

The Dudbridge Redevelopment

Stephen Mills May 2021

The Dudbridge area just outside Stroud will be familiar to many members. Over the years, Ray Wilson has led a number of walks around Dudbridge, an area once rich in industrial history. This relatively small footprint still retains much of interest such as Kimmins corn mill (now in the Sainsbury's car park), a Stroudwater Canal crane, and the two Dudbridge locks of the Stroudwater Canal (both recommissioned in 2013). Other activities of note once included the Lewis & Hole foundry, the Dudbridge Iron Works, and the Hampton Car Company. There were also numerous smaller engineering companies who also called Dudbridge their home - the history of many of these has been explored previously in various GSIA journals.

Until recently, there was more to see, although much of this is being swept away as part of an ongoing major redevelopment project. At its heart is the site of the former Dudbridge Mills, once home to the woollen cloth making firm of Apperly, Curtis & Co, originally founded in 1794 by John Apperly. Family descendants continued to make cloth here for a further 140 years, with Sir Alfred Apperly taking control in 1872.



The extensive Dudbridge Mills site in 1910

However, in 1933, cloth manufacture finally ended with the company's failure, with much of the site being taken over by the engineering Redler company, the site becoming known initially as 'Conveyors (Ready Built) Ltd. They manufactured conveyors, elevators and other equipment destined mainly for the bulk handling of grain, coal and other products. A modular approach was adopted, allowing conveyors etc. to be tailored to a customer's individual needs.

Changes have continued and part of the site was turned into a trading estate in the 1990s, and in 2007, several former mill buildings were converted into apartments. This pattern of change is continuing and another major project is currently underway. As part of this, an assortment of former industrial buildings has been demolished, and another is slated for conversion to flats. Much of the site will eventually be the location of an Aldi supermarket and new housing. The accompanying photos show the state of play at the end of April.



REDLER

This Extension
Was Opened Nov 1910
by The Countess Bathurst.

NO. 1. 1910
1910





