# RIVER TRANSPORT 1189 – 1600

**THE REVEREND DOUGLAS JOHN MORRIS CAFFYN**  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**  
**AUGUST 2010**

## Appendices A – R

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Appendix A

Records of Historic Use

Index of Rivers and Table of Distances

In this appendix the rivers are listed clockwise. Tributaries are listed in order going upstream. Tributaries of tributaries are listed immediately after the tributary. Distances are measured in miles.

*Edwards* Length of non-tidal river for for which Edwards found evidence of historic use as amended in this appendix.

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| Total                        | 103     | 182     | 283     | 284     |

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| Total                         | 93      | 123     | 152     | 61      |

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<p>| Total                         | 231     | 368     | 433     | 434     |</p>
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### South West

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<td>Stroud</td>
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### South East Totals

| Sum: 80 | 169 | 239 | 187 |

### South West Totals

<p>| Sum: 57 | 73  | 254 | 159 |</p>
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<th>River Name</th>
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<th>184</th>
<th>321</th>
<th>434</th>
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<td>82</td>
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<td>3. Teme.</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<td>4. Onny.</td>
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<td>5. Eaton Brook.</td>
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<td>6. Salwarpe.</td>
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<td>7. Worcestershire Stour.</td>
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<td>8. Cound Brook.</td>
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<td>9. Tern.</td>
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<td>10. Perry.</td>
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<td>11. Vyrnwy.</td>
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<td>12. Hereford Wye.</td>
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<td>13. Monnow.</td>
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<td>14. Lugg.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>387</td>
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<td><strong>North West</strong></td>
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<td>1. Dee.</td>
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<td>4A. Bollin.</td>
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<td>5. Ribble.</td>
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<td>7. Condor.</td>
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<td>8. Wenning.</td>
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<td>9. Kent.</td>
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<td>10. Duddon.</td>
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<td>11. Annas.</td>
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<td>12. Cumberland Derwent.</td>
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<td>13. Marron.</td>
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<td>14. Waver.</td>
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<td>15. Eden.</td>
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<td>16. Esk.</td>
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<td><strong>Total.</strong></td>
<td>1201</td>
<td>2141</td>
<td>3057</td>
<td>2728</td>
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<tr>
<td>(187 rivers)</td>
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</table>
The ‘Tidal Limit’ is as shown on the current Ordnance Survey maps. ‘Coast’ is used where the shore is relatively straight and there is no named place at the point of discharge. ‘Lower limit’ is the confluence of a tributary with a river.

**Edwards** is the amended upper limit of recorded historic use as stated in Edwards. The amendments are explained under the individual rivers and have been made where it is considered by the present author that Edwards extracted an entry from the Rolls which did not adequately establish that the river was used. eg:- River Len. [SE 1A.]

A states the limits of recorded historic use for category A evidence as found for this thesis and the flow, gradient and a description of the river form.

B states the limit of recorded historic use for category B evidence.

RLU states the Recent Limit of Use and the flow, gradient and a description of the river form. (For a fuller statement about the RLU see below under Comment.)

**Column 6**

One of the following terms is used:-

Confl. Confluence. This implies that the flow can not be interpolated at the limit point.

Canalised. The river has been modified and the present form of the river can not be considered to be natural.

P&R. The form of the river is pool and riffle.

Br. The bed material is predominantly bedrock.

B. boulders.

C. cobbles.

G. gravel.

S. sand, silt and/or clay.

**2 Comment**

**Edwards** Edward’s thesis provides the previous most extensive list of sections of rivers for which there is evidence of navigation.

**Distances** Distances are taken from the *BCU Guide* or measured with an opisometer on 1:100,000 or 1:25,000 maps. It is accepted that for rivers which are sinuous these do not provide accuracy to the nearest mile.

**Gradient** The gradient is measured in metres per kilometre. Gradients have been calculated from the distance between contour lines on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 maps. Where a place is less than 20 m above sea level no gradient could be calculated.

**The Material forming the bed of the river** was obtained by observation from bridges. Where a river was opaque and the banks formed of fine material it was, normally, assumed that the bed material was sand, silt or clay.
Recent Limit of Use
The most recent publication to give a reasonably comprehensive description of the ‘Recent Limit of Use’ (RLU) of rivers is the BCU Guide. Its limitations are discussed in Chapter 2.2.

River Discharge
Discharge is taken from Hydrological data UK. The accuracy of the gauges used in Hydrological data UK is discussed in the Introduction to that book. These readings are considered adequate for this work. Interpolation or extrapolation from these records is considered in Appendix B. Where the distance from the nearest gauging point is too great the flow is regarded as being unobtainable.

Data records were used from all the information in the book. The data provided refers to different periods of time. For example the mean flow for Riding Mill and Bywell on the Tyne are given for the periods 1989-2000 and 1956-2000 respectively. Their catchment areas are 2174.5 and 2175.6 km² respectively. Their mean annual flows are 34.41 and 45.06 m³ s⁻¹. This is an extreme example but it illustrates the variation in average annual mean flow over time.

On the Stour at Lamarsh the mean flow in 2000 was 4.21 m³ s⁻¹ and in 1996 1.45 m³ s⁻¹. The measurements are not at fault. They accurately record the variability of the English weather. When seeking to draw conclusions from the data this variability must be considered.

Gradients
To measure the gradient of a section of a river which includes weirs is equivalent to measuring the gradient of a curved flight of steps with sloping treads of unequal lengths and unequal risers where the treads move up and down and change their slope with time. Available, affordable, GPS equipment does not provide a suitable level of accuracy for calculating the gradients of the rivers.

Gradients have been calculated by measuring the distance between contour lines on 1:25,000 maps with an opisometer. Normally the interval chosen has been from the contour line next below the relevant place to the fourth line below. It is considered that this provides a suitable level of accuracy to enable the gradients of the rivers to be compared. However the gradient can not be calculated for any place which is less than 20 metres above sea level.

This method of calculating gradients is not appropriate where the river flows above the level of the adjoining land. At these points the gradient has been shown as ‘n/a’. An error in estimating the gradient of the river may lie in the assumption that the river gradient is the same as the gradient of the top of the bank. This error would not have been avoided by using the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology spatial data where the heights of rivers are also interpolated from the Ordnance Survey records of contour lines. It seems that this error could only have been avoided by making an on site measurement of the gradient.

On some rivers the gradient of the water has been modified so that there is a vertical, or near vertical, drop at weirs and the surface of the water above the weirs in almost horizontal. It has not been possible to make allowance for this. The weirs artificially
increase the depth of the rivers. Boats will either use locks, shoot the weirs or be portaged round them. Thus on these rivers the RLU may be further upstream than if the river had not been modified.

