

REDSTONE FERRY AND CAVES



Redstone was one of the most famous crossings on all the Severn. It was obliterated by the building of Lincombe Weir and Locks in 1984 which provided a minimum of 6ft of water between Stourport and Worcester, and greatly altered the appearance of the river at this point. The crossing is now distinguished only by the deep “Watery Lane” leading to it, and the Caves on the West bank. It is only half a mile from Hartlebury Castle and Bishop Latimer wrote, “a rock by Severn, able to lodge 500 men, and ready to lodge thieves as true men. I would not have hermit’s masters of such dens”. Many monks from the dissolved abbeys lived there – sustained by the ford, and many a barge grounded on the shallows – and because of superstitions, and sometimes threats, never failed to give alms.

Layamon, the famous monk of the twelfth century, dwelt in these caves. He was author of “A Chronicle of British History”. The bodies of some

seven or eight hermits were found here about 1736. Across the ford was borne the body of Prince Arthur when on its way for burial in Worcester Cathedral.

One cave served as a chapel, and the frontage, carved with rude Gothic Arch, with an outside pulpit and stairs, can still be seen. The front was ornamented with rough sculptures of the Royal Arms, Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick and of Mortimer, Earl of March. Less than one hundred years ago, one cave was an ale house, another a school, and another an iron store for the Shelsley forge. Pea pickers were allowed to sleep there and caused destruction, and the twentieth century housing estate nearby completing the damage. Heavy catches of salmon by long net were taken here. 90-100 fish were taken annually until the ban on long nets in 1929.

H.W.G. 1970