



Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology

Cotswold Canals Restoration

Phase 1b. Saul Junction to The Ocean, Stonehouse

Project S25

Stroudwater Canal Inspection Reports (1908-1978)

by Joan Tucker April 2007 Issue 1

A collection of 16 20th century Stroudwater Canal inspection reports were recently discovered at the Stroud offices of Goldinghams, a firm of solicitors. They are the successors to Little and Bloxham, solicitors. Mr W R Bloxham was Chairman of the Stroudwater Company for many years and at least one Mr Little was also associated with the Company. The reports have been made available for transcription through the good offices of Mr Michael Little of Goldinghams and they have now been placed in Gloucestershire Archives.

All 16 transcripts are presented here as they contain a wealth of information concerning routine and more major maintenance of the various structures on the canal. The dates of the reports are 1908, 1910, 1912, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1920, 1923 (two), 1924, 1929, 1932 (two), 1953 and 1978.

1908 Inspection

Annual Inspection of the Canal from Framilode to Eastington

Your Committee inspected the Canal on Thursday 25th. June 1908, accompanied by the Clerk, Mr. W.J.Snape.

Framilode

The piers and walls at Framilode were inspected and found to be in good order. The iron stays put in about 18 years ago have kept the main wall of the North Pier, which was formerly in danger of falling into the River Severn, in a satisfactory state. It appears that the highest tide at Framilode probably occurred in the year 1899. The mark up to which it then came has not yet been placed either on the loggerhead or the tidal gauge near thereto, and your Committee recommend that it should be marked on both. Framilode swing bridge was examined and it appears that about six new planks are required in order to repair it. The stop-gate was raised just above the water and was in good condition.

Saul Bridge

This bridge has, your committee were informed, been recently repaired. At some future date a new bridge will probably be necessary, as it is beginning to show signs of decay; but there appears to be no present necessity for a new one.

Junction Lock

This lock and the two swing bridges, all of which are reparable by the Sharpness New Docks Company and Gloucester & Birmingham Navigation, were found to be in good condition.

Walk Bridge (Whitminster)

This bridge was found to be in good order.

Shallow Lock Bridge

This bridge was patched up about two years ago and was found to be in good working order. Probably before very long a new bridge will be necessary, but the present one may last for another two or three years.

Stonepits Bridge

This bridge also repaired about two years ago and was found to be in good order.

Mr. Gray Robinson's Bridge (Occupation Bridge)

This bridge, which your Committee were informed is reparable by Mr. Robinson, was found to be in good order.

Bristol Road Bridge

This bridge was found to be in good order. Your Committee noticed, however, with regard to the lock that there is a leak between the heads of the lower gates, which, it is understood, could be lessened. Your Committee understand that the repair of these gates in order to stop the leak altogether would be a difficult and expensive matter, and that, as there is plenty of water, the leak is immaterial. Your Committee also inspected the two cottages near this bridge in the occupation of Mrs. Williams and

Mrs. Tudor respectively. The doors of each cottage required two coats of paint, and this small matter was ordered to be attended to at once. In other respects the cottages appear to be in good repair.

Westfield Bridge

This bridge was found to be in good order.

Eastington

Your Committee visited the wharf, blacksmith's & carpenter's shops, stores and other properties of the Company at Eastington, and their inspection was quite satisfactory, no detailed comments being called for. Everything there appeared to be tidy & well looked after. The stock comprised the whole of the materials for the new bridge which will shortly be erected at Hilly Orchard. These materials appeared to be very substantial & satisfactory for the purpose.

General Observations

The canal banks and towing-paths were found to be in good order generally. It appears that the only properties unlet on the whole length of the canal are the Warehouse at Framilode formerly rented by a club at £3 per annum, which has been vacant since Michaelmas 1896 and one of the two cottages at Framilode previously let at a rental of £6.12.0d per annum, which has been vacant for three months. Your Committee understand the lock-keeper under Mr. Snape's directions occupies the cottage garden rent free is not an inducement to him to find a tenant for the cottage. Mr. Snape is endeavouring to re-let these properties. A certain amount of weeding requires to be done in parts of the canal and your Committee saw four men on the Company's permanent staff doing some weeding at the Bristol Road part. The weeds on the canal below the Junction are particularly thick. The matter of the telephone posts was fully dealt with in the report of the annual inspection made on 5th July 1907 & does not call for fresh comment.

1910 Inspection

Annual Inspection of the Canal from Eastington Bridge to Wallbridge Wharf

Your Committee inspected the Canal from Eastington Bridge to Wallbridge Wharf on Monday 27th. June 1910, accompanied by Mr. Percy Snape.

Eastington Bridge

This bridge is in good repair. The ends of the balance poles up to New Town Lock (sic) have been painted white & the other parts of such poles tarred quite recently. The palings round the lock-keeper's house are, your Committee were informed, also about to be painted white.

New Town Lock

A leakage in the coping stones was in course of being repaired with concrete & cement, and would, your Committee were informed, be completed that day.

Roving Bridge

In good repair.

Bond's Mill Swing Bridge

In good repair.

Mud-Tip at Stonehouse

Your Committee inspected the mud-tip at Stonehouse adjoining the land of the Midland Railway Company. If the arrangement proposed to be entered into with the Midland Railway Company be carried out, the culvert will have to be extended to within a few yards of the brook, as mud would in that case be deposited on a considerable part of the ground over which the stream now flows after leaving the culvert. Your Committee understand that the Midland Railway Co. have suggested extending the culvert for 30 yards.

Midland Railway Bridge, Stonehouse

This bridge, which belongs to the Midland Railway Co. is in good repair.

Ocean, Stonehouse

Quite in order. Your Committee noticed a line of pipe which stuck out of the ground of Stonehouse Court Farm, tenanted by Mr. Chandler, within a few feet of the towing-path, the other end of the pipe coming above ground further away from the Company's property and ending in a pigstye. If this pipe is ever used for conducting water from the Canal to the Farm, Mr. Chandler should of course pay for the privilege, but your Committee do not know if the pipe has been so used.

Ocean Swing Bridge

Your Committee were informed that this bridge is about to be renewed, the timber being in stock and paid for. The present bridge was erected 25 years ago.

Nutshell Bridge, Stonehouse

In good repair. The drain from which silt recently came into the Canal is at this spot and was inspected. Your Committee also inspected the Company's property adjoining this Bridge, including Wharf House occupied by Mrs. Penn, who asked for a new kitchen grate. The present grate appears to be past repair. Your Committee understand, however, that Mrs. Penn is only a subtenant of the Company's lessees Messrs. Dickinson & Cox, in which case the latter and not the Company are her landlords. Since the last inspection the Midland railway Company have erected entrance gates on the Company's Wharf. (Stonehouse Wharf).

Stonehouse Swing Bridge

In fair repair.

Nailsworth Branch Bridge

Belongs to the Midland Railway Company and is in good repair.

Messrs. Marling & Co. Ltd's Wall

This wall below the coal-pen at Ryeford is in the same condition as at the time of the previous annual inspection (see Report thereon), but a heap of stones at one end of it may be for the purpose of repairs.

Ryeford Road Bridge

Extensive repairs to this bridge have been carried out since the previous annual inspection. Part of this Bridge belongs to the Gloucestershire County Council owing to their having widened the road.

Ryeford Wharf

The Boundary stones are not apparent there now. This should be attended to.

Ryeford Saw Mills

Two of the mooring rings stand up too much from the towing-path and should be put right by Mr. John Wibby, the present owner of the Mills.

Ryeford Footbridge

This wooden Bridge is about to be renewed, the materials being in hand and paid for. The wooden fence on the South side of the path east of this bridge is out of repair in part, but your Committee do not know whose fence it is. The Boundary stones between this Bridge and the Double Locks cottage are not visible, probably being overgrown with weeds. They should be located. Have the occupiers of the cottages near this Bridge liberty to use the towing path to get to their allotments? This point should be looked into.

Double Locks Ryeford

The balance poles have been painted and tarred as at Eastington. The Upper gates are about to be renewed, the materials being in hand and paid for and the work partly carried out.

Ebley Mills Swing Bridge

This Bridge, which belongs to Messrs. Marling & Co. Ltd. is somewhat out of repair. Your Committee were informed that the Bridge is rather dangerous to loaded barges, though not to unloaded ones, which pass it.

Hilly Orchard Footbridge

Your Committee were informed that this Bridge was made and erected entirely by the Company's own men, and the work appears to have been carried out very satisfactorily. The Bridge was recently painted with two coats of paint.

Dudbridge Wharf

The stable office and store-room on this Wharf are still unlet. A notice as to angling in the Canal is posted up here. The small piece of land recently sold to Messrs. Apperly Curtis & Co. Ltd. was inspected. The latter Company is in course of erecting a wall there.

Dudbridge Main Road Bridge

In good repair as regards our part. A small defect requires remedying in the part of this Bridge which belongs to the Gloucestershire County Council.

Dudbridge Lock

The balance poles have been painted and tarred as at Eastington. The sanitary work to the houses at this Lock has apparently been satisfactorily completed.

Gas House Swing Bridge

This bridge needs some repairs. Your Committee understand that the gas Company is liable for half the cost of repairs & renovations, though the Bridge belongs entirely to your Company.

Lodgemore Swing Bridge

In good repair. The paddles and culvert just above this bridge appear to be in order.

Wallbridge Wharf & Company's Property There

Inspected and found satisfactory.