**Bed Material**
As the research progressed it became clear that the material forming the bed of a river affected the usability. Normally the bed material is variable in size both across and along a river. For a work of this type it is considered that sight is an adequate way of assessing the predominant size of the bed material. The bed material has been divided into: S, clay, silt or sand; G, gravel; C, cobbles; B, boulders; Br, bedrock. Grain size was estimated on the Wentworth scale.

**Rivers of the North East**

**NE 1 Tweed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit</th>
<th>Horncliffe.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>Carham. (Border.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Carham. (Border.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU</td>
<td>Carham. (Border.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 miles Not the limit point for boats.

Edwards included a record for 1244 that ‘a consignment of wine was taken by boat to Norham Castle (Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1240-45, 255)’. The entry in the Patent Roll states that the wine was taken from ships at Newcastle to Norham. It does not state how the wine was transported. This record is not accepted here.

1367. Complaint was made that the tolls for the passing of ships had been taken from the bishop’s lordship and seized into the King’s hand on the section of the river where it was the boundary between England and Scotland and ‘where the said water adjoins the land of their lordship of Norham and Tweedmouth’.

1401. Norham and Rokesburgh are amongst places listed relating to a subsidy on each tun of wine to be collected in ‘all ports and places adjacent’.

1412. The captain of Rokesburgh castle successfully petitioned to have a vessel of his dearrested. The vessel, a balinger of 30 tuns burden called la Katerine, had been on a voyage ‘to be loaded with victuals and other things needful for the castle’.

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3 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1364-67, 427.
4 Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1399-1405, 122.
5 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1399-1401, 468.
6 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1409-13, 278.
NE 2  River Tyne/South Tyne

Tidal limit. Wylam. 
Edwards. Prudhoe. 3 miles. 
A. Haydon Bridge. 22 miles. 18 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.9 P&R, B 
RLU. Confluence North and South Tyne. 20 miles. 39 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.2 Confl. 

‘There was a bridge at Hexham by 1263; it is referred to again in 1324, but not thereafter. Jervoise noted that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the only method of crossing the river here was by ferry.’

7th Century. ‘Bede tells us that the seventh-century monks of Jarrow used to raft timbers for house-building down the River Tyne.’

c675. In about 1900 Roman stones were found on the bed of the river at Hexham. They may have fallen from a boat, or a boat may have sunk, when Hexham Abbey was built.

c1000. Eaton considers that stones from the Roman remains at Corbridge were floated 9km downstream to Bywell.

1265-1350. ‘A Ship with merchandise’ was included in the list of items subject to toll at Haydon Bridge. Fraser considers that this would ‘probably be explained as a blind copying of the tariff of some other river-port.’ However no corresponding list has been found for any other river-port.

1371. A commission to investigate and remove ‘weirs, mills, stanks, piles and kiddles in the water of Tyne between Prudhoe and Newcastle-upon-Tyne’ … which ‘totally obstruct the river for the passage of ships and boats.’ Prudhoe is 3 miles up-stream of Wylam.

1558. A statute provided that ‘no timber tree of Oak, Beech or Ash … growing within fourteen miles of the Sea, or of any Part of the Rivers of … Tine, … or any other River, Creek or Stream, by the which Carriage is commonly used by Boat or other Vessel to any Part of the Sea.’ This implies that timber was transported at least for 14 miles on the Tyne.

1611. Speed shows nine boats on the river upstream of the bridge at Newcastle.

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9 Ibid, page 33.
11 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1370-74, 109
12 1558. 1 Elizabeth I. c. 15. Timber not to be felled for making Coals.
1709. ‘An application was made to Parliament for powers to enable the Tyne to be made navigable to Hexham.’\textsuperscript{14} Since in almost every case where a river was made navigable under an Act of Parliament there is evidence that the river had been previously been used by boats, it is arguable that other applications would have been made only for rivers which had been used.

1900’s Selkirk reports that an eel-man with several hundredweight of eels on board his rowing boat was seen going upstream to Hexham from where he would return to Wylam.\textsuperscript{15}

**NE 3 River Durham Don**

Tidal limit. Jarrow.
B. 3 miles upstream from Jarrow. 3 miles.

According to tradition vessels could proceed up the Don to a distance of three miles inland from Jarrow.\textsuperscript{16}

**NE 4 River Wear**

Tidal limit. Lambton Castle. 2½ miles downstream from Chester-Le-Street.
A. Frosterley. 44 miles. $4 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$. 6.2 P&R, BandC
RLU. Wolsingham. 42 miles. $4 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$. 4.3 P&R, BandC

It has been claimed that staithes were made and coal taken out at Biddick (near Chester-le-Street) during the medieval period.\textsuperscript{17}

1170-76. Purbeck marble was brought up the river to the cathedral for use in the Galilee Chapel in Durham Cathedral.\textsuperscript{18}

1190-1200. ‘It was very much easier just to float the required stone down the Wear. … Frosterley marble had already been used to excellent effect just before 1200 in Bishop Pudsey’s Great Hall, now the Chapel, in the Palace at Bishop Auckland.’\textsuperscript{19}

12\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries. ‘The black marble in Durham Cathedral was rafted down the River Wear from Frosterley.’\textsuperscript{20}

1243. Adam was making a boat at Shincliffe when it fell on him and killed him.\textsuperscript{21}

1243. Roger fell from a boat at Cestre [Chester le Street] and was drowned.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{17} Communication – (Assistant Keeper) University of Durham – Department of Palaeography. Cited in Edwards.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. page 187.
\textsuperscript{20} Raymond Selkirk, *Chester-Le Street & it’s place in history*. Durham: Casdec Printcentre. 2001, 243
1243. Garciones fell from a coble at Cocken [nr Finchale] and was drowned.  

These three records refer to the Eyre of 1243. The previous Eyre was held in 1235 and so these deaths would have occurred between 1235 and 1243. There are no other extant Pleas of the Crown for Durham.

1336, 1338-9, 1347-8, 1350-51, 1353, 1357, 1360, 1415. Payments were made relating to a ‘Stanbate’ (a boat used for moving stones) at Durham.

1361. Finchale Priory bought a boat for 45s.10d.

1440. ‘In the presentments of 1440-5 already referred to, the “king’s common highway below Elvet Wood called Wodsnab is said to have been damaged by the carrying away of soil by boat.”’

1532. Goods were brought up the river by boat to Durham Cathedral Priory. ‘Et 20 februarii, solute pro carriagio 20 qu. ordii et 2 hogeshedes vini a navi in 1 keyll, cum navigacione eorundem, 12d.’ Threlfall-Holmes comments that the carriage charges ruling then were 1s. 4d. per hogshead, or 2s. 4d. per tun. ‘It is surprising, in the light of this difference, that more goods were not moved by water.’

