor Road Acts of 1555 and 1562, whereby responsibility for repair of highways was laid on the shoulders of parish inhabitants. By the middle of the 18th century those who could afford to do so usually paid a "composition" instead of doing the actual labour (or the loan of horse and cart), and the money was often used to employ the poor on road work. Hence roads were often extremely bad, as so many travellers report. Now turnpike roads were supposed to pay through tolls for the cost of repair, but oddly enough Trustees could also levy the parish road rate on parishes through which their roads ran. This seems singularly unfair, but it lasted until well into the 19th century.

#### FINANCE

Money is the root of many things besides evil - and from a study of road maintenance during the 18th and 19th centuries it is abundantly clear that then (as now?) the single biggest limiting factor to road improvement was lack of money. The parish system was rarely satisfactory for more than the most undemanding local traffic, and

even then the Gloucestershire JPs for example had constantly to threaten parishes with financial penalties to get them to do anything at all about the appalling state of their roads.(13) Even the great highways were no better, as writers such as Samuel Rudder and Arthur Young point out only too frequently.

The toll system was an attempt to produce revenue from those who actually used the roads, in proportion to the size and horsepower of their transport, but the traffic had to be sufficient to produce this revenue, not only for road repair but also for the return to the investors of interest on their capital. For turnpike roads, like the early canals, give us examples of how public utilities were financed and run in the days when jointstock companies as such were heavily restricted, and partnerships were limited and subject to intimidating penalties in the event of business failure.

While the creation of super-trusts such as that of roads round Bristol, or the route from London to Holyhead, may have generated sufficient revenue to enable their engineers to elevate the art of road making into a sort of science, smaller and more local systems might well have either too little traffic to accumulate sufficient funds for repair, or would rouse strong resentment among local people at the burden of maintaining roads for the benefit of travellers from other localities. (14) The Nailsworth Trust provides us with a useful example of how such a small trust, but one which also formed part of a through route, obtained the necessary capital and dealt with the everyday business of running the road.

The capital for this quasi-company was raised by issuing shares, each to the value of £50, at 5% interest per annum. During the first 3 years of the Trust's existence, at least 96 such bonds were issued, almost exclusively to local people, most of whom were mill-owners. The bonds could be divided into smaller portions, and could easily enough be redeemed or resold. Some 20 shareholders provided the initial capital. Two people took up one share each: one of these was Lord Ducie of Woodchester Park, and he sold his within the year. The three biggest investors were: Obadiah Paul and John Wade, each with shares of £416.5s., and Thomas Baylis with £580. (15)

Subscribers did not have to hand over their promised sums immediately, but as necessity demanded. The heaviest expenditure would be during the first year, while the road was being built. By the time of the first Annual General Meeting, £4903.6.0 $\frac{1}{4}$  had been raised. The first big expense had been the repayment to Messrs. Wilkins (Secretary) and Biggs (Treasurer) of the sum of £437.6.5, the cost of getting the Bill through Parliament. The special arbitration jury cost £13.1.0, and among other items were the monthly advances to the engineer, compensation for land taken and damages done, certain expenses such as postage and advertisements (Mr. Raikes of Gloucester sent in a bill for £11.5.3, but this was subsequently much reduced), payment for hurdles, hedge planting, the making of gates, alterations to bridges, the building of walls (£8.15.0 to Samuel Browning for wall stone) - and similar other items, mostly of capital expenditure.

Working capital was expected to come from toll revenue. Naturally it would be some time before this amounted to any considerable sum, and in the meantime maintenance had to be carried out, toll bars, toll gates and houses (and tickets) provided, and toll-keepers appointed and paid: 2/- a week to Martha Welstead for looking after the temporary bar at The Spout. The original sites for pike houses were - one at each end of the main line of the road, and one in the middle at Inchbrook: others were brought into use as the road system

grew. The pike house at Dudbridge was not to cost more than £40- they had hoped to get one built for £30. That at Inchbrook was never satisfactory ( for those who had to live in it ) and there were frequent changes of keeper there. The bedroom window at first would not open, and had to be replaced by a casement, and the keeper Richard Odey was granted 4/3 a week "which he has used in drying the walls": the house seems to have been built more or less directly over the tributary brook. By 1977 only one of the Trust's pike houses had survived, and that was the one by Park Stile on a side road. Milestones and direction posts were ordered (twice in fact, so it looks as if something went amiss with the first order). Several stones remain, but only two plates are still to be seen, one of which is on a substituted stone the other having been rescued from a bramble bush shortly before the pike house at Tiltups End was demolished: it has now been replaced on its stone by the County Surveyor's department.

However, it was not long before the Trust ceased to appoint and supervise toll-keepers directly. With the growth of the turnpike system a new profession emerged: that of toll-farmer. By the third year of the Trust's existence, tolls were being put up for auction: at first mainly to local people, or even to a Trustee if no one else was tempted, but later on keepers were appointed by a professional, who might have his business as far away as Birmingham, and who would make his profit from the difference between what he had bid at the annual auction, and what he could raise in revenue from road users. This naturally was highly unpopular, but it did at least assure the Trust of a definite income for a year at a time.