General

On several bridges (eg. Eastington and Ryeford Road Bridges) the new diamond-shaped paper notices as to motor cars are torn and require to be renewed. The canal banks & towing-paths were found to be in good order generally.

Signed.

Wm. Davies
Ferdinand? S.

Whittingham.

1912 Inspection

Annual Inspection of the Canal from Eastington Bridge to Wallbridge Wharf

Your Committee inspected the Canal from Eastington Bridge to Wallbridge Wharf on Monday the 13th. May 1912, accompanied by Mr. Snape.

Eastington Bridge

The balance pole on the inside requires to have the decayed wood underneath cut away, and to be tarred.

New Town Ditch (Eastington)

Sewage still flowing in from Mr. Truscott's house. This should be attended to.

Bond's Mill Swing Bridge

Raised part of floor of bridge requires levelling. Repairs about to be done to the King post (one new King post)

Mud-Tip at Stonehouse

The dredger was at work, four men being employed. Some large stones were taken out of the Canal by them at Ryeford.

Houseboat belonging to Company inspected, and is now in good repair.

Towing Path Opposite Stonehouse Court

Requires to be repaired in two or three places.

Stonehouse Swing Bridge

In very good repair now, the planking being of oak.

The Stonehouse Brush Company

Its railings want repairing.

Dr. Perkins' Property at Ryeford.

Place inspected; it evidently wants seeing to. A tree too, is nearly falling into the Canal.

Ryeford Wharf

Timber wagons, timber and other things belonging to Messrs. Brunsdon are on the Company's Wharf still, although they have objected to pay and have promised to remove everything.

Double Locks, Ryeford.

New gate-post required. Stone on far side of top gates requires to be renewed.

Oil Mills Bridge

A few bricks are needed on the towing path side nearest to Wallbridge; also a hole in towing path wants seeing to.

S S

Marling

Dudbridge Wharf

Stable, office and store-room still unlet. The gib of the Company's crane will have to be renewed before long.

Dudbridge Lock

New back board wanted on outside top gate of top lock.

Wallbridge Wharf and Company's Property there

Satisfactory.

General

Canal banks, bridges, gates, towing paths etc. (except where otherwise mentioned) were found in good order.

Signed.

Ferdinand S.

Whittingham.

PTO

One pair of lock-gates (Ryeford) have to be replaced. It was explained that these were already prepared & would be placed in position as soon as possible.

1915 Inspection

Annual Inspection of the Canal from Framilode to Eastington.. 1915.

Report of the Committee

Your Committee inspected the Canal from Framilode to Eastington on Tuesday the 6th. July 1915, accompanied by Mr. Percy Snape.

Framilode

The piers and walls are in good order. The head of the stop-gate wants seeing to, and so does part of the lean-to roof of Harris' cottage used as a Post Office. The pound requires dredging, although traffic is not materially impeded.

The cottage occupied by Mrs. Pockett has a defective chimney pot, which your Committee ordered should be seen to at once, as it was apparently dangerous. The roofs, including the wooden roof on the coal-shed, should be seen to and made watertight, and the outside doors and window-sills should be painted. Mrs. Pockett asked that the window on the ground floor at the pine end of the house should be enlarged (if it is considered that Mrs. Pockett asks too much, this item might be left out) and that the ceiling of the kitchen should be papered or whitewashed. A new bedroom window is wanted in Mrs. Taylor's cottage adjoining. This was ordered some time ago but has never been done, owing to the illness of the man to whom the work was given.

Your Committee inspected the warehouse (originally a school) which is still unlet. It is, however, used by Harris, the Tidesman as the Company's workshop. The upper floor is rather out of repair, but apparently not dangerous. The lower floor is used for Mr. Sibley's boat. Your Committee think that the upper floor might be let if it was more generally known that it was in the market.

Your Committee inspected the new fence put up by the Company on their land, such fence running at right-angles to the bank of the River Severn, and found it satisfactory. Your Committee learnt that one Frank Broucher has built a house worth about £250 on land adjoining the Company's land and purports to claim (he has not yet made such claim direct) a right of way over the land so fenced in by the Company.

Saul Bridge

The iron-work of the new swing bridge put up by the Company in 1913 requires painting. Weeding is necessary and should be undertaken after the salmon season, as is usual, and the banks require cleaning. It is suggested that Harris might do this work, and also any weeding not too far from Framilode, in his spare time, or by arrangement overtime. If not, an oldish man might be employed economically.

Junction Lock

There is a leak in the planking of the outside gate of the bottom gates, for which the Berkeley Canal is responsible. The stopgates are worked once a fortnight by the Berkeley Canal to see that they are in order.

Walk Bridge (Whitminster)

This swing bridge might be carefully inspected as regards repairs next year; at present it will do. The wood and iron-work require painting.

Shallow Lock Bridge (Whitminster)

The iron-work of the new swing bridge put up by the Company in 1911 requires painting. Weeding is wanted badly, and some repairs to the banks are necessary. The lock itself is in order, the Berkeley Canal being responsible for it.

Bristol Road Bridge

The lock is leaking badly at the bottom and, although water is plentiful, it should perhaps be attended to. The Canal is very weedy on the Wallbridge side for some way up.

Coffin Weir

Weeding is badly wanted near this weir.

Dock Lock

The mitres of the top gate of this lock want seeing to.

Eastington

Your Committee examined the blacksmith's and carpenter's shops and found them satisfactory. The Mud-flat is in dry dock undergoing repairs. The barge board in the roof of the Dock House wants filling up with cement.

General Observations The canal bank and towing paths are generally in good order.

Signed J. Margetson, F S Whittingham

13th. July 1915.

1916 Inspection

Annual Inspection of the Canal from Framilode to Eastington

Report of the Committee

Your Committee inspected the Canal from Framilode to Eastington on Tuesday 11th. July 1916, accompanied by Mr. P G Snape.

Framilode

The piers and walls are in good order. The bottom paddles of the tidal lock gates require fitting and mitres. The basin is very weedy, but will, it is understood, soon be attended to. The top cheek of the stop-gate wants renewing or scarfing. Renewing would apparently cost about £5 and scarfing about half that sum. The pound from the mouth of the Severn (Frome?) to the junction with the Sharpness New Docks canal is not so weedy as it was last year.

As regards the cottage in Mrs. Pockett's occupation reported on last year, the leak in the roof was stopped, the window was enlarged, and the chimney put right. The lean-to roof, if made watertight, will last another year. Mr. Snape will get from Mr. S. Hopson an estimate for the work, and also for some repairs to the lean-to roof of the cottage occupied by Harris.

The warehouse is still unlet, the lower part being used by the Company to store tools and other things. Your Committee were informed that a man named Jackson, a basket maker of Westbury-on-Severn, might rent the upper floor or possibly the whole.

Harris was instructed to see him and to endeavour to obtain an offer of 2/6d or at least 2/- a week for the upper floor, the tenant paying rates. If he wants the whole building, an increased rent could be asked for.

Saul Bridge

The iron-work was painted last year, and need not be done again this year. Wheel planking of elm of at least 1½ inches in thickness might usefully be put on the bridge, as there is considerable traffic over it. Harris could do the work at ordinary carpenter's wages.

Junction Lock

The mitres and bars of the bottom gates require slight repairs. The Sharpness New Docks Company is responsible therefor. Your Committee saw Mr. William Fredericks, the joint clerk, who informed us that the loading at the tip (which, though on the Sharpness Company's land, belongs to the Great Western Railway Company) is now getting on all right again, but the question is, of course, of more than temporary importance.

Walk Bridge (Whitminster)

This swing bridge will apparently last another year, when it should be again carefully inspected. Notices as to heavy traffic have been put up at each end of this bridge, and also on all the other bridges on main roads since last year. The centre standard and stanchions require repairing – a matter of £2 or £3. The approach to the Bridge on the Frampton side has been strengthened with concrete and iron.

Shallow Lock Bridge (Whitminster)

The facing planks of Shallow Lock require repair, two being missing altogether. The Sharpness New Docks Company is responsible. The pound is much less weedy than it was last year.

Mr. Grey Robinson's Bridge (Occupation Bridge)

The gate on the towing path just above this bridge wants strapping.

Bristol Road Bridge

The lock gates are still leaking badly at the bottom. The mitre of the inside top gate (this gate was put there in 1872) requires scarfing or renewing. The Canal is less weedy here than it was last year. The whole of the bank of the towing path from this bridge to Parklands Bridge requires repairing: it has been much trodden down by cattle, and has been badly broken in at least two places.

Westfield Lock

The iron of one of the mitres of the bottom gates requires renewing – a small matter: there are also bad leaks in both heels. The mitres of the top gates will require to be repaired before long, and two facing planks on the towing path side also require repair.

Dock Lock

The bottom gates require replanking and are leaky. One mitre of the top gates requires repair.

Eastington

Your Committee inspected the blacksmith's and carpenter's shops and found them satisfactory. They also saw one of the new lock gates for the Double Lock, Ryeford, which was lying on the wharf. They also saw the other gate in course of being made.

General Observations

Subject to the matters requiring attention as pointed out above, the Canal banks and towing paths are generally in good order.

Signed

Jack Margetson
F S Whittingham.

1917 Inspection

Annual Inspection of the Canal from Framilode to Eastington

Report of the Committee

Your Committee inspected the Canal from Framilode to Eastington on Monday the 2nd. of July 1917, accompanied by the Clerk Mr. P G Snape.