1533. Ten barrels of herrings were taken from Berwick to Durham by sea. At 4d. per barrel it seems that they must have been transported by water up the River Wear.

1686. Coal was sent down the river from Lumley to the sea.

1716. An Act was passed to provide for the clearing of the port of Sunderland and the Wear which had lately become obstructed. The power of the Commissioners extended from the sea to the city of Durham.

1729. A statute was given to the City of Durham ‘as a symbol of the scheme to link Durham to the sea by improved navigation of the River Wear’. This would seem to
imply that the river had previously been usable but not of a standard suitable for the 18th century.

**NE 5 River Tees**

Tidal limit. Low Worsall. 4 miles upstream of Yarm.
A. Hurworth-on-Tees. 14 miles. n/a.
B. Cleasby. 26 miles.
RLU. Whorlton Falls. 39 miles. 14 m³s⁻¹. 4 P&R, BandC.

*Edwards* quotes a reference to the transport of stone in 1361 from Stapleton, near Darlington. The reference is to transport ‘by land and water carriage’. The reference is not accepted here.

1558. A statute provided that ‘no timber tree of Oak, Beech or Ash … growing within fourteen miles of the Sea, or of any Part of the Rivers of … Teese, … or any other River, Creek or Stream, by the which Carriage is commonly used by Boat or other Vessel to any Part of the Sea.’³⁴ This implies that timber was brought downstream from more than 14 miles up the Tees. (Hurworth-on-Tees.)

1753. There was a boatman at Stapleton.³⁵

1821. A man was rescued by boat at Hurworth.³⁶

1829. There was a boathouse at Cleasby.³⁷

**NE 6 River Skerne**

Lower limit. River Tees.
B. Mordon. 15 miles.

Selkirk states that a suspected Roman barge basin has been found at Mordon.³⁸

**NE 7 River Leven**

Tidal limit. Leven Bridge. (A1044.)
B. Little Ayton. 17 miles.

The names Great and Little Ayton may indicate that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.³⁹

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³⁴ 1558. 1 Elizabeth I c. 15. Timber not to be felled for making coals.
Rivers of Yorkshire

Y 1  Hornsea Beck

Tidal limit.  Coast.
A.  Hornsea.  1 mile.  n/a.  < 10m.

1369. ‘A little boat fell on S and broke his neck and back at Hornsea Beck, nr Holderness, Yorkshire.’

Y 2  River Hedon

Tidal limit.  ½ mile from River Humber.
Edwards.  Burstwick.  4 miles.
A.  Burstwick.  4 miles.  n/a.  < 10m.

1338. A commission investigated an unlawful diversion of the watercourse. It was claimed that ships and boats were unable to pass the town of Bondebrustewyk (Burstwick) because of the illegal diversion of the sewer ‘Le Scurth’.

1345. The keeper of the manor of Brustwyk was ordered ‘to receive toll and custom in the parts of Holderness from ships laden with merchandise and other things coming there, to wit, as well in the rivers and fleets of Wilflete, Potterflete, Witheflete, and Stanherthe by the coast of the water of Humber, as in the town of Hedon.’

Y 3  River Hull

Tidal limit.  Hempholme Lock.
Edwards.  Wansford.  23 miles.
A.  Wansford.  23 miles.  2.5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.  < 10 m.
RLU.  Driffield.  25 miles.  2.5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.  < 10 m.

13th C. Early in the thirteenth century the Archbishop of York claimed right of passage in the river ‘of the breadth of 24 feet and one grain of barley.’

13th C. Meaux Abbey had free passage on the River Hull.

13th C. Purbeck marble was taken by river to Beverley.

c1235. The Cistercians used small boats on the drainage ditch which served the grange at Skerne.

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42 Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1337-47, 407.
1260. Hull Bridge was first mentioned. ‘It has a long and controversial history, with conflicts of interest between the road users and the navigation.’

1268. Attempts were made to clear the river of obstructions. It appears that the obstructions were fish-garths.

1298. A member of crew died on a ship whilst the vessel was on the water of Hull near Beverley.

1298. Produce was taken down the river from Wansford, Beverley and Leven for onward shipping to the army at Berwick. (Also Beverley Beck.)

1309. Grain was taken overland from Malton and Pocklington to Wansford and then by river to Hull for onward shipping to the army at Berwick.

1343. A ship was arrested near Grimsby, taken to Hull, then Beverley and back to Hull ‘because wool found therein was not coketted or customed.’ (Also Beverley Beck.)

1361. A commission was appointed ‘to survey kiddles and weirs in the waters and rivers of Use, Ayre, Derwent, Querf, Yore Swale, Nidd, Hull and Don, and to make inquisition … whether any of these obstruct the passage.’ The members of the commission were also asked to determine whether the owners, masters and mariners of ships and boats passing along the rivers were guilty of charging ‘excessive stipends, wages and other sums for carriage in their ships and boats, contrary to the form of the statutes of labourers and workmen, by covenants made in advance, and refuse to carry for a reasonable sum.’

1377. Beverley was described as a dry place remote from the sea.

1550s. ‘Beverley was still actively disputing with Kingston-upon-Hull in the 1550s about tolls and harbour facilities: and even in the seventeenth century it was still possible to reach Wansford, though the way was then hazardous.’

16th century. A 16th century logboat was found at the mouth of the Hull in 1912.
Y 4  Beverley Beck

Lower limit. River Hull.
Edwards. Beverley. 1 mile.
A. Beverley. 1 mile. n/a. < 10 m. Modified.

See River Hull, 1298, 1343.

1200-1600. ‘Beverley beck, that “very ancient canal, constructed 500 or 600 years ago,” was regarded as the property of the Corporation, which kept it clean throughout the 17th century.’

12th C. Archbishop Thurston of York persuaded the merchants of Beverley to deepen the creek which led from their town to the River Hull, thus enabling sea-going vessels to come and go.

1321. Ships from Beverley paid quayage at Scarborough.

c1543. ‘Beverle. … Ther is a great gut cut from the town to the ripe of Hulle Ryver, wherby preaty vessels cum cum thythere.’

1611. ‘This is memorable, that the River from Hull, [to Beverley] was cut by the Townesmen, sufficient to carry boats and barges.’

1641. ‘Beverley great Fair, … Thither the Londoners send their wares by water.’

Y 5. Yorkshire Ouse.

Treated here as the river from the junction of the Swale and Ure to the tidal limit.
Tidal limit. Naburn.
A. Ure / Swale. 26 miles. Not limit of use.

Records of use are not quoted for this river. Edwards gives 74 references to the use of the whole of the river Ouse. Use of the Swale or Ure imply use of the Ouse. ‘The Ouse was naturally navigable up to York, while small craft could venture upstream almost to the edge of the highland zone.’
Roman. ‘Water-borne transportation of building stone (and other materials) to York continues to be perceived as the most expedient means by which such materials would have been supplied.’