The first list of toll charges proposed was as follows:

For every Horse Mare Gelding Mule Ass or Ox or other beast or Cattle drawing any carriage	4d
For any ... not drawing	1d
For every drove of Oxen or other neat cattle	10d a score
For every drove of Calves Pigs Sheep Lambs or Swine	5d a score
( and so in proportion for a greater or less number )	

Additional charges were made under the provisions of the Broadwheel Act (16) and the tolls were altered from time to time. But carriages going empty to Coalpitheath had to pay only for one journey if they returned with coal on the following day.

Receipts in the first few years were not encouraging. The Treasurer's first accounts were passed by the Committee at their meeting on 10 Feb 1782, but to us they are unhelpful as a profit and loss balance is not given, nor are toll receipts as such given, merely the receipt of cash without qualification, which may include other sources of income, such as a call on subscribers to pay.

For the next year things are scarcely any better, and the Accounts had to be balanced by a heavy injection of share capital, together with such non-recurring items as sale of hurdles and surplus land. Toll income from 27 March 1782 to 20 March 1783 was only just over £214, and already capital borrowed stood at £4542.10.0 not counting the unpaid interest. In fact there seems to have been a critical session at the Ladyday Annual General Meeting of 1782, with considerable retrenchment and a significant change of officials. However, with the completion of the branch roads on both sides of the valley,





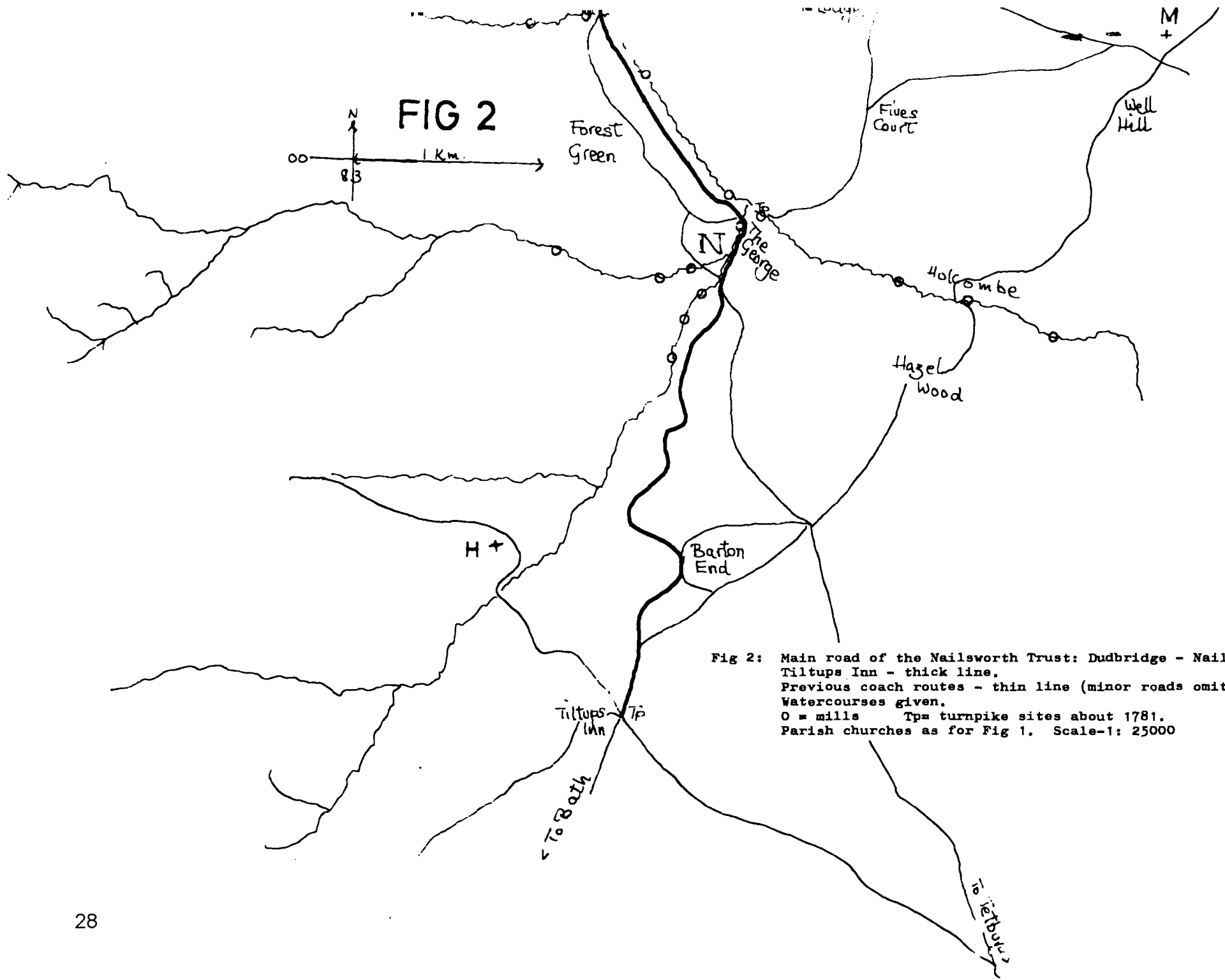


Fig 2: Main road of the Nailsworth Trust: Dudbridge - Nailsworth-Tiltups Inn - thick line.  
 Previous coach routes - thin line (minor roads omitted).  
 Watercourses given.  
 O = mills Tp= turnpike sites about 1781.  
 Parish churches as for Fig 1. Scale-1: 25000