Framilode

The piers and walls are in good order. Some slight repairs are necessary to the bottom gates of the Tidal Lock, and to the facing planks of the top gates. The basin and also the pound up to Saul Junction require dredging. The stopgate has been repaired and should last some years yet.

Harris has not yet cultivated the small paddock adjoining the warehouse, owing, it is understood, to ill-health. The warehouse still remains unlet. The under-carriage of the Bridge has been repaired recently. The roofs of the cottages occupied by Mrs. Pockett and Harris respectively have also been repaired recently, and the outside wood and iron work of both cottages will be painted shortly. The roof of the room formerly a wash-house in Mrs. Pockett's cottage is still not watertight at certain times; also the rough-cast has worn off the walls in parts. Mrs. Taylor's cottage has been papered, and a new kitchen grate has been put in there.

Saul Bridge

Wheel planks and roughing boards have been recently put in and the condition is satisfactory. A little painting might be done next year. The towing path just above Saul Bridge needs repairing in two places. There is an old canal boat against the bank just below Junction Lock in an apparently derelict condition, which ought not to remain there indefinitely.

Junction Lock

The mitres and bars of the bottom gates still require some repairs, and there is a somewhat large leak in the planking of the outside bottom gate. The Sharpness New Docks Company is responsible for these matters. Between here and Shallow Lock the Canal is less weedy.

Walk Bridge (Whitminster)

This swing-bridge can probably go on for another year. The king-post has had some slight repairs done to it recently.

Shallow Lock Bridge (Whitminster)

Two facing planks in the top gates of Shallow Lock are missing. The Sharpness New Docks Company is responsible for repairs there. The pound from there to Eastington needs weeding in varying degrees.

Bristol Road Bridge

The wall on the lower side has been recently repaired. The lock gates are still leaking somewhat badly at the bottom, but there is no lack of water here.

Coffin Weir

The bank of the watercourse has been recently repaired.

Westfield Lock

The iron of the mitre of one of the bottom gates was renewed soon after the last annual inspection and is in order. There is a small leak at the heel of the outside bottom gates. The mitres of the top gates and also the facing planks have been recently repaired. The weeds referred to above appear to be worst from this lock up to Eastington.

Dock Lock

The bottom gates still require replanking and are leaky. It is intended to patch them up when the Company's carpenter is next up that way. The balance pole has been repaired and the mitre of one of the top gates has been renewed recently.

Eastington

Your Committee inspected the Dry Dock. One of the Company's punts was in it for repairs. Over half the rough cast on the upper side of the pine end of the Dock building has worn off, and the wooden lathing exposed is rotting in parts. Your Committee also inspected the Company's Icebreaking boat, which is leaky and will have to be repaired before next winter: also the carpenter's shop and blacksmith's shop, finding them in a satisfactory condition.

General Observations

Subject to the foregoing observations, the Canal waterway, banks, towing paths, and other property are generally in good order.

Signed. F S Whittingham.

1918 Inspection

Canal Inspection Report 1918

From the Ocean, Stonehouse, Stonehouse, to Wallbridge.

Your Committee inspected the canal from the Ocean at Stonehouse to Wallbridge on Tuesday the 10th. September 1918, accompanied by the Clerk Mr. P G Snape.

The Ocean

There is an inspection chamber about half-way along the concrete wall between Mr. Winterbotham's land and the Ocean containing about a 4 inch pipe running into the Canal well above the waterline.

It is not apparent for what purpose this is used, if only for surface water there would appear to be no objection to it.

Your Committee regret to see that the Midland Railway loading and unloading shed has been removed.

Ocean Bridge

This bridge will require painting next year.

There is a large elm tree on the Canal bank about 50 yards from the church. If Mr. Winterbotham would consent to remove it, it would be an advantage as if it were blown down it would very seriously damage the Canal bank.

Nutshell Bridge

The wing wall pier on the NE requires repair, as there are several bricks out.

Bridgend Bridge

The brickwork requires pointing.

From this point up to the Swing Bridge the Tow-path bank needs clearing.

Stonehouse Swing Bridge. (Upper Mills)

Roughing boards should be laid in the centre of the bridge and the approach to the bridge from Vowles' Mill needs repairing for a distance of about 12 feet, from the bridge, as it is badly worn by heavy traffic.

From the Midland railway bridge to Ryeford Wharf the tow-path needs making up with ashes in several places.

Opposite Sir William Marling's Cottages new planks are required in the place provided for the cottagers to draw water.

Stanley Mill Coal Pen

The bank needs piling opposite the coal pen.

Ryeford Main Road Bridge Outside

The brick and stonework of the wing walls on the S W and N W needs repair.

Inside

All the brickwork of the wing walls wants looking over and repairing where necessary.

Ryeford Saw Mills

Your Committee would be glad to know if there is an agreement under which the owners of this mill are liable for the repairs of the wharf.

The bushes adjoining the tow-path by this mill need to be removed or cut back and notice should be given to Messrs. Workman Ltd. Ryeford.

Ryeford Nurseries

Notice should be given to Messrs. Price to cut back the yew or other trees and bushes overhanging the Canal.

From there to the double lock there is a number of willows on the tow-path many of them are leaning over the river. These (about 10) should be cut down and the sound ones split and used for piling as the river is undermining the tow-path to a serious extent.

Double Lock

The cills of the middle gates are leaking badly and these and the balance poles require attention.

When your Committee was there the *Reliance* barge was in the lower lock and the water was spurting out from the leaks and much of it falling into the barge, which was some 4 or 5 feet from the gate.

New oak paddles and starts have been fixed at this lock and the work is sound and good. They require painting.

Ebley

Both below and above the bridge at Ebley the hedge overhangs the towing-path and notice should be given to Barnard that unless he does this within, say, fourteen days, the Company will have to do it at his expense.

Dudbridge Wharf

The arm of the crane requires to be tarred or painted.

The slates and tiles on the roof of the shed need attention.

Dudbridge Bridge

The ivy growing over the bridge needs cutting back.

Dudbridge Top Lock

The brickwork in the sides of the lock is in a bad state of repair and needs attention.

Messrs. Samuel Jefferies & Son

Have lopped the black poplar trees on the bank.

The bank opposite the Sewage Works has been piled.

Gasworks

The bank opposite the discharging place needs repair.

Gas Works Bridge

The false decking of this bridge should be renewed.

Messrs. Strachan & Co. Ltd.

Have cut and layered the hedge.

Lodgemore Bridge

This bridge is in a very bad state of repair and should be replaced. The longitudinal beams and others have decayed and been temporarily repaired.

Wallbridge Basin

The basin needs clearing.

Wallbridge Wharf

The brick piers of the lean-to (let to Lee) need repointing. Also the roof leaks on to the beam and the water is rotting the beam.

The pointing of the brickwork at the front of the wall of the stable let to Mr. Lambert requires to be renewed in places.

Generally

The Canal needs weeding in various degrees.

Your Committee observe that on several of the Company's wharves there are considerable quantities of stone for road mending etc. belonging to the Gloucestershire County Council, and large quantities of coal etc. belonging to various owners, much of which appears to remain on the wharves for long periods and for which your Committee understand that no wharfage is paid – the goods having been brought by the Canal and having paid the usual tolls.

Your Committee understand that the towing-path has not been closed recently and suggest that this should be done.

The notices as to traffic affixed to the various bridges bear no reference to the Motor Car Act. Your Committee understand that a letter was written to Mr. E T Gardom, the Clerk to the Gloucestershire County Council, on the matter in connection with the Thames & Severn Canal, but, his reply was that the matter had to stand over until he instructed further. Your Committee suggest that he should be written to.

Subject to the above observations the canal waterway, banks, towing paths and other property are generally in good order.

Signed : F A Little

Printed: W R Bloxam.

1920 Inspection

The Stroudwater Navigation Company

(An account dated c. 1920)

Canal Dredging

It is over 40 years since any systematic dredging was done.

Messrs. Bomford & Evershed Ltd. of Evesham have sent in an estimate but they state that they can only roughly estimate the amount of work to be done which they put at 60,000 cubic yards of mud to be removed and that they consider the cost to be about 3/3d per cubic yards = £9,750.

Within the next three years the following work should be done and has been noted by the inspection Committee at several inspections, viz:-

New Swing Bridge at	Lodgemore
Ditto	Bond's Mill
Ditto	Whitminster

New pair of bottom gates at Blunder Lock, and the new pair of middle gates at Double Lock Ryeford should be fixed, this work should be put in hand, will cost about £1,188.0.9d

The Lock Gates, paddles, etc. of all the (15) (*should be 13*) locks need repairs, for which it is difficult to estimate – say £20:- a lock = £280. And new gates will have to be put in at Newtown Lock, Pike Lock, Dock Lock @ £702. Total £2170.

Bridges

There are nine Swing Bridges, eleven Brick Bridges and thirteen Locks with two pairs of gates to each lock and a double lock with three pairs of gates.

Water Supply

Is free - 1st. From the Painswick Stream
2nd. River Stroudwater (Frome) and has been sufficient.

Railway Rate

From Staffordshire to Stroud is about 8/4 per ton including truck hire.

Canal Rate

From the same place works out at about 12/6 per ton including boat hire.

Workmens wages

Tradesmen £2.19.0, Tidesman £1.16.0. other men £2.11.0 per week.

At the present rate of pay a year's wages of the men now employed by the Company amount to about £1.908.8.0. per annum.