‘Throughout the Middle Ages, York stood at the centre of an extensive system of river navigation.’

Post 1200 in the Humberhead Levels strips of land were allocated, mainly to religious institutions extending from the Ouse ‘as far as the moor goes towards the south’.

‘These strips were for turbary and included provisions for the construction of Dikes, the largest of which could be used for boats (e.g. Whitgiftmer and Landemere).’

1548. The Bishop of Durham told Henry VIII that within 10 miles of Haslewood, near Sherburn in Elmet, there were 5 navigable rivers.

**Y 6 River Don**

Tidal limit. Kirk Sandall. (1 mile north of Doncaster.)
A. Aldwarke. 14 miles. 12 m³ s⁻¹. < 10 m.
    (now in NE Rotherham.)

The route of the lower reaches of the River Don were radically altered in the seventeenth century.

The dedication of the parish church at Thorne to St Nicholas seems to indicate that this was an inland port.

Medieval. ‘The rivers crossing the outcrop assisted the transport of the creamy limestone from Tadcaster and Conisbrough to nearby towns and villages.’

Timber was sent from Aldwark, near Rotherham, to York Minster throughout the medieval period.

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1218. Three children fell from a boat and were drowned in the Don in Strafford Warpentake.  

1218. H of Barnaby fell from a boat and was drowned in the Don in Villata Doncaster.

Mid 13th C. ‘A waterfront where boats and barges could be offloaded with ease’ was built at Doncaster.

1314. Monks of Louth Park were given permission to cut turf by the town of Swinefleet and to ‘carry it and other goods to the waters of the Use and Don, and there load ships and take them thence freely and without disturbance.’

1322. The King ‘lately appointed Thomas de Roassale to keep the bridge and water of Roderham, and to arrest the King’s enemies trying to pass the same.’

1326. A commission was appointed to investigate an obstruction in the course of the Don between Thorne and the Isle of Axholme and the River Trent.

1343. A commission was asked to investigate obstructions concerning ‘the river Done, where there used to be a course of water for the passing of ships from the town of Doncastre to the water of the Trent, … to remove the obstructions, and cause the river to be brought back to its ancient course, … and they caused the river to be dug at the charges of the men of the said parts from a place called “Crullflethill” to a place called “Donmyn” to a breadth of 16 feet and one grain of barley and the course of the water to be brought back to the ancient course, and now the river is again obstructed by bridges, weirs and other things so that the said breadth is not kept, whereby the passing of ships is impeded and the land adjoining is flooded, and praying him to cause the obstructions to be removed.’

1382. A commission was appointed to enquire into the same obstructions as in 1343.

1394. William Bleburgh was instructed ‘to arrest ships and other vessels sufficient for the carriage of free stones from a place called “le Mar” by Doncastre to the palace of Westminster by water for the King’s work there.’

1394. Stone was sent from Mar by Doncastre for works at Westminster Abbey.

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73 Ibid. page 208.
75 Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1300-26, 254.
76 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1318-23, 472.
77 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1324-27, 291.
78 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1343-45, 91.
79 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381-85, 193.
80 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1391-96, 419.
81 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1392-96, 218.
14th, 15th, 16th centuries. Stone was sent by water from Doncaster for the building of York Minster.82

The Don together with other Yorkshire rivers was subject to various surveys. See River Hull 1361.

1639. Iron was carried down the river by water being portaged at the weirs.83

1698. In a petition presented in support of a Bill to make the river navigable the gentlemen, traders and inhabitants of Doncaster declared that it would be a great advantage ‘to make the said river navigable, which, in a great measure, is so already.’ The Corporation of Lincoln stated that the Don was ‘in great measure navigable from Sheffield to Doncaster, and is capable of being made navigable to Rotherham.’84 Willan states that the above statement ‘shows that the Corporation lacked local knowledge.’85

Y 7 River Aire


Edwards. Fairburn. 9 miles. (3 miles upstream of Knottingley.)

A. Coniston Cold. 55 miles. 2.1 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 2.1 P&R, C.

RLU. Coniston Cold. 55 miles. 2.1 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 2.1 P&R, C.

At Snaith, on the tidal section of the river, ‘a bridge was built with a draw-leaf 4 feet in breadth, “for the voiding thorugh of the Mastes of the Shippes passinge under the seid new Brigg.”’86

Stone was carried by boat from Snaythland to Brotherton and Knottingley.87

Timber was sent from Knottingley for the construction of York Minster.88

1218. ‘Water Fryston lies immediately to the north of Ferry Fryston, which is located at the highest point on the Aire which could be reached by sea-going ships in the High Middle Ages and is also at a crossing point of the river. At the pleas of the Crown at York in 1218-19, Ranulf de Fery accused Nigel de Fareburn, Fairburn (North Yorkshire) being the township on the bank of the river Aire opposite Ferry Fryston, of drowning Simon de Fareburn by throwing him overboard from a ship.’ The other people involved in the case all came from townships in the vicinity of Ferry Fryston,

85 Ibid.
suggesting that the ship had come from a port there. Knottingley on the Aire in the adjacent township, continued to function as a port and ship-building centre throughout the Middle Ages and until the nineteenth century.\(^{89}\) Fairburn is 4 km up-river from Knottingley.

1218. ‘S fell from a boat and was drowned. Let the village of Ferrybridge answer.’\(^{90}\)

1218. ‘Three men fell from a boat and were drowned. Let the Clerk of Pontefact to answer.’\(^{91}\)

1245. The Constable of Pontefract was asked to send lime by water for the re-fortification of York Castle.\(^{92}\)

1274. Pontefract was listed as a port for the export of wool.\(^{93}\)

14\(^{th}\) C. Goods were taken by ship from Pontefract and Snaith to Scarborough.\(^{94}\)

14\(^{th}\), 15\(^{th}\), 16\(^{th}\) C. Stone was taken from Wheldale, Snaith and Pontefract by water to York Minister.\(^{95}\)

1340. A grant of pontage provided for the men of Ferrybridge ‘on things for sale brought to their town as well by land as by water.’\(^{96}\)

1346. A grant of pontage for three years was granted at Ferrybridge ‘on wares coming to the town by land as well as water.’\(^{97}\)

1359. A grant of pontage was made ‘on things for sale passing by the water of Eyre from Kelynglay to Queldale as well as by the bridge of Ferybrigge.’\(^{98}\) Wheldrake is 2 miles up-river of Ferrybridge, near Fairburn and Kellingley 3 miles down-river, near Beal.

See River Hull 1361. The River Aire was subject to a number of surveys.