and the link through Tiltups Inn with the Bath road becoming better known, matters gradually improved and revenue increased, though somewhat unsteadily. To follow this up is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is pleasing to note that the Trust did manage to catch up with the interest owed to its subscribers. These, being local industrialists and business men, did not so much need a return on their monetary investment ( though this would be a gratifying bonus ) as the convenience and reduced costs that would ensue from the new road, and these they must have obtained.

#### THE COMMITTEE

Who were the Trustees? The word "Committee" first appears in the Minute Book on 7 April 1783. The usual large number of Trustees was given in the Act - 139 names in all. But the business of the Trust was in the hands of a much smaller group of local men who met at least once a month. Various Trustees died or were disqualified from time to time, but new names were duly approved.

The first meeting was held at The Lodge (17) on Minchinhampton Common and 12 Trustees attended, with William Wilkins making the 13th. He, together with William Biggs the Treasurer, had attended to the Parliamentary business, and he was also duly appointed Surveyor at an annual salary of £45.

During the first 12 months while the road was actually being built, 28 meetings were called, and another 26 in the following year. Thereafter the number dropped by half, and on some occasions a quorum was not reached. In the first year, 21 people attended, 5 of them for fewer than 5 meetings, some only for a single special purpose. The most assiduous were John Wade and Obadiah Paul with 21 attendances each, and Thomas Pavey with 20. The Treasurer attended on 15 occasions and the Clerk on 21, his own clerk acting as his deputy in his absence. Sir George Onesiphorus Paul attended on 7 occasions: indefatigable in social reform, county business and charitable works, he generally seems to have been called upon when his magisterial authority could be used to solve difficult situations. (18)

Attendance during the first two years of the Trust - that is, during construction and the first year of operation - were as follows:  
 Ladyday 1780 - 1782: total meetings called 54.

No. of Attendances	Name	Identification	Reference
42	Obadiah Paul	Woodchester & Southfields mills	VCH xi 300
36	Thomas Bayliss	see below	
33	John Wade	of Pudhill: owned Inchbrook mill	VCH xi 297, & 299
34	Thomas Pavey	landowner at Barton End	VCH xi 178
27	William Biggs	Treasurer: shopkeeper Nailsworth, interest in Freames Mill	VCH xi 214, & 217
22	William Wilkins	Clerk & Surveyor; family interest at Freames.	VCH xi 214, & 280

21	William Robins Tyndale	Dyehouse mill with Richard Cockle	NTMB 14 Dec 95
16	Thomas Cooper	Dunkirk mill	VCH xi 213,299
16	Samuel Wathen	later Sir Samuel: nephew of O. Paul	VCH xi 297, 300
11	William Gaisford Peach	Rooksmoor mill	see VCH xi 326 for Peach family.
10	William Harris	?	
10	Rev. Peter Hawker	Rector of Woodchester 1756-1809	VCH xi 302
Less than 10 attendances in first two years:			
1	Richard Aldridge	Bristol banker, local clothing family	VCH xi 124 NTMB 16 Oct 86
1	Henry Cooke	? Lodgemore mill	VCH xi 213-4
1	John Day	Family of Jeremiah Day of Nailsworth	VCH xi 213-4
4	William Frost	tenant farmer at Barton End (illiterate)	NTMB passim
1	Richard Farmer	?	
1	John Gidley	Rooksmoor mill	Peach Gidley & Co. List of Clothiers 1792. GRO D67 Z77
2	William Halliday	see below	
3	John Hawker	Dudbridge Dye mill	VCH xi 228
2	Humphrey Jeffreys	?	
3	William Knight	? London banker of Lower Gannicox	VCH xi 110
7	Sir George Onesiphorus Paul	of Hill House Rodborough	VCH xi 223-4, 300.
7	Nathaniel Peach "the elder"	Rooksmoor mill	VCH xi 227
4	Samuel Remmington	Gig mill	VCH xi 213
1	Thomas Shurmur	Shurmurs mill	VCH xi 299
3	Richard Webb	? Millbottom mill	VCH xi 213

In S.Rudder's New History of Gloucestershire (Cirencester 1779, reproduced Alan Sutton 1977), on page 716 there is a list of benefactors of Stroud Parish church in 1759 which includes the names of Thomas Baylis, Richard Aldridge and William Knight.