Tolls

The Tolls are fixed under the maximum Tolls & Charges Confirmation Order Acts 1893-1894 as follows:-

All classes of goods 1¼d per ton per mile.	Wharfage charges:-
Classes A.B. 1½ per ton.	Classes C and I – 3d. per ton.
Classes 2 to 5 – 4d per ton.	

The Tolls now in operation are about $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per ton per mile under the maximum.
The total amount of tolls received by way of tonnage and wharfage is not sufficient to maintain the Canal.

Canal

The Canal is a barge Canal $7\frac{7}{8}$ ths. miles in length and extends from the town of Stroud to Framilode on the River Severn, crossing the Gloucester and Berkeley Ship Canal at Saul Junction on a level.

The smallest lock between Saul Junction and Wallbridge is the Dock Lock at Eastington which is 72ft 1" x 16ft.2".

Least water on cill is at the Double Locks Ryeford which is 5ft.2".

The Tidal Lock at Framilode is the smallest lock on the canal – 71ft. 9" x 15ft.9" x 5ft.6" of water on cill.

The Company are not carriers – simply toll receivers. (this written in longhand)

Tolls and Charges

Canal Rates, Tolls and Charges Order Confirmation Acts. 1893 and 1894.

Stroudwater Canal rates fixed at $1\frac{1}{4}$ d per ton per mile.

$1\frac{1}{4}$ d.plus 204%=a boat 4d per ton per mile

See Mr. Dudbridge's statement

8 miles. The rate. Framilode to Wallbridge would be $\frac{2}{8}$ per ton.

7 miles. The rate. Gloucester & Berkeley Canal to Wallbridge would be $\frac{2}{4}$ per ton

The present rate is 8d. per ton.

Through rate to Thames & Severn Canal is $8\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ton

1923 Inspection May 24th

Inspection on May 24th 1923

Framilode Lock to the Ocean.

H R Hooper.

W R Bloxam.

Chairman.

Framilode Lock

Bulge in wall at entrance from the Severn mentioned in last report, no change.

Lower Gates are bad, considerable amount of leakage.

Upper Gates (1900) in fair condition.

Traffic through the lock, one cargo a month only.

Lock House

Span roof of outbuilding requires plastering, and should be done at once.

Taylor's Cottage

Chimney pot requires immediate attention.

Warehouse

Mentioned in last (1918) report, still unlet, renewed efforts should be made to secure a tenant, and Pocket was told that if one was obtained through his efforts, Committee would probably show its appreciation in the usual way.

Framilode Pound & Lock

No money should be spent. Traffic practically nil. Pocket 30/- per week and a cottage, good useful man, but nothing much to do, except to attend to lock when the tide necessitates. Some work should be found for this man in upper section of the canal.

His utility is being wasted, and it is a question if his wage is being earned.

A man riding a bicycle on towpath, and thoroughly at home, was met on this reach.

Seemed to look upon the infraction of the rule as of no consequence. The question of issuing 'permits' is worth consideration.

Walk Bridge

Towing path gate and guard rail of Bridge need repair. There seems to be some doubt as to the Body responsible. The canal at this section, according to Act of Parliament, has to be maintained by the Gloster and Berkeley Canal Co.

What about towpaths and bridges? Is it the job of the G&B Canal?

Whitminster Pound

Wants cleaning but question the wisdom of insistence on this until the account with this Company in connection with work at Bristol Road lock is settled.

Shallow Lock

(maintained by Gloster & Bristol (sic) canal.) Mitres on upper gates are very bad, also paddle gearing same gates.

Bristol Road Pound

Shallow Lock to Bristol Road Lock. In good condition.

Stonepits Bridge

(occupation only) is in bad repair. The coign stone dangerous condition. Should be attended to. Upper end of Pound at this section under repair, towing path fallen away through use by cattle, being repaired.

Eastington Pound

(From Bristol Road Lock to Westfield Lock)

Badly silted, whole reach needs weeding and mudding. At this reach Ward & Co's motor boat *Alfreda* of notorious memory, passed us, one man on board, one on towpath, Boat travelling well over 5 miles per hour, and making lot of wash. Stem down over 18". She was towing the barge "*Dorothy*". Question if speed of these motor barges can be limited.

Coffin Weir

A plank has been fixed across this weir to raise level of canal. This would not be required if reach were properly dredged.

Westfield Lock

Heel post split (gates dated 1896), serious, but should last for a time, unless run into. The Committee should discuss and make provision for new gates. Upper gates, mitres bad, but should last some time.

Dock Lock, Eastington.

34 years old, lower gates on towpath side, badly split in heel, should be re-examined next year. Upper gates will need attention next year, but should last for a time unless run into.

Dry Dock

Roof, stone tiles. As Dock is now never used, question of selling roof tiles worth considering.

Dock House

Chimney pot needs attention at once.

Eastington Pike Lock

38 years old. In bad condition. New gates urgently wanted. If possible upper gates mitres should be attended to, when lower gates are renewed.

The trees on Mr. Bush's property (Eastington Park), alluded to in 1918 report as requiring lopping, still untouched.

Blunder Lock

Is in bad state, both mitres in lower gates are broken and much patched, and both heels in bad condition. Upper gates bad, but better than the lower.

Newtown Pound

Very muddy.

Newtown Lock

Topgates middling condition, fixed 1876. Should last some time. Bottom gates fixed 1907. Ground paddle of the top gate on towpath side here is bad. Stop planks should be purchased (?price) to dam canal near gates, and thus obviate emptying the long pound. Might have to be done at any moment.

At this point, Davis Cottage, there is a small piece of land, the property of Canal, but of no practical use, either now or in the future, might be sold. Wall is in bad state.

The Long Pound

From Newtown to Ryeford, very muddy and full of weeds, needs attention as bad as any part of canal between Severn and Ocean.

Bond's Mill Swing Bridge

Should be painted this year.

SUMMARY

Severn to Bristol Rd. Lock

Nothing this year.

Eastington Pound and Long Pound

Should be weeded this year.

Eastington Pike Lock

New Gates, urgent

Blunder Lock

New gates next year.

Dock Lock

New gates next year.

Shallow Lock

Mitres and Gearing paddle this year.

Stonepits Bridge

Coign stone, cement at once.

The portion of canal under review wants, in some cases urgently, more money spent upon it than the Navigation has at its command. It is obvious that from 1916 to 1922, work that would have been undertaken in normal times, was not done, owing to the war, and the money paid in dividends during that period would have been better funded, to meet the inevitable accumulation of necessary work which now faces the Company.

1923 Inspection 13 June

Ocean to Wallbridge

Canal Inspection June 13th. 1923

H R Hooper

W R Bloxam
Chairman

Ocean Bridge

Bank on Court Farm side broken away here – due to watering of pigs. Farmer should be written to. Iron work of this bridge needs painting, when similar work is being done at Bond's Mill.

Long Pound

2nd. Section right away to Wallbridge – very weedy - must be done this summer.

Stonehouse Wharf

This large Wharf appears to be let to the Glos. County Council at the absurdly inadequate rent of 10/- per week. Their lorries, in some number, are parked there. Tar barrels are also stored there at present. It must be remembered that these are brought by canal – but nothing else apparently. A C Ward's Wool Warehouse is on the road side of this Wharf. They might entertain purchasing it!

Stonehouse Cross Bridge

One of the surface road water pipes to which further reference is made later in this report, is silting up the bed at this spot.

Ryeford Wharf

Brunsdon the Haulier appears to use this wharf, about 1000sq. yards, without payment. This must be stopped. The trees in Price the nurseryman's ground badly overhang the stream at this point. Should be written to.

Ebley Pound

Trees and bushes overhang badly on this Pound – on Ira Bassett's land – Willows opposite Barnard's House (Bridge House?) want cutting, and the trees on the old Gyde property will want attention next year.

Old Bridge

Unused. Known as Gyde Old Bridge ? Property of Smith, Rogers & Co. – suggest making an offer to buy. Ironwork would be useful, at any price.

Dudbridge Wharf

Here again the County Council appear to park Steam-rollers etc, and stone, without payment. Reference should be made to letter written Feb. 28 and April 26 to Mr. Larque. Here, too, are to be found 2 marine boilers, property of Messrs. Abdela, for which no charge is made.

Dudbridge Top Lock

Paddle outside bank will need attention next year.

Gas Works Bridge

Ironwork should be painted.

At Lodgemore a barge conveying 57 tons was encountered – going very slow – or as the Captain of the barge put it, doing less with 3 donkeys than he did with 2 before the War – Barge obviously very near the bottom. Also complained of the silting up of the whole canal from the Bristol Road Lock, and especially of the barrage of mud across the stream at places where the surface water from the roads runs into it. Mr. Snape states that at one time the County Council took its share of the expense of dredging, but not of recent years. Your Committee of inspection considers this question to be of the utmost importance.

1. Steps should at once be taken to remove, or lessen the menace of these barrages.
2. The attention of the County Council should be immediately drawn to the trouble.

Our man after dealing with this mud barrage should weed the whole length of the Canal, which ought to be completed by September, when real mudding might be undertaken

1924 Inspection

Stroudwater Navigation Directors' Inspections

Inspection on June 25th. 1924. Framilode to the Ocean

Present:- Major Little, J. Margetson, (Mr. Snape in attendance)

Framilode Lock

Balance pole towing path side and bottom gates in bad state. Very little traffic (in) lock.