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\(^{90}\) Ibid. page 221.

\(^{91}\) Ibid. page 221.

\(^{92}\) Calendar of Liberate Rolls, 1240-45, 300.

\(^{93}\) Calendar of Close Rolls, 1272-79, 125.


\(^{96}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1338-40, 432.

\(^{97}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1345-48, 197.

\(^{98}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1358-61, 296.
1367. A ship was sunk at Brotherton co. York ‘loaded with lime worth 20 l.’

1384. There was a grant of pontage ‘for three years for repair of “Engeweybriggles” over the Eyre [Aire] by Skipton in Crave, to be taken upon things for sale passing by that river between Cononlaye and Conyston.’

1392. The jurors of York said that a bridge called Tunbridge across the water of Dyke by Cowick is made so low that no ship can pass beneath it towards York and that the men of Cowick, Rawcliffe, Snaith and Hook ought to raise and mend it.

1420. A boat was bought for 33s. 4d. for carrying stones from ‘Snaythland, a now-lost name,’ to repair a weir at Knottingley.

Y 8 River Calder

Lower limit. River Aire.
B. Wakefield. 9 miles.
RLU. Wakefield. 9 miles. 20 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. < 10 m.

Early 11$^\text{th}$ C. A log-boat from the early 11$^\text{th}$ century was found in the bed of the river in 1838 at Stanley Ferry.

‘The medieval Bridge Chapel [at Wakefield] … is also recorded as serving as guide to travellers both on the road and river.’

Y 9 River Yorkshire Derwent

Tidal limit. Barmby.
Edwards. Stamford Bridge. 21 Miles.
A. Malton. 39 miles. 15 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.3 Canalised.
B. East Ayton. 59 miles. Not now usable.
RLU. Ganton. 56 miles. n/a. 0.2 Canalised.

Records of use downstream of Stamford Bridge have not been quoted as it was the historic tidal limit.

The names East and West Ayton indicate that the settlements had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.

Barley showed the River Derwent as being navigable to Malton in the Middle Ages.

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100 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381-85, 414.
In a case in the High Court in 1988 it was held that there was a public right of navigation to Sutton but that historically only small boats at rare states of the tide went as far as Stamford Bridge and so there was no public right of navigation between Sutton and Stamford Bridge.\textsuperscript{107} When the case came to the Appeal Court it was stated that the parties were agreed that there was a public right of navigation from Sutton to Stamford Bridge. No reasons were recorded.\textsuperscript{108}

1218. ‘R was drowned from a boat in the Derwent.’ The heading of the section of the Roll is ‘Adhuc of Bukros’.\textsuperscript{109} This implies that R was drowned between Sherborn [Sherburn] and Skertenbok [Skirpenbeck]. This is a non-tidal section of the river.

1332. An inquisition stated that ‘Ships and boats, laden with victuals and other goods, used to pass by the water of Derwent to Staynfordbrig and elsewhere along the banks of the said water from time beyond memory.’ The record lists twelve weirs which obstructed the river between the mouth of the Derwent and Stamford Bridge. It continues ‘Consequently ships and boats cannot in these days pass to the parts of the East Riding, co. York, and the adjacent parts to the damage of [named persons] and their tenants having lands on the banks of the said water, of 100l., and to the nuisance and impoverishment of all the people of those parts and of merchants wishing to pass with their goods. Floods are caused yearly by the weirs and sewers and several men have been drowned. Cf. Patent Roll Calendar, p. 290. C. Inq. Misc. File 121. (21.)\textsuperscript{110}

1340-61. Surveys of obstructions of Yorkshire rivers were carried out. The rivers included the Ouse, Ayre, Done, Wherf, Nidde and Derewent Co. York, and sometimes the Yore, Swale and Hull.\textsuperscript{111}

1341. Complaint was made about obstructions in the area of Stamford Bridge ‘so that ships and boats laden with merchandise cannot pass for the common good of the men of those parts, as they used to do.’\textsuperscript{112}

1391. ‘Writ of supersedeas omnino in respect of any process against John Godard then sheriff of York, appointed with others by letters patent of 23 August 13 Richard II to make inquisition in Yorkshire what waste was committed in manors lands, houses, woods and gardens in Bolton, Hoton and New Malton, and by other letters patent of 9 March following to survey all weirs, mills, stanks, stakes and kiddles set up in the river

\textsuperscript{107} Yorkshire Derwent Trust Ltd and another v Brotherton and Others (1988) 59 P & CR 60, 84.
\textsuperscript{108} Yorkshire Derwent Trust Ltd and another v Brotherton and Others (1990) 61 P & CR 198, 201.
\textsuperscript{110} Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1307-49, 320-321.
\textsuperscript{112} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1340-43, 311-312.
Derwent, and to make inquisition by men of the counties thereto adjacent which and how many were set up in and after the time of King Edward I, and order to release any distress upon him made, proceeding nevertheless against others who did meddle therein; ...¹¹³

Y 10  River Rye

Lower limit.  River Derwent.
A.  Rievaulx.  22 miles.  2.2 m³s⁻¹.  2.5  P&R, C.
RLU. 1 mile above Helmsley.  20 miles.  2.2 m³s⁻¹.  2.5  P&R, C.

c1145 and c1205.  Two canals were dug at Rievaulx Abbey.¹¹⁴  The evidence relating to the canals was reconsidered by Bond.¹¹⁵

1601.  ‘The only hope of achieving large sales [of iron] was by breaking through to the London market, and it was Rutland’s success in doing this, thanks to ready water transport from Rievaulx to Hull and from Hull to London, which brought him his high profits in the early seventeenth century.’¹¹⁶

Y 11  River Wharfe

Tidal limit.  Ulleskef.  3 miles downstream of Tadcaster.
Edwards.  Tadcaster.  10 miles.
A.  Tadcaster.  10 miles.  17 m³s⁻¹.  < 10 m.
RLU.  Bolton Abbey.  51 miles.  14 m³s⁻¹.  2.5
Difficult upstream.

1219.  3 men and 2 women were drowned having fallen from a boat into the River Wharfe.  Some of the men came from Tadcaster.¹¹⁷

14th, 15th, 16th C’s.  Stone was sent from quarries at Thevesdale and Bramham near Tadcaster by water for the building of York Minster.¹¹⁸

1333.  Stone was sent by water from near Tadcaster.¹¹⁹

1338.  Wool was sent in carts to Tadcaster and then by ship to Hull.¹²⁰

1361.  The Wharfe was subject to a number of surveys.  See River Hull 1361.

¹¹³ Calendar of Close Rolls 1389-92, 508.
¹¹⁹ Calendar of Close Rolls, 1333-37, 35.
1362. An obstruction to the passage of boats was created when a stake was set in the river at Kirkby Wharfe. In defence the archbishop of York claimed that ‘he and his predecessors were lords of the whole river so far as the said lordship extended and no stakes were set there to the hindrance of the passage’.  

