

Along the Cotswold Canal Audio Trail Script

Location:	Ryeford Swing Bridge
Music	Fade In
Introduction	Along the Cotswold Canals. Welcome to Ryeford Swing Bridge, one of the places on the Canals Trail. This is one of a series of recordings made up of local people's experience that you can listen to at different places along the Cotswolds canals.
Music	Fade Out
Narrator	The steel swing bridge in front of you was installed in the 1980's to replace a wooden bridge. The criss-cross handrails you see today were transferred from the previous bridge. Bill Evill, a long time volunteer and supporter of the restoration, describes where to find a very personal memento.
Bill Evill	If you go to, for instance, Ryeford and the little swing bridge over the canal, you'll see that there's a seat at the side of the towpath and if you look at the seat, you'll see there's a little plaque in memory of my father who actually done a lot of the welding on the main structure of the new bridge.
Narrator	In the wall opposite the bridge you will see a black door. This door was cut into the wall to allow access to the sluice gates behind it. Martin Hyde, who lived along this stretch of the canal, took responsibility for operating these sluice gates.
Martin Hyde	Yes I used to operate the sluice gates on the canal here and on the river. So when it rained you have to keep an eye on the river and when the river came up high you would have to beetle off down the path and lift the gates up but this could be in the middle of the night, you know, it usually was something like that, usually, some awkward time...when it was dark of something and you would hear the rain coming down and you would go out into the back garden and look at the river and I'd think 'oh my god its come up to the top' you know so I've got to go down and open the gates a bit quick so I'd go down and open the gates.
Narrator	Martin had a very clever way of calculating how much he needed to turn the sluice.
Martin Hyde	If the water reaches that black flood line its just going over the bank used to run it three bricks below the black line. And I worked out that the gates worked on a three notches on the gate was the equivalent of one brick so I could raise or lower water level on the river quite easily by thinking how many bricks do I want to go up or down on and then wind the gates by the equivalent amount, you know.
Music	Fade In
Close	Thank you for listening, other recordings are available along the towpath or can be downloaded on our web site www.alongthecotswoldcanal.co.uk
Music	Fade Out