



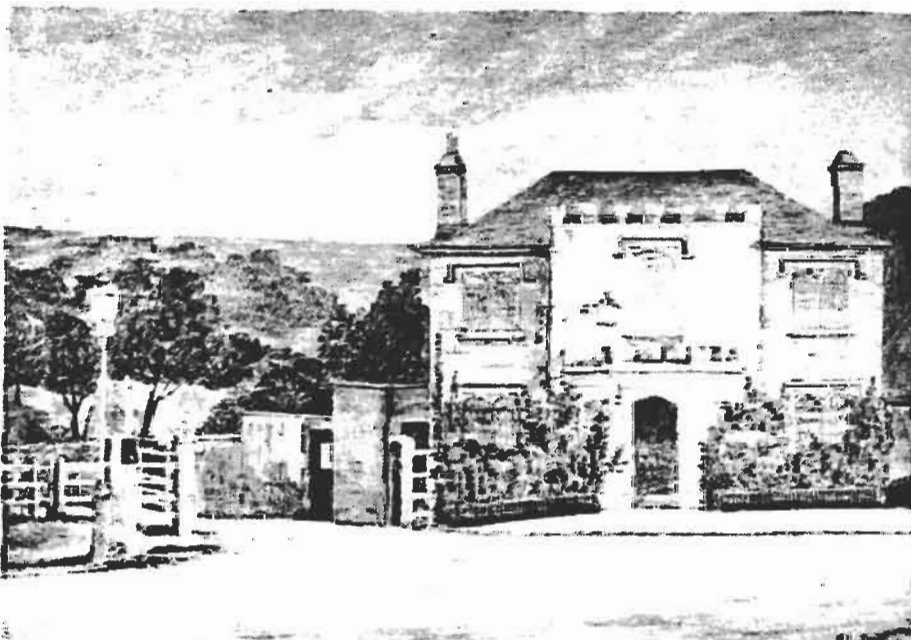
Front view from Westward Road

CAINSCROSS PRESERVED

On the corner of Bridge Street and Westward Road in Cainscross near Stroud is an attractive, but sadly dilapidated, toll-house dating from the mid-1820s. It stands at what had been an important, and ancient, road junction, where the route from the eastern parts of the county to the passage over the Severn at Newnham crossed the track from south to north along the edge of the Cotswold scarp.

In a neo-Gothic style, the building is one of two toll houses on the Stroud, Cainscross & Minchinhampton Turnpike Trust, the Lower Division of which made a direct link from Cainscross to Stroud where previously traffic had to go by way of Paganhill and Stratford Road. The Upper Division was another newly-built road up the steep side of Rodborough Common, from Bowbridge to the Bear Inn. The toll-house of this latter Division is the Butterow Pike, in a simpler but similar architecture style, and which still retains its (restored) charges-board.

The Cainscross site was one of the original three toll-sites of the Stroud Turnpike of 1726. The first site was at Whitminster cross-roads on the A38, and the third was where Wick Street met Stratford Road by Beeches Green. The early elevation of the toll-house is given below, from a water colour in the Stroud District Museum by Paul Smith, dated 1903 - but therein lies a puzzle referred to below.



Paul Smith, 1903,
courtesy of Stroud
District Museum.

Note the milestone
to the left, happily
preserved following
extensive road al-
terations.

The present house is on the site of a scene of riotous assembly in 1734 when, copying the example set by the mob in Gloucester, "a tumultuous company of disguised people ... came up to the turnpikes and commenced hewing with axes ... the turnpikes were utterly demolished." The present building however was not built for another ninety years.

The Cainscross-Stroud turnpike road was dispiiked in 1877, and the trustees sold the house to John Uriah Davies, innkeeper of Cainscross, for £130. The frontage of the building as may be seen from the two previous illustrations, has been much altered but - and here is the puzzle - expert opinion considers that the existing door on the right-hand side is original, but this is not shown on Paul Smith's painting.

The toll-house (and the adjoining building, No. 1 Bridge St.) has now been bought by the Stroud Preservation Trust, which intends to restore the ashlar frontage, leaving the central windows, the right-hand door as now, and restoring the crenellations. Grants and loans have been negotiated, and it is hoped that others will follow. Planning permission has been given to convert the two buildings into three small two-bedroomed dwellings, for first-time buyers. The result should offer once more a most attractive vista, and also serve a most useful purpose.

The Stroud Preservation Trust would appreciate hearing from anyone who may be able to recall the earlier appearance of the toll-house, or who might have such a photograph. One further point: note in the painting the columnar milestone on the left (happily preserved during road alterations). This is the last in a series extending from the Severn Passage between Newnham and Arlingham all the way to Cainscross, with a branch through Claypits and Alkerton to the base of Frocester Hill. Most of these milestones still stand, and several still bear direction plates (which are probably later than the erection of the actual stones). Those with information to impart, or who are otherwise interested in this happy restoration, may please contact Mrs. Anne Mackintosh of the Stroud Preservation Trust, 6 Castle Villas, Stroud, tel. Stroud 6273. These notes and the accompanying illustrations are by courtesy of the Trust.

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Front Elevation



Location Plan