Y 12. **Bolton Percy Foss.**

Lower limit. River Wharfe. (near Bolton Percy.)
A. Hornington. 2 miles. n/a.

1224. Men came to the mill at Hornington and took the mill stones away in the miller’s boat.

Y 13. **York Foss.** (Flows into the Yorkshire Ouse at York.)

Lower limit. Yorkshire Ouse.
Edwards. Strensall. 6 miles.
A. Strensall. 6 miles. n/a.

1323. A complaint was made that at Strensall the King’s ‘keeper ought not to mow grass in the lands or meadows adjoining thereto, and that neither the King nor his Keeper ought to receive any other profit except from so much grass or rushes (*cirpis*) as the Keeper can mow from his boat in the summer time by having one foot in the boat and one on shore.’

1586. ‘The Fosse (a slow stream yet able to beare a good vessel) …’

Y 14 **River Nidd**

Lower limit. Yorkshire Ouse.
Edwards. Knaresborough. 23 miles.
A. Knaresborough. 23 miles. 8 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.73 S. 10
B. Birstwith. 32 miles.
RLU. Ripley. 28 miles. 5.0 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 2.5 P&R, B&C.

The name ‘Birstwith’ may be derived from ‘landing place of the fort’. Ann Coles thinks this may be doubtful ‘in view of the difficulties of navigating the Nidd’.

Nun Monkton is at the junction of the Nidd and the Yorkshire Ouse. ‘Goods were brought up the Ouse to an unloading-point at Nun Monkton and then taken inland on

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123 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1321-24, 379.
pack-saddles and carts. The river side is now deserted, but a small toll-house survives from the days when tolls were levied upon river traffic.126

14th Century. ‘Lead was regularly sent from Nidderdale to York and thence to Hull entirely by water.’127

It is clear that the River Nidd was navigable at other times as several surveys were carried out of this and other rivers. See River Hull 1361 above.

Y 15 River Swale

Lower limit. Yorkshire Ouse.

Edwards. Morton-on-Swale. 32 miles.

A. Morton-on-Swale. 32 miles. 14 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.37 S. 45

B. Easby Abbey. 50 miles.

RLU Catterick. 45 miles. 13 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 3 P&H, B&C.

Edwards reference to the relationship between ‘The King’s bailiffs of the city of Lincoln’ and ‘men of the honor of Richemond’ is considered here to refer the part of Boston known as ‘the honour of Richmond’ rather than to the town on the Swale.128 It is not accepted here.

During the medieval period timber was regularly shipped from Topcliffe to York.129

It is thought that boats used to supply Easby Abbey.130 The maps show an inlet at Easby Abbey which has the form of an artificial backwater for a dock.

13th C. ‘Fountains Abbey had ‘free passage’ on the river Swale.’131

1218. A man fell from a boat and was drowned at Maunby.132

14th century. Barley considers that the presence of Flemish or German brasses of the fourteenth century at Topcliffe may indicate that sea going boats reached this town.133

1317. There was a ‘passagium’ of the water of Swale at Morton-on-Swale.134 It is perhaps significant that it was a passagium referring to a ‘passage way or path’ as opposed to a passuagium a ‘ferry or means of transport over water.


130 Chris Hawkesworth. Personal communication. 29 November 2009.


134 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1313-18, 496.
1353. The River Swale was one of the rivers referred to concerning obstructions. See River Derwent 1353 above.

1357. Mention is made of a boat on the River Swale at Myton on Swale.\footnote{Y 16 River Ure}

Y 16 River Ure

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<td>B.</td>
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<td>1.4 P&amp;R, C.</td>
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Records of use are not quoted below Boroughbridge.

Beresford states that ‘Boroughbridge was the head of the Ouse navigation in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.’\footnote{136}

John Richmond former mayor of Ripon states that “flat bottomed boats (before the canal was built) were pulled upstream at least as far as West Tanfield.”\footnote{137}

13th C. Lead was regularly shipped from Boroughbridge to York.\footnote{138}

1218. The jurors at the eyre of Boroughbridge in 1218-19 declared that ‘No ship can pass without payment.’\footnote{139}

1275. ‘The bailiffs of Boroughbridge had taken to levying tolls, taking from every man or woman coming down stream 1d and upstream ½ d ....’\footnote{140} From this it appears that the boats were coming from, or going to, places upriver from Boroughbridge.

1322. It would seem from the statement that ‘ships could not pass for fear of the King’s enemies’ that boats went up-river of Boroughbridge.\footnote{141}

1508. Boats travelling downstream would be unloaded upstream of Boroughbridge in order to avoid the toll. The goods were transported by carts round the town and then placed back on the boats.\footnote{142}

\footnote{135} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1354-58, 557.
\footnote{137} Personal communication Chris Hawkseworth. 23/4/2010.
\footnote{141} Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1307-49, 121.
Rivers of the Trent Basin

Tr 1  River Trent

Tidal limit. Collingham. (5 miles downstream of Newark-on Trent.)
Edwards. Swarkestone. 51 miles.
A. Tame confluence. 72 miles. Confulence.
B. Abbey Hulton, 117 miles.
Stoke on Trent.
RLU. Trentham. 111 miles. 0.65 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1 Modified.

Records of use of the river downstream of Nottingham are not quoted. Edwards gives 38 quotations of records of the use of the river downstream from Nottingham from the 14th century alone.

‘The river traffic on the Trent is singularly ill-documented.’$^{143}$

‘Primitive boats preserved in river silt have been found along the length of the Trent from the Humber Ferry to Abbey Hulton in Stoke-on-Trent.’$^{144}$

Salisbury suggests that there was a medieval port at Hemington.$^{145}$

‘An unusual feature of the gravel pit at Hemington is a spread of large stones of Triassic and Carboniferous sandstone over the Medieval river bed. These have an average weight of 19 kilograms, although there is great variation in size, with the largest approaching 100 kilograms. … They comprise a mixture of ancient stone quarry waste, millstones, querns and unfinished or re-used building stones, some of which are Roman. And include the arm of a ninth century Saxon cross and another carved stone of the same period. Known quarries upstream of Hemington and close to the Trent occur at Castle Donington, of Triassic sandstone, and at Melbourne, of Carboniferous millstone grit. Carboniferous sandstone is also found in the catchment area of the Dewent. In Saxo-Norman times hardcore could have been shipped to Hemington both from these quarries and from abandoned buildings in former Roman towns such as Derby and Leicester. At Hemington the hardcore was used to form an armoured bed or as bank revetments to stabilise a very mobile river.’$^{146}$

‘It is probable that from Chellaston the material [Alabaster] was conveyed down the River Trent, which flows not far away from the quarries, to Nottingham.’$^{147}$

‘Yet the principal materials used in the manufacture of pottery, … The flints were brought by sea to Hull. … From Hull the materials were brought up the Trent to Willington.’$^{148}$

$^{146}$ *Ibid.*, page 159.
c1400 BC ‘A large log-boat was stranded … in an unstable reach of the River Trent. … [It] was carrying several large blocks of locally hewn Bromsgrove Sandstone.’

