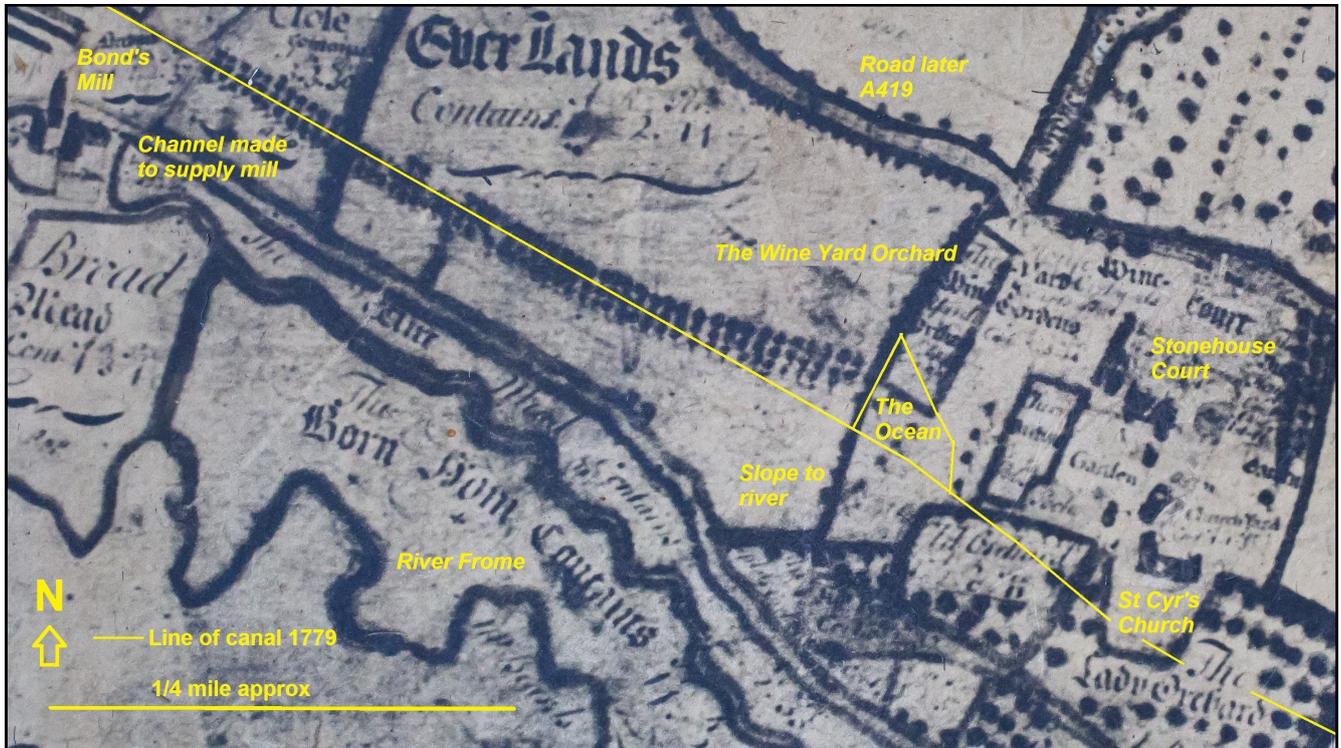


The Levi Ball Map

Levi Ball inherited Stonehouse Manor in 1729. A large map was created c.1730 to show him the extent of the property he had inherited (he lived in London and died there in 1739). Unfortunately, the original was destroyed in a serious fire in the manor house (Stonehouse Court) in 1908. However, Arthur Winterbotham, the last Lord of the Manor (died 1936), had a photograph of the map and had 3 full-sized copies made, one of which hangs in Stonehouse Court, and another is in Gloucestershire Archives.