- 1) Pockett has to get assistance of extra man, (one of our own men) at high tides.
- 2) A very high tide might break lock if extra man was not on the spot.
- 3) Cannot be patched.
- 4) Cost £14.
- 5) Extra man, cost nil.

Pockett reports that bicycle riding on towing path much on increase. Notices are posted.

Berkeley Canal issues licences, 1/- pa. Worth consideration.

In basin by lock there are at present time two stationary trade vessels, been there a

considerable time, no charge being made. Berkeley canal charge is 1d per ton on 20 tons

after one month.

Framilode Swing Bridge

Running to a cul-de-sac. Centre beams require renewing. The only traffic appears to be one passenger lorry to cottages, weight 25cwt. Plus about 8-10 passengers. Joy ride from Stroud.

Before anything is done to bridge, some investigation of this traffic should take place.

Framilode Pound

Very bad. Must be seen to this year, if vessels are to pass.

Saul Bridge

Traffic of all descriptions. Top decking bad. Should go for a further 12 months.

Junction Inn

Mrs. Long, tenant of Stroud Brewery complains of leak from canal into garden. Mr. Snape instructed to put right.

Head of Framilode Pound

Where Glos. & Berkeley begin responsibility very bad for weeds and bank of mud. Canal responsible should be advised.

Shallow Lock (Whitminster lock) Maintained by Glos. & Berkeley Canal. See last year's report. Paddle gear put right, but mitres on upper gates still untouched.

Whitminster Pound

Must be weeded this year.

Bristol Road Bridge

Widening of this bridge by C.C. (County Council) will necessitate reinstating tow path gate several yards further than present position, and building up of path. Mr. Snape should keep a vigilant eye on this work. The men's steps at this bridge have very narrow treads and look dangerous.

Westfield Lock

See last report. Heel should be watched. New gates are really urgently required. Timber should be bought at once

Dock Lock, Eastington

Bottom gates 35 years, bad. Mr. Snape should report on condition in 6 months time. Upper gates 51 years, still in fairly good condition. Sills need a certain amount of patching.

Blunder Lock

New gates made and ready for fixing. Mr. Snape to examine upper gates when doing this work.

Dry Dock, Eastington

Part of roof tiles removed. Could the bricks be sold? And the old clock?

(End of Inspection)

Attached to the report in the archive is a letter dated 12/7/29 to Mr. Margetson

Dear Mr Margetson,

Thankyou for the report of Inspection of the canal (from Framilode to Ocean) on 25th. ult.

The only note of misfortune (?) which I made to which you have not included in the report is with ref. to the Pike bridge and the necessity for keeping an eye on the CC to see that they do not take a big corner off our yard near where we gave them the stable. I think you agreed that this was important.

What struck me most in the inspection was the need for weeding the Framilode Pound, the bank of weed at the head of Framilode Pound and the desirability of stopping the lorries from crossing the Framilode Swing Bridge which I believe they only do in order to turn round. (all these points you have included in the report?)

Yours sincerely,

R J C L (Major Little)

1929 Inspection

Report on the Inspection of the canal from the Ocean, Stonehouse, to Wallbridge, Stroud.

Made by Mr. Bloxam and Major Caruthers-Little on 8th. November 1929.

Ocean Swing Roller Bridge

Condition fair, but the condition of the decking should be carefully watched.

Nutshell Bridge

The west wall needs repointing in places.

The east wall is fair.

Long Pound

The whole of this pound needs dredging as usual.

Stonehouse Wharf and buildings

The roof of the lean to attached to the stable let to Mrs. Penn has a large hole which should be attended to. Mrs. Penn is in arrear with her rent.

The County Council are encroaching somewhat beyond their boundary.

Stonehouse Brick Bridge

East wall requires some repointing.

Swing Bridge at Stonehouse Upper Mills

The iron work on the Towing path side has been damaged but it was reported that Messrs. Vowles had undertaken to repair it.

Towing path

Just above this Bridge is in bad condition, many holes which should be filled up with ashes.

Railway Bridge

Damage has again been caused to the Towing path by water dripping from this Bridge and it needs some ashes.

The hedge on the Tow path side near the Canal Cottage, Ryeford, wants cutting back as Ivy is overhanging badly.

Ryeford Bridge

Water is coming through the arch of this bridge near the off side and it is difficult to account for this, unless there is a leak in the Water Company's pipe attached to it.

A tree near the north east pier on the off side of this Bridge is too near the wall and the roots may cause damage.

At the Ryeford Saw Mills

There is a fresh hole in Towing path just behind the cement coping which needs attention at once, and the path just here is generally hard? And should be seen to.

Double Lock, Ryeford

The leak caused by defect in the heel of the post on off side of bottom gates, is bad and should be seen to when occasion occurs of emptying this pound.

The balance poles of the middle gate need retarring.

The balance pole of top gate on Towing path side needs watching and a new foot board is required.

Cottage at Double Lock

Fence in front needs painting.

Cement verge of back slope of roof needs repair.

Guttering on lean-to also defective and wet getting into brick work.

Oil Mills Bridge

Pier of south west wing wall needs repair, brick out.

A small ash tree in the grounds of Ebley Orphanage is hanging over the Canal and this should be cut down.

Ebley Swing Bridge

This Bridge is not the property of the Navigation but boatmen complain that it is difficult to open. It certainly sticks to some extent, but not very seriously.

Ebley Weir

The piling should be pulled back to prevent possible damage to the wings.

Hilly Orchard Footbridge

Condition satisfactory.

Dudbridge Bridge

Water is leaking through the arch of this bridge, but it is impossible to tell whether this is due to the fact that the road is in course of reconstruction and rain water therefore gets in instead of running off, or to a leak in the Water Company's pipe which goes across under the roadway. This should be watched.

2 Cottages above the Bridge at Dudbridge

New guttering is wanted for one cottage (possibly mean below the Bridge)

Dudbridge Lower Lock

Nothing needed at present.

Dudbridge Upper Lock

Nothing needed at present.

Wallbridge Pound

Very shallow – needs dredging.

Wallbridge Wharf

Hopson is again encroaching beyond his boundary.

Double gates

To the wharf are very dilapidated.

Canal House

Mr. Snape reports ceiling of attic is falling. Not inspected yet.

1932 Inspection

Inspection from the Ocean, Stonehouse to Wallbridge, Stroud.
September 28th. 1932

Present:- G A Evans and R J C Little.

Ocean Swing Bridge

Several roughing boards require replacing. Rails require painting shortly (last done 4 years ago) Gate on to towing path – post requires attention.

Nutshell Bridge

Pointing required particularly near coping on west side. Ivy should be cut on east side. Gate on tow path on east side requires pale (sic)

Pound between Nutshell Bridge and Stonehouse Brick Bridge

Still the worst part of the canal. Requires dredging badly. Last done in 1879.

Stable (formerly Penn)

Still a hole in the roof, and tiles along the verge in a bad way. This was put right only recently but is as bad as ever again.

Cottage (let to Ward) and Weighbridge and Stable

Tenant complained of the wet getting in a bit, but the roof appeared to be in good order – probably the lay of the tiles.

Rent of cottage and yard seems rather low.

Porch and windows require painting.

Stonehouse Cross Bridge

Some pointing required. Surface of crown of bridge requires attention.

Wall between Bridge and L M S Gate

Several toppers missing (but this has been so for years).

Bank opposite Wycliffe Bathing Pool

Requires building up.

Willows adjoining Wycliffe Garden

Require cutting back.

Bank near Ryeford Cottages

Requires building up.

Brunsdons Yard

Has he built up this bank to include more than he is entitled to? This being a turning spot.

Brunsdon's yard is worth £5 rent.

Ryeford Bridge

Towpath under bridge requires attention. Large stone to be replaced.

Ryeford Saw Mills

Weeds very bad. (This is having attention).

Ryeford Footbridge

Painting badly needed.

Double Lock

Still leaks rather badly at heel.

New balance pole to bottom gate completed and apparently satisfactory.

Upper gate balance pole in a bad state.

Witheys nearby require cutting.

Hooper's Saw Mills

Dredging badly needed

Oil Mills Bridge

Gate on towpath needs repairs.

Hilly Orchard

Gate – top rail requires repair at once. Bridge requires painting.

Dudbridge Wharf

Warehouse – slates on floor require attention. New rafters required and new door.

Could not this wharf be advertised? Should be invaluable for Shell Transport or some such Company.

Cottage (J Perks)

Ceiling of W C requires plastering.

Dudbridge Lock

Upper gate – southern balance pole in poor condition

Gas House Bridge

One beam gone on Stroud side.

Strachan's Bridge (Lodgemore)

Coat of paint required

Wallbridge Wharf

House – bridge requires painting.

Could not the western end of this wharf, beyond the wharf house bridge be made use of for parking?

1932 Inspection 29 September

Inspection 29th. September 1932.

Framilode Lock to the Ocean

Chairman and H R Hooper.

Framilode Lock

The crack in pierhead should be watched.

Lower gate balance pole renewed 1929. Upper gate balance pole renewed 1930.

Gates in fair state.

Stop gate was pulled up for inspection and appeared to be in order.

The swing bridge repaired in 1931.

Warehouse cracks are getting worse.

Two cottages let to Byard and Wathen appear in good condition.

Mr. Sims the owner of cottages in Canal Road, Framilode wants permission to fix pipes to take surface water from roof.