874. The Viking fleet overwintered at Repton. Presumably they were with their sea going boats as their camp was D shaped against the bank of the river.

c1155. A charter of Henry II ‘gave the burgesses of Nottingham the right to levy tolls on boats using the river between Thrumpton and Newark.’

1313. A boat was stolen from Barton 6 miles up river of Nottingham.

1338. ‘Grant to the good men of Swerkeston of pontage for four years, …. on things for sale coming to the town as well by land as by water for the repair of their bridge.’

1383. A commission stated that the waters of Trent ‘has been used and ought to hold its course from the place where it takes it’s source to the castle and town of Nottingham’ and from thence to the sea.

16th C. ‘[At Colwick] There was also channel improvements for coal barges during the 16th century.’

1545. Four people were drowned from a boat at Barton in Fabis.

1549. A man was drowned trying to get out of a small boat into a big ferry.

1549. A man fell from ‘a lytyll bott’ into the Trent at Colwick and was drowned.

1550. A man fell from a small boat into the Trent at Radcliffe on Trent and was drowned.

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153 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1313-17, 72.

154 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1338-40, 22.


158 Ibid. page 134.

159 Ibid. page 136.

160 Ibid. page 138.
1592-3. The inhabitants of 39 villages organised ‘a great and unlawful assembly’ to pull down a weir at Shelford which ‘interfered with navigation and so straitened the passage that boats were lost and lives endangered’. ‘The privy council and the court of star chamber were both called in to adjudicate before the storm blew over.’

1611. The river is shown as divided into four streams at Nottingham.

1637. ‘There was a project for making the former [Derwent] navigable as early as 1637.’ This implies that the Trent was usable to the confluence at that date.

1738. It was held that there was an ancient public right of navigation through Nottingham and so also upstream of Nottingham.

### Tr 2  River Eau

Lower limit. River Trent.

Edwards. Scotter. 3 miles.
A. Scotton. 5 miles. n/a.

1375. The abbot of Peterborough was accused of causing obstructions ‘by a weir called Fiss … at Scotter on the east side of the Trent where he set piles and stakes lower than he ought in two “roumes” containing thirty-two feet, and set no beacon or “wyte” there, so that passing ships have no notice thereof …’ Since goods were to be taken upstream of Scotter they must have been taken at least as far as Scotton.

### Tr 3  River Idle/Poulter

Lower limit. River Trent

A. Bawtry. 10 miles. n/a.
B. Elkesley. 25 miles. n/a.
RLU. Retford. 20 miles. n/a.

The dedication of the parish church to St Nicholas would seem to indicate that Bawtry was an inland port.

Cole states that the name Eaton indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.

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164 The Mayor and Burgess of the Town of Nottingham v Richard Lambert. (1738) Willes, 111-119.


12th C. Beresford, in his description of the foundation of Bawtry states that the Idle was navigable upstream into Nottinghamshire and downstream to the Trent. Since the boundary of Yorkshire stops at the south of the town and not at the bridge where the great north road crosses the river, Beresford considers that the town was founded as a river port.\(^{168}\)

1260-70. Much wool was shipped from Bawtry and Torksey.\(^{169}\)

1267. The sheriff of York was ‘to receive 60 fother of lead to be delivered at Bautr’ by the sheriff of Nottingham and Derby, and carry it by water to Westminster without delay and without fail.’\(^{170}\)

1298. The Sheriff of Lincolnshire transported 86 quarters of grain and 29 quarters of malt from Bawtry to Hull by water for onward shipping to the army at Berwick.\(^{171}\)

14th C. Ships went from Bawtry to Scarborough.\(^{172}\)

1322. Thomas de Donestable was granted land fisheries and ‘his passage over or within the water, in the town and territory of Scaftworth and Marriosey near Everton, co Nottingham.’\(^{173}\) Scaftworth and Mattersey (Marresey) and Everton are situated up-river from Bawtry.

1337. Various persons were accused of diverting the course of the Idle at Sutton, which is 3 miles north of Retford.\(^{174}\)

1341. Wool and lead were shipped from Bawtry to Grimsby.\(^{175}\)

1363. Various persons were instructed ‘to make inquisition in the county of Nottingham touching the water of Idle descending by the towns of Elkeslay, Gamelston, Eton, Ordescale, Estretford, Westretford, Bolum, Tilne, Sutton, Estretford, Westretford, Scoby, Skaftworth, Cloworth, Everton, Harwell and Hayton, which as the King is given to understand, is so obstructed by weeds and other dirt ….\(^{176}\) While this commission does not refer to navigation as opposed to obstruction causing flooding, it seems more likely that as long a reach as this would refer to navigation.

1373. A similar commission was appointed.\(^{177}\)


\(^{170}\) Calendar of Liberate Rolls, 1260-67, 256.


\(^{173}\) Calendar of Close Rolls, 1318-23, 528.


\(^{175}\) Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1307-49, 437.

\(^{176}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1361-64, 449-450.

\(^{177}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1370-74, 395.
1380. Henry Marchant of Retford was given licence to ‘load one last of hides at each of the ports of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Hertlpool, Whiteby and Scardeburgh and take them to Bautre, co. York.’

1396. A commission was appointed ‘to inquire who have placed kidels, bridges, nuisances and other obstructions in the river Edelle on the borders of the counties of York and Nottingham flowing into the water of Bekerdyk and thence to the Trent, thereby hindering the common passage of ships and boats to Bautre and other towns on the said river.’

1397. A similar commission was appointed.

1548. A man was drowned from a boat in a small river called ‘le hiegh dyke’ between Everton and Misson.

1574. Six barrels of (Spanish) ‘steele’ were delivered to Bawtry. Other records show that ‘this import trade was possibly a regular one’.

1585. Lord George exported 100 tons of lead from Bawtry.

1715. Goods were sometimes transhipped to smaller boats which could reach Bawtry.

Tr 4  River Till

Lower limit. River Trent.
A. Stow. 8 miles. n/a.

13th century. In a ‘survey of the manor of Stow, the services of ten of the villain tenants included going “to Misson (on the River Idle) and Axholme for timber and turf with the ship of the lord bishop within their work all at their own proper cost, and to carry the said timber and turf to the dry land at the will of the sergeant.”’