The Committee carried out the work one might expect: approving contracts, passing accounts, confirming compensation for purchases and damages, appointing servants, agreeing on regulations, making decisions. The Annual General Meeting of 1782 was, as we have noted, one of crisis. The road had been open to traffic for 10 months, and while expenses continued to mount the income had proved disappointing. Strict economy had to be practised, it was observed,

and accordingly the joint office of Clerk & Surveyor was abolished, and the salary stopped with effect from the meeting. So William Wilkins abruptly ceased to be on the Committee, and instead, a James Dalby (attorney-at-law of Tetbury) (20) took his place ( at 10/6 a time) at the next meeting. The minutes for this particular meeting are written in Mr Biggs' handwriting, and it looks as if the meeting must have been an uncomfortable one. Certainly something seems to have gone wrong. There is a reference two years later to an action taken by Joseph Rice (who had produced the original map) against Wilkins, and some difficulty over the compensation due to Mr Nathaniel Webb and Mr Wight (landowner of much of the route at the Dudbridge end). Another hint occurs in August 1781, perhaps forshadowing the later awkwardness, when the Clerk's authority to treat with Mr Liversedge and Mr Selve for Tithe interest on land taken in Horsley parish had been suspended, and the minutes on that occasion were "sign'd by us" - Wilkins' name was not included, so he was probably not there.

Whatever this difficulty, and although the first year's income was poor, the Trust weathered it. The Accounts had been passed, but as we saw do not give in detail the toll income. For the succeeding year toll income is given as follows :

Nett receipts at Toll Gates after the expenses of collection : partly from the Treasurer, partly from Mr. Heaven, then Surveyor.

Nailsworth	£ 47.14. 2
Tiltups Inn	70.16. 8
The Spout	22. 8. 1
Grigshot	13.16.10
Dudbridge	33.10. 0
Inchbrook	<u>26. 2. 5</u>
Total	£ 214 8 2

(this was at first incorrectly entered as £214.14.10.)

About half this sum had been spent on road maintenance. The Committee allowed the Treasurer £5.14.8 which was owing to him, but deducted £1.7.2 from the Surveyor, Mr Heaven, for a mistake in his receipts. But they made good his loss of 30s in bad halfpence, and gave 6/- to John Hyde, the gatekeeper at Nailsworth. (21)

#### THE END OF THE BEGINNING

The Trust continued with its original achemes. Surprisingly little appears in the Minute Book about the hill section south of Nailsworth. (22) This was part of Edson's original assignment, but we find some of the construction in the hands of Sam Rigby and John Naylor, and even the intractable William Frost has a hand in the road from Barton End to Tiltups Inn - this is probably an improvement of the existing track. Frost seems to have got just about all he asked for, including improvements and compensation for damage to mowing grass. The alignment itself from Nailsworth to Tiltups Inn is a remarkable one for its day; as that for the valley section had marked a new departure, so this one ascended to the plateau top by broadly sweeping curves aslant the slope, with a gradient far more suitable to wheeled traffic than the previous tracks going straight up the hill-sides. This, like the valley section, is the present A46 road alignment to Bath.

A start was made in June 1781 on the improvement of the link with Minchinhampton. This is the road known as the W, from its sharply-angled turns, and though indeed steep it is better than the near

vertical "Ladder" route previously in use. A companion road was via "Howcombe and Wollhills" (Holcome and Well Hill) and this was built in the 1790s, to improve the precipitous descent from Minchinhampton to the valley and the above Nailsworth ascent on the opposite side, a route apparently taken by traffic for Bristol. (25) This new road of course drew such traffic into Nailsworth for the Bath Road past Tiltups Inn. Various other improvements were also undertaken, about the same time, for example up to St. Chloe and Culver Hill.

But probably more important was the cross-valley route from The Bear Inn on Rodborough Common, down past Sir George Paul's residence to The Spout, and then up past Woodchester Mill and Park Stile to Nurlsgate on Selsley Common. The former was taken in hand by Sir George Paul himself, and the latter by W.G. Peach. Both were started in late 1781.

The other main road, part of the original plan but which was to be regarded virtually as a separate, though satellite, Trust, was that from Dudbridge up past Stanley End (as Selsley village was then called), and along the edge of Selsley Common to the old turnpike house that stood opposite the top gate of Spring Park. This was where the ancient road from Frocester debouched at the top of the hill for Nymsfield and the road to Bath. The present road up Frocester Hill was not built, according to Paterson's Roads, till 1784, and the link between the old and the new roads came even later.

This paper deals only with the first year or two of the Nailsworth Turnpike Trust, and its subsequent history must be left to a later occasion. Revenue was to improve with the growth in traffic in the war years, both in coaching as from Cheltenham to Bath, and also in the cloth industry itself, and mounted till the crisis year of 1825. The Trustees at all events had got what they intended: a more efficient system of communications for their businesses, and one that also promised cheaper imports of necessities for the labouring poor.