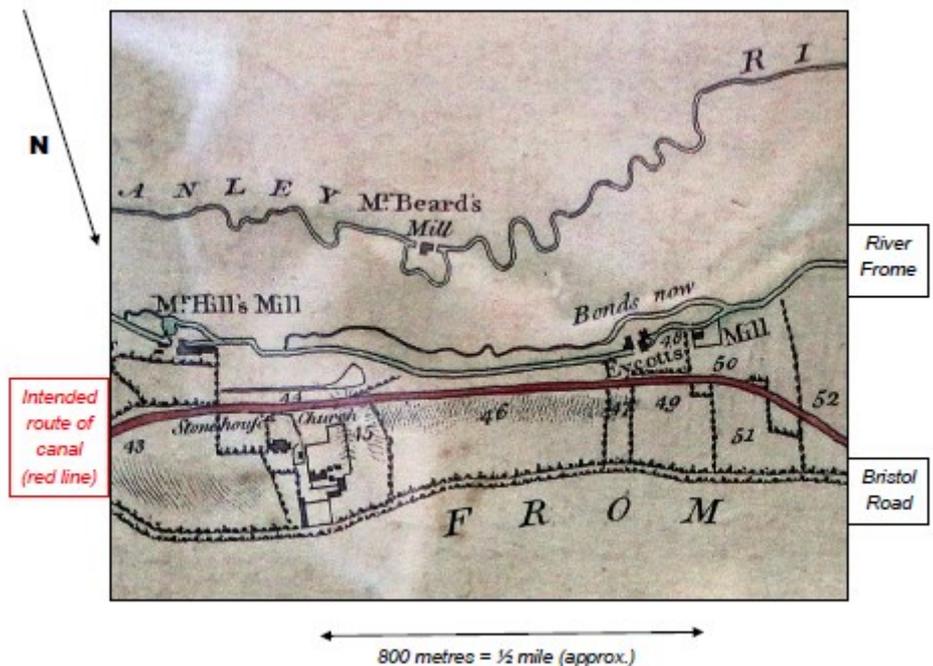


Copy of a portion of "A Map of Y. Manor of Stonehouse In the County of Gloucester Belonging to Levi Ball Esq". Surveyed by Stephen Jefferys of Minchin Hampton, c1730.

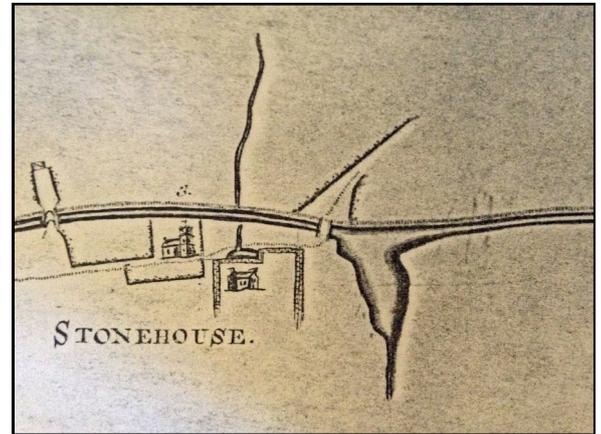
Origins of the Ocean

Until recently, it was generally believed that the Ocean in Stonehouse had been one of Stonehouse Court's medieval fishponds prior to the construction of the canal. However, the above portion of the map shows no body of water at the position of the Ocean, and neither does the portion of the plan of the proposed canal made c.1775 (see below).

This is not surprising since the Ocean and canal were created on a south-facing slope. The Levi Ball map shows an enclosure called the Wine Yard Orchard near the location of the Ocean (this may be the site of the vineyard recorded at Stonehouse in the Domesday Book, 1086). The Caudle Stream, which ran down the western side of the Wine Yard Orchard, originally joined the River Frome. When the canal was constructed, it seems likely



that the stream was connected to it since a small inflow of water would have compensated for leakage. Such a junction would also have been a useful place to create a winding hole. It is shown on a plan of the completed canal made in 1781 (See at right. *The plan is part of the Stroudwater Navigation Company committee archives*). Nowadays, the culverted Caudle Stream flows into the Ocean at its NW corner.



Originally the Ocean may have been used as no more than a winding hole. In 1843/4 the railway line from Bristol to Gloucester was built on an embankment running along the west side of the Wine Orchard, and the Ocean was probably extended considerably to act as a wharf for railway building materials. It was envisaged as an important canal and railway interchange wharf though there is little evidence that it was so used. There was a boat repair yard in the NW corner of the Ocean by the railway embankment. It included a floating platform which raised boats out of the water for repair.



'Joey' boat 'Pioneer', owned in Gloucester, on the Stroudwater canal at Stonehouse Ocean after delivering coal, c.1920, looking NW. The boat repair yard can be seen to the right of the photo and a railway workers' building to the left (on the railway embankment). There is a line of railway wagons behind the buildings.

Works on the River Frome

In the late 1750s, John Kemmett and three other Tewkesbury men devised a novel scheme to create a navigable River Frome between Framilode and Stroud. A key element involved straightening and deepening parts of the river. Work started in 1759, stopped in 1761 and the works were abandoned in 1763. It was thought that the river had been straightened by Kemmett from Framilode to just south of Stonehouse Court. However, the Levi Ball map shows that the river had been straightened from Bond's Mill to its eastern end point at least 30 years before the Kemmett project (probably to improve the flow of water to Bond's Mill while also reducing the amount of flooding of the water meadow which was gradually being converted to permanent pasture

Documents in Gloucestershire Archives: copy of Levi Ball map c.1730, ref PC/1850; plan of proposed canal c.1775, ref D1278/P/3; plan of completed canal 1781, ref D1180/10/2