

## Along the Cotswold Canal Audio Trail Script

Location:	Brimscombe Port
Music	Fade In
Introduction	Along the Cotswold Canals. Welcome to Brimscombe Port, one of the places on the Canals Trail. This is one of a series of recordings made by local people you can listen to at different places along the Cotswold Canals.
Music	Fade Out
Narrator	It's hard to imagine that Brimscombe Port, in its heyday, was full of water, busy with boats loading and unloading. Bruce Hall talks explains in this clip a bit about the history of the port and the buildings you see today.
Bruce Hall CLIP 1	When they got to Brimscombe, of course that's when the valleys started moving in, and so the valley bottom was not wide enough to sustain, err waterway wide enough for two 16 foot wide boats to pass comfortably. And so Brimscombe port was a transshipment port whereby they transhipped onward going goods to the Thames barge, which was only 12 feet wide.
Narrator	In practice, this meant that they off loaded goods from wide boats nearly 5 metres in length onto smaller wide boats measuring closer to 3 and half metres long, for their onward journey to Stroud. The cargo off loaded at Brinscombe was often coal, as Bruce Hall explains.
Bruce Hall CLIP 2	it was also a port in its own right, a big coal yard there. ...well I say a yard, it was an island where the gate was firmly locked in the evening
Narrator	When the port closed, the Canal Company headquarters building that was on the edge of the A419 road was sold. Bruce Hall remembers it becoming Brimscombe Polytechnic running day release courses and a popular night school.
Bruce Hall Clip 3	<p>that's how lots of local people bettered themselves. You know having left school and 12 or 13, whatever went to night school to get their exams and improve their lot, improve their status. So that was it, the trade school eventually moved into Stroud and it became an elementary school to start off with.</p> <p>NARRATOR: After the war, the school became a secondary modern and later moved to a new site at the top of the town (check??). It's now called Thomas Keeble. The old headquarters building in the port was now redundant, so the council put it on the market.</p> <p>who bought it?...Bensons international. The makers of lever arch files and spring back files. And indeed when I moved into the area in 69, they were coaching ?? It was 24 hour production. There were busloads of workers coming in. Well eventually the work went</p>

Bruce Hall Clip 4	overseas, but Bensons are still in business and still got offices in this country
Narrator	<p>There are now plans for the redevelopment of the port centre. One idea is to refill it with water and surround it with new houses, shops and restaurants. Of course much consultation needs to be done and local people will have a chance to say what they want the area to look like.</p> <p>The first part of this process was to find out exactly where the original port was, and as Bruce Hall explains, those involved had quite a hunt on their hands.</p>
Bruce Hall Clip 5	The engineers were doing site surveys for developing. They couldn't find the wharf edge of Brimscombe port. They couldn't find it, they hunted around and at long last they found it, and where was it?...Right in the middle of the floor of one of the big industrial buildings there. So the whole thing was moved forward to allow road widening.
Music	Fade In
Close	Thank you for listening, other recordings are available along the towpath or can be downloaded on our web site <a href="http://www.alongthecotswoldcanals.co.uk">www.alongthecotswoldcanals.co.uk</a>
Music	Fade Out