The dipping hole above Sims cottages and below Ship Inn wants filling up with big stones.

Framilode Pound

Mr. Cook met the Committee and explained the state of the Canal and how it interfered with his boats and it seems essential that the weeding from the Junction to Saul Bridge should be taken in hand at the earliest possible moment.

The bank by the Junction Inn on the off side has been damaged by water rats, etc. and there are leaks in the garden. The Bank needs stiffening.

Saul Bridge

Nose plank recently repaired.

Walk Bridge

Iron work needs one coat of paint.

Shallow Lock Bridge

Woodwork wants painting.

Shallow Lock

Bottom gate balance pole at the head end is practically rotten.

Slam gate on the towing path at Aqueduct needs seeing to.

The falling post appears to have gone entirely.

Backwater is damaging the Bank behind piles and needs filling up. A little further up there is a hole in the towing path which needs filling up.

Stonepits Bridge

Some bricks have been pulled out in the coping stone of one of the walls. Wants some new bricks and cement pointing in several places and there is a bad crack on the north wing wall of the off side.

Windmill working. Mr. Grey Robinson's pump was apparently working. Has the pipe been stopped.

Bristol Road Lock

No comments.

Spiers complains that the County Council's surface drain had been so arranged that in heavy rain it flooded his wharf completely and he was recommended to communicate with the County Council's Surveyor.

Bengough Accomodation Bridge (Hyde Bridge)

Bad crack in south wing wall at near side.

Coffin Weir

Complaints having been recived that the carrier where it crosses the rean was leaking badly. This was inspected and as there was very little water in the rean it was obvious that the leak was bad and required immediate attention.

Westfield Slam Gate

Requires two bottom spars.

Westfield Bridge

No comments

Westfield Lock

No comments.

Dock Lock

No comments.

Dock House

No comments.

Pike Lock

Condition good.

Blunder Lock

No complaints

Newtown Lock

No complaints

Roving Bridge

No complaints

Towing path close to Bond's Mill is sinking and should be watched.

Generally

The Canal is in need of weeding and no traffic was observed.

Survey by Tubby Alderton 1953

STROUDWATER NAVIGATION

Typescript from notes made by WFA. (Tubby) Alderton ex. Glos. C.C. Surveyor and Hon. Surveyor to the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation after a walking survey in May 1953.

Wallbridge Basin.

Filling being tipped. Gate shut on towpath at Lodgemore Mills.

Painswick Stream comes in and is controlled by Lodgemore Mills. Goes under Canal in, at present a leaky culvert, but can be taken into Canal. There is also an old way of putting water from stream into old mill pond on North of Canal with another sluice at west end of pond which goes under canal into river.

(This all seems out of action & pond empty)

Swing Bridge at Lodgemore Mill is a steel one & is in good order.

Bridge at Gas Works is a fixed steel one in good order (Now rebuilt with RSS. & concreted deck) and. There is a gas main across Canal just west of Gas Works bridge. From Gas Works bridge to Victoria Inn the tow-path is vehicular & the only vehicular access to Inn.

Foundry Lock Top gate is shut & holding a little water, but is in a very bad way. Just west of lock the stream from Paganhill Lane goes under Canal & across allotments into river.

Dudbridge Lock

Top gate shut & holding a little water, but is in very bad condition.

Stroud Metal Plating Co. have an intake for drawing water just west of lock & almost under road bridge.

A46 (spur) Road Bridge crosses Canal with a brick arch which is in good order

The towpath is shut from just west side of Bridge for about 50 yards to another gate by (big)? building.

(Hilly Orchard Bridge). A high level iron footbridge crosses Canal on footpath from Cainscross Church to Dudbridge

East of Ebley Mills the River Frome is alongside the Canal & at the same level, with only the towpath between them. On this length there is a level sluice with paddles on top which can be raised or lowered. Water can go either way here & is the main source of water for the Canal.

At Ebley Mills there is a water main across the Canal, just above water level. The swing bridge to Mill is timber & not too good. (Note..Mr. Snape informs me this is a private bridge owned by Marling & Evans 3/6/53.) (Note against Timber' ... steel girders under. 1955.) West of Mills & south of Vale House a stream comes in on the north side of canal.

50 yards east of Oilmills Bridge on north side the laundry has an intake for drawing water from the Canal. Almost opposite this on south side there is a circular overflow weir which takes water from Canal to river, in corner of house garden.

Oilmills Bridge is a brick arch in good order

About 100 yards west of Bridge on south side in private property there is another circular overflow weir which takes water from Canal to River. Almost opposite the overflow weir on the north side to the east of the Saw Mills a stream enters Canal. Where Parish Boundary crosses canal, there is a stile on the towpath. From stile to the Double lock the level of the Canal is very much above the adjoining land & river on the south. The land to the north is all above Canal level.

Double Lock

This is two locks adjoining & the middle gate was common to both. The top gate (1912) is shut & holding water, but is in a very poor condition. The middle gate is shut but rotten, & not holding. On the south of this lock is the lock keeper's cottage. Gate & stile across towpath on west end of cottage garden. There is a long triangular strip of allotment gardens here between Canal & River. (Mr. Snape says not Canal property.. belongs to Workmans) The River & Canal are at same level as far as Saw Mills with the land to the north very much higher. About 150 yards east of Saw Mills the sewer in a C.I. pipe crosses over the Canal & River on a high level steel bridge.

Ryeford Footbridge

Between Saw Mills on south & cottages on north there is a timber (1910) footbridge across Canal. It is in fair order.

Ryeford Bridge is a stone & brick arch in good order. It has been widened on the west side at some time. There may be an old wharf here belonging to the Canal. The towpath as far as Canal Cottages is vehicular, as cottages have no other way in. The adjoining land is now high to the north & low to the south.

Railway Bridge.

The railway (Midland from Stonehouse to Nailsworth) crosses Canal on steel bridge.

On the north side opposite Upper Mills there is a boat house belonging to Wycliffe College

Upper Mills (or Brush works) Bridge

Messrs. WH Vowles of Upper Mills have an intake on the south side, where they take water from the canal

Messrs. W.H.Yowles, Brush Works at Upper Mills have an
a

The swing bridge to Upper Mills is steel & in good order.

Stonehouse Bridge (Downton) is brick arch in fairly good order. (Now replaced by concrete tubes nd.) There is a wharf & possibly other property belonging to Canal here.

Nutshell Bridge is brick arch in good order. Land to south is very much lower than Canal.

Ocean Swing Bridge is of timber in fair order, but has a concrete wall under at mid-span, on edge of Canal wall.(since rebuilt with R.S.S. & concrete by Workmans.)

The Ocean. Between Ocean Bridge & Railway Bridge there is a large area of water, all part of Canal.

Railway Bridge

The Railway crosses Canal on steel bridge.

Hoffman's Dam. About 50 yards west of Railway Bridge, Messrs. Hoffman have an intake (& possibly outlet) where they draw water from the Canal. The water is well up in this length of Canal, & to the north there is Plough Land well above Canal.
To the south the river is only 30-40 yards away & very much below Canal level. This bank may give trouble.

Bond's Mill. At Bond's Mill (Sperrys) just east of swing bridge there is a paddle (almost in bridge abutment) that can be opened? to draw this pound & discharges into river. They have had trouble with this at some time, & it does not look in very good working order now, but it is the only means of drawing the pound except by removing Clay Dam at Roving bridge near East Lodge, Newtown and passing water on down Canal.
The Swing Bridge to Bond's Mill is steel & in good order.
From Bond's Mill to Roving Bridge the Canal is below adjoining land.

Just east of Roving Bridge south of Newtown a clay dam has been put across the Canal up to just below water level with some concrete channels across top to prevent scour if gates lower down fail. This is to ensure that water in this pound is kept up for Hoffmans should the lock gates fail at any time.

Roving Bridge (Newtown).

To Eastington Park (GCC. old people's home) is a brick arch in good order. The towpath changes over from the south to the north side of Canal at this point. There is a cottage somewhere near New Inn that belongs to Canal. (This is between the Canal & Road.. A 4096. at Pike Bridge). Just east of Top Lock of Five there is a Weir that discharges into next pound.

Top Lock of Five (Newtown)

The top gate is shut & the water is up, but gate is in a very poor way. This & the Dam at Roving Bridge keeps water up for Hoffmans & if this is to continue some more permanent structure will be required.

The Canal runs immediately alongside A4096 as far as Pike Bridge, & the water is well above road level. The land on the north of the road falls away northward towards the Oldbury Brook. Just east of Blunder Lock there is a weir that discharges into the next pound.

Blunder Lock. The top gate is shut & water is up, but it is an 1896 gate & is not too good. The towpath is shut at end of Pike Cottage garden east of Pike Lock. This pound is now empty.

Pike Lock

Top gate is shut, but completely rotten & no water in pound. This has happened recently, & (had?) not hardened off on inspection

Pike Bridge is concrete & think built by Highways & is in good order.

The towpath changes over from north to south of the canal.

This pound is dry

There is an old dry dock here & cottages, wharf might possibly belong to Canal.

Dock Lock

Gates all rotten & no water in pound.

Between Dock Lock & Westfield Lock is what is known as the Forked Pound.

The Oldbury Brook runs into this pound, having crossed under Grove Lane at Chippenham Platt.

If & when the pound was full, there are Sluices on the south side of Canal that would pass surplus water from Canal on down to Meadow Mill.