The main achievement of the Nailsworth Trust was that it pioneered a new pattern of communications within and through the Stroudwater valleys. During the first quarter of the 19th century, each of the other valleys got its new roads. These, like the Dudbridge to Tiltups Inn road of 1780-81, were built along or near to the valley bottom (except where topography made this impossible, as in the Slad valley), and reached the tops of the hills not, as hitherto, by routes going straight across the contours (and usually at the scarp edge at that), but by more gradual ascents that snaked uphill less acutely. The Nailsworth Trust led the way. Within 18 months it had presented its Bill to the Houses of Parliament, obtained its Act, collected the necessary capital, built its main road within the allotted time - and within the estimated sum; and all this was done by local people - mill-owners, businessmen and minor landowners - without the help, and with virtually no interference, from government whether central or local. But this of course was 200 years ago.

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20 George III c84. An Act for making and maintaining a Road from Tiltups Inn, in the Parish of Horsley; to join the Turnpike Road leading from Cirencester to Dudbridge, at or near Dudbridge, in the Parish of Rodborough; and from the bridge at Nailsworth, in the Parish of Avening; to Minchinhampton Common; and several other Roads therein mentioned, all in the County of Gloucester.

## NOTES

- 1 On diversions see for example GRO Q/SRh 1799, a diversion by Lock and Remington mills in the Horsley valley.
- 2 12 George I c.24
- 3 GRO Q/SO 6 Michaelmas 1734 has details of an investigation into the financial position of the Stroud Turnpike.
- 4 see The Cotswolds - a New Study (David & Charles 1973) ed. C and A.M.Hadfield, ch.5 for a discussion on Cotswold roads.
- 5 GJ 4 Sept 1780: Christopher Coleman, landlord of The George at Frocester has an advertisement recommending the old Bath Road: this notice was repeated later: he was obviously feeling the competition from the new road through Nailsworth.
- 6 H of CJ xxxvii for 28 Jan 1780: local inhabitants protest that the project contemplates "nearly an entire new road.... through Gardens, Orchards and Meadows .... where an entire new Foundation must be made at an enormous Expence". The same entry also records the objections of the Cirencester road Trustees.
- 7 See Mr. Rice's plan of the intended road in the Gloucester Records Office, also the list of properties in the House of Commons Journal q.v.
- 8 (i) Tiltups Inn to Dudbridge via St. Chloe's grounds.  
(ii) Nailsworth Bridge to or near the Fives Court (= Halfway House) on Minchinhampton Common.  
(iii) Nurlsgate on Selsley via The Spout to the Bear Inn and from Park Stile (Woodchester) to the new road at Frogmarsh.  
(iv) Dudbridge through Buckholt Wood to near the top of Frocester Hill.  
(v) Nailsworth Bridge via Holcombe and Well Hill to Minchinhampton.
- 9 See list of properties in 20 Geo.III c.84, and Valuation List at the end of vol 1 of NTMB.
- 10 See above, and Rice's Plan of the intended new road.
- 11 Copy of Agreement with Denis Edson is at end of vol 1 of NTMB. Mr C Hadfield wrote to say that Edson worked as a foreman on the Chester Canal in the 1770s, moved to engineering work on the Stourbridge Canal in 1780-81, also was for one year resident engineer on the Gloucester-Berkeley Canal in 1798-99, and later was clerk of works on the Grand Surrey Canal in 1802 - for 5 months only.
- 12 Mr R.A.Downs, County Surveyor, wrote in 1967 that "the Stoud - Nailsworth road through the valley was built on soil with poor bearing value and the use of brushwood and furze has been, until quite recently, the accepted practice for distributing the load from the embankment above on to the poor subsoil." This may well be the intended use for some of the hurdles.
- 13 GRO Q/SO 1734-41 - Quarter Sessions provide examples.
- 14 e.g. Cainscross Turnpike riot in 1734, quoted in Glos. Notes & Queries iv of 1842.
- 15 see List of Securities end of vol 1 of NTMB.
- 16 Various General Turnpike Acts in 18th century laid down the permitted width of wheels - if e.g. under 9 inches, waggons

Fig 3: Road profiles. Top diagram - former coach route from Dudbridge to The George, Nailsworth. Stanley End = Selsley village. Settlements named = streams to be crossed indicated. Lower diagram: valley road. O = mills. Transverse routes from Selsley Common to Rodborough Common indicated. Vertical interval in feet. Scale 1:25000.

