

CEMEX aggregates moved on the River Severn

Water-borne freight services have resumed on the River Severn after a 10-year hiatus.

CBOA members Thompson River Transport have facilitated a cheaper and environmentally-friendlier means of transporting CEMEX aggregates by water rather than by road.

In March 2005 commercial use of the non-tidal River Severn resumed when transport of CEMEX's quarried products on specialist (180-tonne) barges operated by Thompson River Transport began. This freight activity has resulted in the transport by water of 200,000 tonnes a year of sand and gravel.



The aggregate is extracted from a quarry near Ripple and transported by barge two miles north to CEMEX's Ryall plant near Upton-upon-Severn, Worcestershire, with four to seven loads per day being moved. At Ryall the aggregates are washed and separated into various grades and delivered by road to CEMEX concrete making plants.

Once property and legal matters have been resolved, it is expected that there will be a regular service whereby some 65,000 tonnes a year of newly-processed material will be loaded back onto the

barges and transported down the River Severn and via the Gloucester - Sharpness Canal to CEMEX's Ready Mixed Concrete plant two miles south of Gloucester. The concrete will then be used for locally based, construction projects within a 10-mile radius of CEMEX Ready mixed plant.

CEMEX chose modal shift from road onto water because it was a commercially sound and an environmentally-sustainable solution. The development of quarrying activity at Ripple would have had the adverse effect of increasing the number of lorries travelling on local country lanes. The solution was to maximize the nearby river as the principal mode of transport to Ryall. In the future there may be an opportunity to extend the river-transportation service upstream .



Environmental benefits

The new water-borne service has ensured that:

- When the barges Perch and Chub each make four journeys a day, it is the equivalent of taking 116 (25-tonne) lorry journeys off the roads. (Barges 180-tonnes x two x four = 1440 tonnes a day) (Road haulage 1440 tonnes / 25 tonnes x two trips per delivery = 116 journeys)
- The elimination of the lorry journeys means that issues such as road accidents, noise, congestion, vibration and the use of the aggregates in the road are reduced as a result of this new freight service.
- Barge transport reduces emissions of carbon dioxide and other toxins. Each barge averages 90-litres of gas oil a day to operate. Water transport consume less than half the fuel required for transport by road.

Investment

To facilitate the new river-borne freight service several million pounds have been invested in the infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of the service.

CEMEX applied for, and secured, a £1 million Freight Facilities Grant from the Department for Transport and used it to establish the handling equipment at its wharves at Ripple and Ryall.

CEMEX funded over £2 million alongside the Government's grant and develop the infrastructure. Thompson River Transport invested £300K in improving the two motor barges.