Westfield Lock.

Gates are all rotten & no water in pound.

Westfield Bridge is a brick arch in fair condition.

This pound has a little water in, but not up to full height.

About 300 yards east of Hydes Bridge a stream enters Canal from the north and immediately opposite on the south there is an open weir (known as Coffin's Weir) which discharges into the River.

The water, on inspection, in the Canal was not up high enough to go over weir.

Hydes Bridge (? Bengoughs) is a brick arch in fair condition.

Bristol Road Lock

Top gate is shut, but not holding very well, & water in pound low.

A large gas or water pipe crosses Canal just east of bridge.

Bristol Road Bridge is a stone arch & has been widened in concrete on west side.

This crosses T.R. A38 & is in good order. (Note added ... Removed by GCC. and tubed and solid embanked)

There are wharves and cottages that may belong to Canal.

All natural drainage from land on north of Canal is in to the canal for some distance.

There is one place at hedge between O.S. parcel Nos.188 & 198 where any surplus water in Canal could possibly run down ditch into small stream to the south of Canal.

Occupation Bridge (?Robinsons) is a brick arch in fair order. This is said to be privately owned & maintained. (Information:- Hopson & Pocketts) (This is confirmed by Mr. Snape)

Stonepitts Bridge is a brick arch in bad order with parapet all down on one side. Looked at this bridge again on 29/5/53 with Hopson -Builder of Wallbridge & Pocketts to see how best to make parapet safe. (Note added ... Since been removed & replaced by concrete tubes 1955.)

The River Frome crosses under the Canal in an inverted syphon. The small stream that has run alongside the Canal on the south side for some distance crosses under the River Frome just south of the syphon. The land to the south of the Canal is very much lower than the Canal & water level of the River Frome. The water level of Canal & River Frome are level & the sluice on the south side of Canal just east of the syphon was leaking water from river to Canal at 12.30pm. on 4/5/53. (Note added There is also a sluice on the north side of Canal just east of the syphon *Note:-* This is worth another inspection as I may have marked map wrong on original walk, and there is only one.) The River crosses Canal in the syphon from south to north & then turns west & runs parallel with Canal on north side. About 100 yards north-east of the Shallow Lock there is a level weir between Canal & river, which can act either way. The Canal pound is full of water on this length & is above land to the south with the small stream that has crossed under River Frome about 100 yards away.

Shallow Lock (Whitminster Lock) Both gates are open & the water is level in both pounds. Gates are in poor way, & top

gate has balance pole lying over.

Whitminster Bridge is of timber & in a very bad way with bearers broken, and in my opinion unsafe to take any load. (Visit on 29/5/53 with Hopson & Pockett was informed that two new bearers had been put through centre, & was now reasonably safe) The towpath crosses over here from south to north.

Whitminster Just north of Whitminster Bridge there is a good brick wall, & under this wall are (sic) a series of culverts that pass water from the River Frome (high level) into the Canal west of Whitminster Bridge. This is the way the Sharpness Canal keep their level up, & they use the length of Stroudwater, from here to the junction as a feeder.

Further notes added 29/5/53 I saw Mr. Snape for a short while & got the following information:-

About 40 years ago the Engineer on Sharpness Canal was having trouble, due to silt in his canal. At that time they were not too well off financially & to save the expense of dredging he raised the level of the water in his canal, by raising certain weir levels (Mr. Snape does not remember the details of this). This was not done with slip boards but as a solid construction, and is still in existence. Mr.

Snape thinks the rise in level was 6 inches. The Shallow Lock on Stroudwater only had a lift of 5 inches as shown on the longitudinal section (in long envelope in my steel cabinet). The Sharpness Canal & the Stroudwater are at same level from the Junction to the Shallow Lock. This was also the same level as the River Frome above the Whitminster Weir. By raising the water level of the Sharpness Canal, the Stroudwater was raised to the same level as far as the Shallow Lock. As the Shallow Lock only had a lift of 5 inches there was now a fall of 1 inch. In other words the Gates were just floating & served no useful purpose for navigation & the next pound up, which extends to Bristol Road Lock, was now all level with the Sharpness Canal. At the same time the water level in the River Frome was raised by 6 inches, & water began to seep through the River Banks between the Syphon under Canal, & the small culvert under the River to the south of the Syphon. These banks had to be raised by the Sharpness Canal authority, & they are their liability to this day. The syphon under the Stroudwater canal was built when the Stroudwater Canal was constructed, & is wholly maintained by them.

The pound is now full & up to navigation level, & is very much above the level of the adjoining land on both sides. The small stream that has been following the Canal on the south side is now within 10 yards of the Canal & sufficiently low to cross under the Canal in a culvert about 100 yards west of Whitminster Bridge. It is now north & east of the canal & proceeds northwards & crosses under Whitminster Lane about 40 yards east of Walk Bridge & enters the River Frome west of Whitminster House. About 150 yards west of Whitminster Bridge the Canal turns through nearly 90% & runs in a northerly direction.

At this point another small stream coming in from the south runs about 20 yards away parallel with the Canal & on the west side. This stream is sufficiently low to be able to cross under the Canal from west to east in an open culvert about 15 yards south of Walk Bridge. About 40 yards to the east of the Canal it joins the first small stream just south of Whitminster Lane.

Immediately south of Walk Bridge there are three houseboats moored. So long as these are in this position, Walk Bridge must be able to swing, otherwise they could never get through to the Sharpness Canal.

Walk Bridge

This is an iron swing bridge, & now has a 5 ton restriction on it against Highway Traffic.
Note: Now replaced by concrete slab. 1953.

River Frome is now to the east of the Canal & is at a very much lower level than the Canal. It has dropped in level due to the weirs at Whitminster.

From Walk Bridge to the Sharpness Canal there are a lot of boats of all classes moored on both sides of the Canal. Just south of the actual junction with the Sharpness canal & on the west side there are Boat Houses, Dry Docks & Boat Repair Yard. Some entrances appear to be into the Stroudwater Canal, but the actual property boundary of each Canal I know nothing about.

There is a pedestrian Swing Bridge across the Stroudwater just south of the actual junction but think this is the property of the Sharpness Canal.

The Junction

The water in Stroudwater & Sharpness Canals are level, & join one another.

The Stroudwater Towpath crosses the Sharpness Canal on a long iron swing bridge, what I think must be the property of the Sharpness Canal.

About 60 yards north-east of the Junction the River Frome crosses under the Sharpness Canal, I should say in an inverted Syphon. There is also a weir on the north side of Sharpness Canal, over which, I assume surplus water pass(es) back into the River from the Canal.

Junction Lock

Immediately north of the junction of the two canals there is a lock on the Stroudwater Canal. Both sets of gates are shut & holding well. These gates are in very good order, & of a different type to the rest on the Stroudwater & I assume are kept in order by Sharpness, otherwise they would lose water down Stroudwater.

The towpath is not much used here, & very overgrown. There is water in the Canal, but not up to navigation level.

The River Frome is now immediately alongside to the east of the Canal towpath, & is in a very narrow & deep ravine. All lateral streams entering the River from here onwards have tide flaps, as the River is tidal.

All land to the west of the Canal is lower than Canal.

About 160 yards south of Saul Bridge the river goes off in a north-easterly direction & has a flood bank on the west side which joins up with the Canal towpath at the change of direction.

Saul Bridge is a timber bridge in poor order. There is a 5 ton restriction on it against Highway traffic. There is a brick wall at mid-span on the edge of Canal wall. It is therefore impossible to swing it.

Note : Saul Ditch under Canal here details to find.

Saul Bridge is a timber bridge in poor order. There is a 5 ton restriction on it against Highway traffic.

There is a brick wall at mid-span, on the edge of Canal wall. It is therefore impossible to swing it.

From Saul Bridge northwards the Towpath seems vehicular as there are numerous houses etc. all fronting on to it.

There is a little water in Canal on this length, but not up to navigation level.

Immediately south of Framilode Bridge a concrete dam was constructed in 1941 across the Canal. This has an aperture about 36''x12'' with a wooden tide flap on the downstream face.

Framilode Bridge is a timber bridge in fair order. A concrete wall has been placed under it at mid-span on the edge of Canal wall. It is therefore impossible to swing it.

From here to the River Severn the Basin & Lock are all deserted & useless.

Water Control to and from Canal

Lodgemore - Painswick Stream

Ebley River Frome

Wheatenhurst - River Frome.

Industrial Users

Stroud Metal Plating - Dudbridge

WH Vowles & Son (Brushworks)

Ebley Laundry

Hoffman

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Abandonment Act passed and all bridges carrying county roads became the property of the County Council on July 31st 1954.

Wednesday August 4th 1954

Chairman of GCC (Col. Godman) and County Surveyor & WFA visited Stroudwater & looked at Bridges, Junction with Sharpness Canal & Col. Godman & WFA spent afternoon on our own walking several lengths especially from Double Lock to Hoffmans & finished at Wallbridge.

Tuesday October 5th 1954

At the board meeting gave my report on work to be done on Canal.

Wednesday October 6th 1954. Spent afternoon on canal. Oilmills to Double Lock. Found where eastern overflow weir of Oilmills went into River. It is a very deep culvert, covered all the way, & is in the form of a deep well under Smith's Cornmill & rises up under W.C. & flows over spill & in to river. The western overflow weir is an open stream except for the weir (weil)? & portion under building & part of garden. Date on Oilmills Bridge 1808.