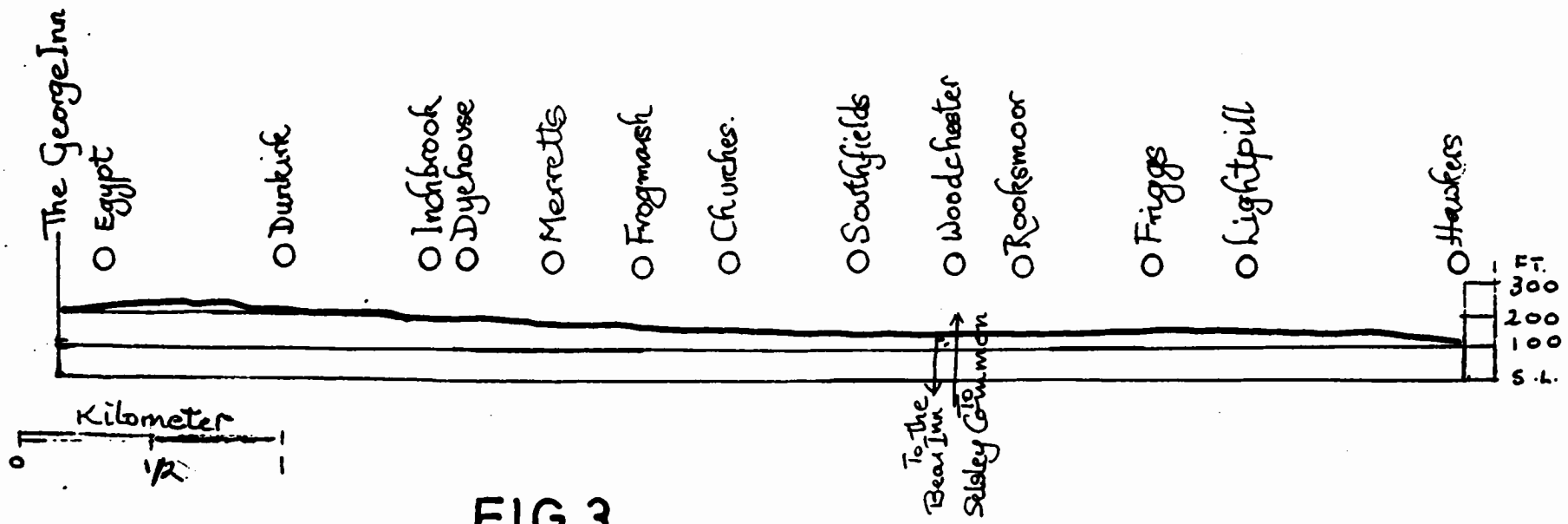
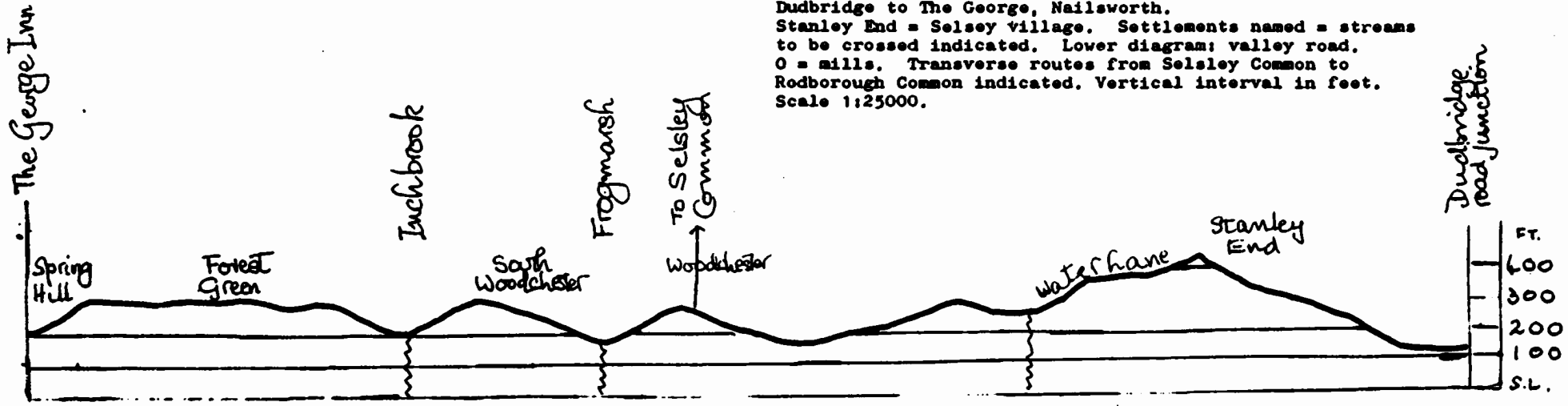


FIG 3

were penalised, and also for exceeding a given horse-power. It was thought that broad wheels broke up the road surfaces less than narrow ones. These Acts were not repealed till the 1820s.

