

Plans of Railways, Roads & Canals (public schemes)

Background

During the late 1700s the industrial revolution caused a boom in the building of new roads and canals. To monitor these, in 1792 the Government decided that copies of the planned schemes should be deposited with the Clerk of the Peace of the appropriate counties. [By authority of standing orders of the House of Commons, 1792, confirmed by the Act of 7 William IV & 1 Victoria c. 83 (1837)].

Gloucestershire County Council took over responsibility for these plans in 1889 and the series extends into the late 1900s.

What information do they contain?

The plans relate to schemes for:

- Canals (from 1792),
- Horse or tram-railroads (from 1801)
- Docks (from 1802)
- Rivers (from 1805)
- Turnpike roads (from 1808),
- Water supply (from 1810),
- Town improvement (from 1824),
- Severn ferries and bridges (from 1825)
- Steam railways (from 1830), gas schemes (from 1863)
- Tramways (from 1871).

The great majority from 1810 to 1825 relate to turnpike roads, and from 1830 to 1875 to railways.

The style and detail vary widely, depending on the surveyor who made the plan. Often only the land and property adjoining the proposed development is shown. After the 1840s plans tended to use the new Ordnance Survey maps as their base. Nearly all the plans are accompanied by books of reference giving details of the ownership, occupation, use and area of land affected by the schemes.

Many of the railway schemes were never carried out, so the plans cover parts of Gloucestershire where no railway was subsequently built.

How to find them

These plans are held as part of the Quarter Sessions records under the reference **Q/Rum**. You can view a list of the plans by using the online catalogue on our website. Use the reference **Q/Rum** as your search term.

For more guidance on using our online catalogue please see the Help page and FAQs. Or you can watch our YouTube tutorial.