Friday October 8th 1954

Met Mr. Workman & both went to Hoffmans & discussed them installing pumping plant to take water from River.

With Mr. W. all rest of morning on Canal as far as Oilmills Bridge.

Stroudwater canal = 5'6" water. Sharpness originally 17'6" wide. Act of 1875 specified 18'0" wide.

1978 Inspection

A Visual Inspection of the Stroudwater Canal, Between the Main Line Railway Crossing, Stonehouse and Pike Bridge, Eastington.

A Report by R H Veevers, C.Eng., MICE, MIHE., MIPHE.

And

C M Povey, B Sc., C.Eng., MICE., MIWES.

For:- Stroudwater, Thames & Severn Canal Trust Ltd.
Registered Office.

Riverside,
Pridings,
Saul,
Glos.

April 1978.

A visual inspection was carried out on part of the Stroudwater Canal during the morning of Sunday 9th. April 1978. This inspection extended from the main line railway crossing at Stonehouse (map ref. SO 797051) to Pike bridge (map ref. SO 783061), a distance of approx. 1.7 Km.

A report of the inspection follows, and suggests certain maintenance should be carried out to bring the section of canal up to a safer and more visually presentable level. The work outlined has been devised on the basis of being undertaken as a labour-intensive project. It is estimated that the cost of materials for the work is approximately £4,800.

Report of Inspection of Part of the Stroudwater Canal, as described below.

The inspection proceeded westwards from the main line railway crossing towards Pike bridge, and the report follows this procedure. Lengths of channel are denoted by the main structures at the extremities.

An estimate of the materials necessary can be found in the Appendix following the Report.

A. Railway Crossing to Hoffman's Water Intake

Debris and reed clearance is required for this stretch, mainly to the towpath (southern) side. The existing towpath gate is decrepit and replacement is necessary. It is recommended that grills be placed over the entrance and end of the by-pass pipe, for safety purposes.

B. Water Intake to Hoffman's Bridge (Bond's Mill)

Clearance of deadwood from the trees on the north side of the canal is required. Some trimming of the overhanging branches may be desirable. The almost-dead willow tree arching over the towpath should be removed, as should the remains of a boat on the bank nearby. Mild debris and reed clearance is necessary.

The southern embankment, which contains the towpath, visibly drops down to, and possibly below, the maximum water level of the canal at the bridge end of this stretch.

This depressed part of the embankment, about 100m. in length, will require raising by an average of approximately 0.5m. to the proper level. It is recommended that this is effected by the insertion of suitable timber piling on the water side of the embankment, and the subsequent building- up with imported clay behind the piling to the required embankment level. Existing topsoil to be removed over the affected area, to the clay layer inside the embankment before new clay is inserted. Only good quality clay should be used for building up the embankment, and it should be suitably 'puddled' in layers to achieve water-tightness. Topsoil can then be replaced over the new clay, and the towpath re-instated.

C. Bond's Mill Bridge to Brick Roving Bridge

A small amount of tree and bramble clearance is necessary on the towpath side. The trees are mainly saplings, although a small number of semi-mature trees (approx. 6) exist. Trimming the overhanging branches of the trees on the north side is desirable. At the time of the inspection, the Milk Marketing Board (Tilburys or Laings) were laying a pipe across, and presumably under, this stretch of canal, to the new Milk Marketing Board Works. It is assumed that re-instatement of the canal will be to its original state. (No, it was not, and caused great difficulties, compensation claimed, and subsequently was paid JT).

D. Roving Bridge (Newtown Bridge) to East Lodge of Eastington Park

This bridge transfers the towpath from the south to the north side of the canal, in addition to giving agricultural access. The structure is covered with ivy, but parts which are visible encourage the belief that the structure is sound and in fairly good condition. Recent repairs to the north-west road wing wall are evident.

Although not widespread at present, trees are beginning to infiltrate the lower part of the bridge, especially the abutments and entry wing walls. If left, these will cause serious damage to the brickwork, and one particularly bad example of this exists on the north-east entry wing wall where a tree has dislodged the brickwork and raised the copings by a substantial amount. This sort of damage requires removal of the tree and the roots, and removal of all dislodged building materials prior to relaying or rebedding them.

It is recommended that all greenery, trees, and tree roots are removed from this bridge, and damage so caused repaired as described above. Any other repairs required, such as to loose or missing brickwork, should be similarly dealt with. An example of loose and missing brickwork exists on the wall supporting the western towpath. The removal of the overgrowth will allow repointing of the structure, after any loose mortar has been raked from the joints.

The concrete coping over the new brickwork on the north-west road wing wall is breaking up. The original coping is semi-circular brickwork. It is likely that the original bricks for the stretch of coping now formed in concrete lie in the canal, and it is suggested that these bricks are retrieved and reinstated, after removal of the concrete coping.

Lastly, large hollows exist in the road surface over the bridge, and it is likely that the surface is approaching the arching of the bridge. It is recommended that any loose earth is removed from these hollows and concrete used to fill the depressions to the proper road level.

E Roving Bridge to Newtown Lock

The towpath continues on the north side of the canal.

There is evidence of an old timber revetment at water level along the entire length of the north side. There is also evidence to suppose that the north bank is not entirely stable, as some looseness of the bank occurs near the house with the dovecote. Near Blunder Lock the A419 main road converges on and lies adjacent to the canal. It is recommended that a new timber revetment approximately 0.5m. high is introduced along the full length of the north bank of this stretch, a length of approximately 280m. Any filling or stabilisation of the bank can then take place behind a stable structure. There are no depressions in the level of the north bank of any consequence, and any filling or stabilisation can be effected with good quality earth.

Overhanging branches from the trees on the south side require trimming. A significant number of semi-mature trees exist on the north side, mainly at the bridge end. The felling of these trees is the optimum solution, thereby leaving the towpath bank clear. If, however, tree-felling is undesirable, all low-level overhanging branches should be trimmed to present a tidy appearance. All saplings should be lopped off, regardless. When trees are felled, roots should be left in the bank, and the trunks trimmed tidily. The hedge between the towpath and the main road needs trimming, and gaps in it should be reinforced by the planting of new quickthorns.

F. Newtown Lock and Associated Structures

The structure associated with this lock is the overflow weir on the northern bank, just upstream of the lock. The weir directs surplus water away from the canal, but as the structure is overgrown it can only be assumed that the passage of water is under the main road to a ditch on the other side. The weir basin extends through the road verge. Handrailing exists around the structure on the towpath side, but no such protection exists from the road. It is recommended that the weir and basin is cleared of undergrowth, stone or brickwork repaired as necessary, and suitable protection for road-users erected around the structure.

The lock itself is constructed from brick with stone copings. Vegetation covers parts of the walls, and small trees are beginning to take root in the brickwork. At present the structure looks generally sound, but it will only be a short time before substantial damage occurs from these growths. The overgrowth requires removal, and the trees and roots should be grubbed out to ensure decent repairs to dislodged or loose brickwork. Pointing of the structure should follow, after all loose material has been raked from the joints.

The upper gates of the lock were removed to enable a concrete weir to be placed across the upstream entrance. However, the lower gates exist, albeit in a decrepit state. These should be removed, and all fittings and iron work taken from them.

The area around the lock is very overgrown, and as such is dangerous to walkers. The area should be cleared of growth, thereby revealing hidden edges of the lock, and made into a tidy lock surround. It is not clear where the southern lock boundary is, as no fence seems to exist. A new fence is desirable to denote this boundary.

The present hedge between the lock and the road requires trimming, and reinforcement with new quickthorns where gaps exist.

G. Newtown Lock to Blunder Lock

Very little work is required to this stretch. Overhanging branches on the south side require lopping, and undergrowth between the towpath and the canal ought to be trimmed. The towpath hedge should be tidied and reinforced as mentioned previously.

H Blunder Lock and Associated Structures

A similar overflow weir to that at Newtown Lock exists here, in a similar position. The work required to this weir is the same as that outlined for Newtown Lock weir, in section (F). Some straightening of the towpath handrail is necessary.

Blunder Lock itself is constructed of stone. A concrete weir exists across its upstream entrance and the bottom gates, with balance beams, are extant. The lock looks sound and in good condition.

Similar work to that described for Newtown Lock in section (F) is necessary here. One of the bottom gates looks in fairly good condition, and it may be thought desirable to preserve it intact after removal.

I Blunder Lock to Pike Lock

Again, almost no work required on this section, except general bank clearance and hedge tidying.

J. Pike Lock and Associated Structures

An overflow weir exists here, but the weir itself appears to be in somebody's private garden. The handrailing to this weir is visible in the towpath boundary fence, but the weir itself seems to be filled in. It may be thought desirable to investigate the ownership aspect.

The lock is brick-built, but has been filled with earth at the upper gates' cill to form a sloping ramp down to the downstream end. A concrete weir exists, but its downstream side has been filled with concrete, and forms a funnel at its lower end to channel water down the open concrete channel which exists in the middle of the earth ramp. The water eventually enters an 'Armco' duct underneath the now filled-in Pike Road Bridge.

The partial filling-in of this lock leaves only a small wall area visible. However, these walls should be cleared of vegetation, and repairs and pointing carried out as necessary. This will be mainly to the coping stones, which are misaligned.

The area around the lock would benefit from a tidy-up, similar to that previously described.

Two pages of estimates for materials and plant follow, amounting to £4,800.

[NB not in fact present]