- 17 The Lodge has become Minchinhampton Golf Clubhouse.
- 18 Gloucestershire Studies, ed. H.P.R Finberg (Univ. of Leicester Press 1957) - see articles by E.A.L Moir on Sir George Onesiphorus Paul.
- 19 References in the VCH vol xi (Glos) are given: see also J Tann Gloucestershire Woollen Mills (David & Charles 1967). Some of the identifications are doubtful, others unknown as yet.
- Thomas Bayliss The Baylis family held mills at this date in other Stroud valleys (VCH xi 128), but this one must have lived in the Nailsworth area to have attended so regularly. Mr L Walrond of the Stroud Museum suggests he might be a member of the family of carriers, who later joined with the Tanners to make the firm of Tanner & Baylis (VCH xi 230). This seems quite probable but has not so far been confirmed.
- William Harris VCH xi 213 gives the firm of James Harris at Gig mill in 1856; the 1792 List of Clothiers has a firm of George & James Harris in the area. The writer has not yet identified William.
- William Frost He did some work for the Trust, attended some meetings, claimed a good deal of compensation and damages made good: he makes his mark with X.
- Henry Cooke Probably of the Lodgemore mill family (VCH xi 213-4: this mill is not on the line of the road but is only just "round the corner", and this would seem the most likely identification.
- Richard Farmer He has not been identified or linked with a mill, or anyone else.
- Humphrey Jeffreys The same goes for Mr. Jeffreys.
- William Knight Identification is tentative.
- Richard Webb Also tentative, but probable.
- William Halliday VCH xi 226 puts him at Fromehall mill: this is in the Stroud valley, but he had business connections with the Hawkers. He also owned Archards "manor" in Rodborough parish (VCH xi 223) and he is probably the Mr Holiday who owned some considerable amount of land along the route of the new road in this area.
- 20 James Dalby, described in Baileys British Directory of 1784 as attorney-at-law in Tetbury.
- 21 John Hyde, gatekeeper at Nailsworth, was "severely hurt" by being assaulted by one Sam Halliday. On 7 Dec 1781 he was awarded 1 guinea, part of the fine on Halliday.
- 22 VCH xi 176 says "the stretch up to Tiltups End had existed as a turnpike from 1758." In the writer's estimation this is not correct. The Act of 1758 - Tetbury Roads Act, 31 George II c 65, gives instructions for a road from "Bouldown Sleight" to the end of a lane adjoining to the road from Horsley to Tetbury near Tiltups Inn. In the 1770s the Old Bath Road, once past Hunters Hall Inn near Kingscote, took a south-easterly direction before reaching the line of the



present A46. The Long Ash turnpike (referred to here and there in relation to the Nailsworth road) is at the junction of the A46 with the road to Leighterton (824923) just south of Boxwell Lodge. The road referred to in the 1758 Act would be a track leaving the Old Bath Road somewhat north of the Long Ash turnpike (829938) where Bowdown Road heads for Easton Grey, and continuing thence north past Calcot Farm to the lane from Barton End just north of Tiltups End. The Nailsworth Road Act refers to a gate or stile about here. One effect of the Nailsworth Road Act was to complete a change in direction of roads west of Tetbury. These now became north-south and east-west, i.e. the present A46 and A4135, with a crossing at Calcot Farm. The previous coach route from Nailsworth would have probably been up Spring Hill from The George, and through Upper Nailsworth and up Tetbury Lane past Windsorash (but which is given in the early documents as "The Wind's Arse") to a cross-roads near Ruggers Green Barn (855982), and thence past Barton End to Tiltups End. Here the former main road came across the Horsley valley from Nymfield, and went east and south-east from the Black Horse (the inn of what in the 18th century was called Tiltups Inn) towards Tetbury. The stretch between Tiltups End and Chavenage Green is no longer a public highway. These roads are well marked on the 2 inch Preliminary Drawings of the Ordnance Survey, and can also be made out on Isaac Taylor's map of the 1770s (see the Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society reproduction 1961), and all the indications in the early records of the Nailsworth Trust indicate that the present section of the A46 from Nailsworth to Tiltups End is a new alignment. Further corroboration is given in the Gloucester Journal of 7 Sept 1778 which refers to the renewal and enlargement of the turnpike road to the end of the lane adjoining to the Horsley to Tetbury road at Tiltups Inn. That is, the Tetbury Roads improvement stopped there: the Nailsworth Road provided a link in what is now the Bath Road - the A46.

23

A.T. Playne A History of the Parishes of Minchinhampton and Avening (Gloucester 1915). This difficult route would have come down the (unimproved) Well Hill road to the Iron Mills in the Avening valley, then climbed up through Hazle Wood to the cross-roads near Ruggers Green Barn and past Barton End to Tiltups End. The writer does not know the further route but suspects it went south-west behind the Black Horse through Kingscote village to near Ashel Barn to follow the present A4135 to Wotton-under-Edge for Bristol. The existing road from Nailsworth through Horsley - the B4058 - had not then been built, and the turnpike site was previously south of the junction with this road, and would have been suitable placed to catch such cross traffic.

Post script. Not all the problems connected with the building of the Nailsworth Turnpike have been solved by the writer. For example, the identity of one or two trustees, particularly Thomas Bayliss; and the connection with the Trust of Thomas Pavey, who is recorded as landowner at Barton End, and attends frequently at meetings. The writer would be grateful for any further or corroborative information regarding this Trust, and its members. He would also be grateful to those who can point out errors or omissions. There are sure to be some!

Incidentally, the building at the bottom of the road from The Bear Inn known as Hillgrove was an inn specially built for the road by Sir George Paul and others, and named The Fleece. In advertising

their new road from Bath to Gloucester in the Gloucester Journal for 18 Feb 1782, the Trustees say:

"With intent to render the public Accommodation complete, a Society of Gentlemen are erecting a spacious and commodious House, situate near Woodchester, at a convenient Distance for Change of Horses between Petty-France or Cross-Hands Inns and Gloucester, which will be ready to open at Michelmas Day next, with every Accommodation as an Inn, Tavern, and Post-House, and will consist of four large and elegant Parlours with Bar, Tap-Room, Kitchen, and all other useful Offices on the Ground Floor; 18 good Bedchambers; cellars for 500 Hogsheads of Beer, an arched Vault for Wine, and Coach-Houses and Stables for any Number of Horses."

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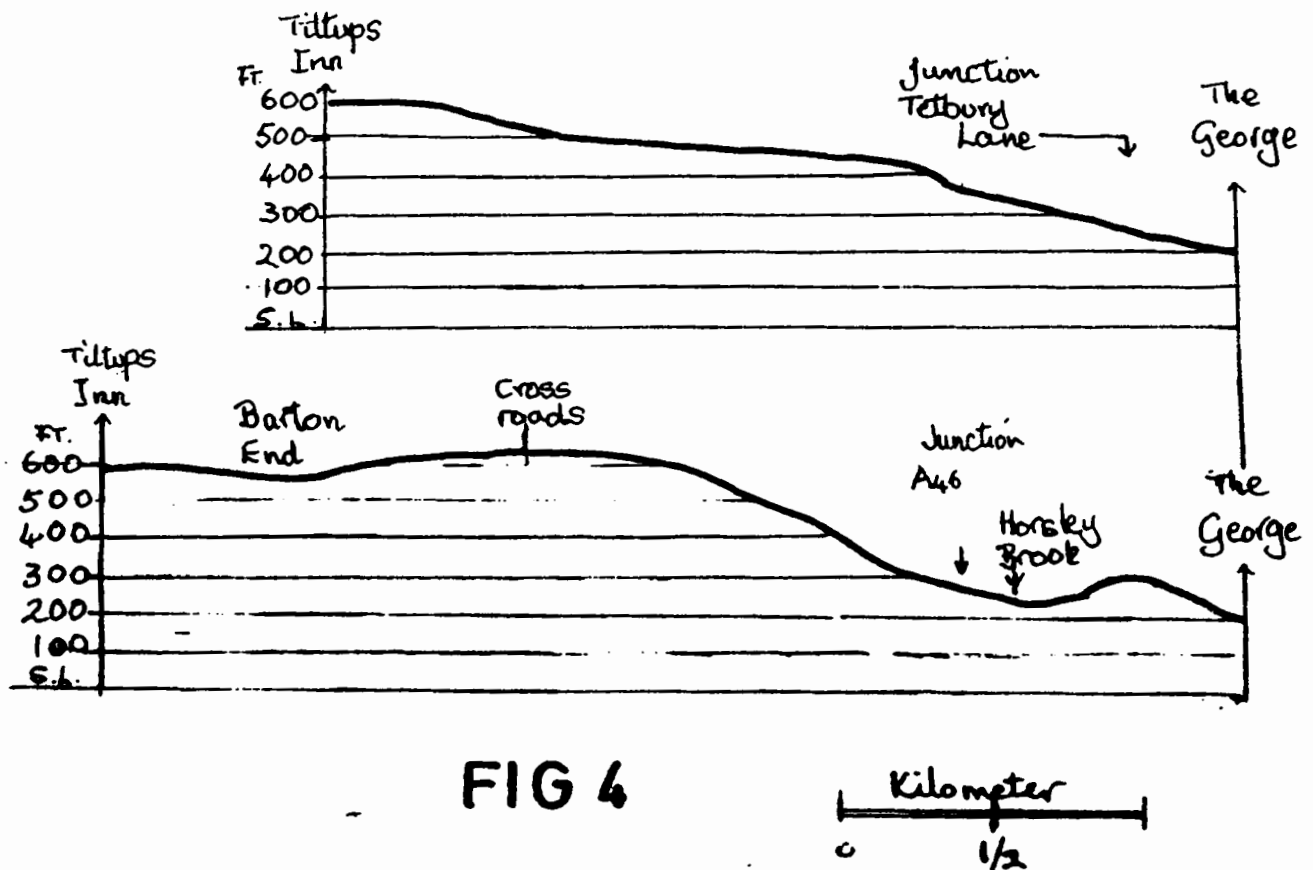


Fig 4: Road profiles. Top diagram the new route from The George to Tiltups Inn - crossing with former route (Tetbury Lane) indicated. Lower diagram shows the earlier route. It is probable that coaches left The George and went up Spring Hill before turning down in Upper Nailsworth for the present Tetbury Lane. Cross roads is that at Ruggers Green Barn, where certain old tracks met. (see note 22 at end). Vertical interval in feet. Scale 1 : 25000.

**Note** The owners or tenants of 4 mills in the main valley play little part in the early years of the Trust. T. Shurmur appears only for compensation when the building of the bridge at Frogmarsh deprived his mill temporarily of water power. In later years, a member of the Haycock family who worked what was later called Merrett's mill puts in an appearance, as does Thomas Cooper who may have been at Churches mill in the earlier years (VCH xi 197 & 299). The Webbs at Egypt seem, at least in the first year or two, only interested in claiming damages; and in the early years we do not see much of the Days of the mill of that name in Nailsworth. But the clothing families were closely linked by marriage and tenancies.