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178 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1377-81, 486.
180 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1396-99, 98.
184 Ibid. page 109.
Tr 4A Foss Dyke

An artificial cut, 10 miles long, first made by the Romans from the River Witham at Lincoln to the River Trent at Torksey. 187

‘The cutting of this channel would present no great difficulties. It passes through low-lying land liable to flooding: and for the first four miles of its 11-mile course from Lincoln the engineers were able to use and perhaps to straighten the bed of the Witham’s tributary river the Till, which now runs into the canal.’188

1086. Domesday Book records that the channel was navigated in 1086.189 However it appears it may have been partly obstructed.190

1121. ‘At this period, king Henry having, by digging, made a long trench from Torksey as far as Lincoln, by turning into it the river Trent made a passage for shipping.’191

1273. ‘Robert of Donham, …, was levying, wrongly, it was complained, a toll of a halfpenny (more or less) per ship passing from Lincoln by Fossdyke to Dunham, a village on the Trent above Torksey, and in one year his receipts amounted to half a mark; this suggests 160 ships in the year, and the figure would not include ships passing downstream from Torksey.’192

1299-1316. The Durham Account Rolls show that a large purchase of cloth and provisions was taken from Boston to Lincoln by water, by cart to Torksey and there transferred to boats. This may indicate that the Foss Dyke was not navigable at this time or that it was only navigable by small boats.193

1329. The batellage charge for wine transported from Boston to Saxilby was 1s. 8d. per ton.194

1335. The channel was obstructed.195

1335. It was claimed that the channel had been cleared but that some of the money collected had been converted to the use of certain men.196

1365. A commission was appointed to compel the clearing of the dyke.197

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193 ‘Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham, Volume II’ Surtees Society, Vol. 100. (1898), 2, 495.
196 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1334-38, 203.
1375. The channel was obstructed.\textsuperscript{198}

1395. The city of Lincoln asked to be exempt from certain payments and taxes due to the cost incurred in ‘scouring of a canal whereby boats come to the city with divers victuals in greater numbers that they used to do ...’\textsuperscript{199} This shows that the dyke was cleared at this time.

1518. It was agreed that 110 marks should be collected so that the dyke could be cleared and the bishop of Lincoln issued an indulgence to all those who would assist.\textsuperscript{200}

1571. ‘The City Council considered that an Act of Parliament should be obtained for the river … but no action was taken.’\textsuperscript{201}

1586. ‘At Lincolne also this noble river meeteth with the Fosse dike, whereby in great floods vessels may come from the Trents side to Lincolne.’\textsuperscript{202}

1600. John Taylor took a boat along Fossdyke.\textsuperscript{203}

1622. ‘A Ditch is a kind of current of Waters in \textit{infimo gradu}. … (Fossdyke) is at this day a current and passage for Boats of small burthen in Winter, but in Summer none at all.’\textsuperscript{204}

1672. The canal was re-opened shortly after 1672.\textsuperscript{205}

\textbf{Tr 5 North Beck}

Lower limit. River Trent.
A. East Drayton. 3 miles. n/a.

1316. Protection was granted for one year to Walter de Chaumberlayn for ‘carrying corn and other victuals to the city of York by water from the Church of Estdraiton, co Nottingham, for the sustenance of …’

The Church of East Drayton is situated by the North Beck 5km upstream of the junction with the River Trent, 5km upstream of Torksey.\textsuperscript{206}

\textsuperscript{197} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1364-67, 138.
\textsuperscript{199} Calendar of Close Rolls, 1392-96, 413-414.
\textsuperscript{204} The Reading of the Famous and Learned Robert Callis, Esq; Upon the Statute of 23 H. 8. cap. 5. of Sewers: As it was delivered by him at Gray’s Inn, in August, 1622. 2nd Edition. London. 1685, 81.
\textsuperscript{206} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1313-17, 383.
Tr 6  River Devon

Lower limit. River Trent.
A. Belvoir. 15 miles. n/a.

At Hawton there was a fish weir in which ‘there is a statutory two perches gap at the apex. When not in use this would allow navigation.’

1510. Twelve people were drowned from a boat in the river.

1539. Bargemen were employed at Belvoir Castle.

Tr 7  River Greet

Lower limit. River Trent.
B. Southwell. 4 miles. 0.32 m³s⁻¹. 2

1580. ‘The Willoughby’s had their own fleet of open barges or “lighters” and distribution warehouses at Gainsborough. Coal was delivered to Southwell …

Tr 8  River Soar

Lower limit. River Trent.
A. Leicester. 25 miles. 2.8 m³s⁻¹. 0.61 Canalised.
RLU. Leicester. 25 miles. 2.8 m³s⁻¹. 0.61 Canalised.

Edwards considered that an order of 1318 that ‘certain customs were to be paid from goods for sale passing by the bridge of Keggeworth for the repair of the bridge’ was evidence of the use of the river. It is not accepted here as the order may only have referred to goods passing over the bridge.

Frere. (1967.) “The Raw Dykes at Leicester have sometimes been taken for an aqueduct, but the shape of the earthwork is that of a navigable canal, leading perhaps to docks.”

Frere. (1987.) “The Raw Dyke at Leicester is also taken to be an aqueduct.”

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211 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1313-18, 545.
c1340. Higden wrote that ‘the city of Leicester is in the middle place of England on the water of Soar, and on Foss a royal highway’. It appears that the river was as important for the city as the road.

1325. The Receiver of Leicester’s Accounts show money spent for the Repair of Boats (Batell’) including the purchase of pitch, cobbler’s wax (code), tallow, “flocke”. (fn. Perhaps flockwool for caulking seams, iron nails and payment of the carpenter’s salary.)

1325. The accounts of the Borough of Leicester include ‘And 2s. 7½d. for seven workmen on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday next after the feast, digging turves and carrying them by boat, 1½d. per day.’

1431. There was an agreement to submit to arbitration the question as to whether a toll was payable at Torksey by residents of Leicester on goods ‘sold or bought … or driven or carried by land or by water or through the middle of the town (of Torksey)’. Torksey is downstream of Leicester.

Tr 8A River Leen.

Lower limit. River Trent.

1830. There is ‘watercolour done by Turner about 1830 … showing crowded sailing-boats on the River Leen.’

Tr 9 River Derbyshire Derwent

Lower limit. River Trent.

A. Belper. 24 miles. 17 m$^3$/s. 1.1 P&R, C.
RLU. Hathersage Bridge. 53 miles. 5 m$^3$/s. 2.7 P&R, C.

1204. King John gave a charter to the town of Derby including the right to use the ‘Darent, navigable from ancient times.’

1229. A charter to the burgesses of Derby gave them ‘all the greet customs which the King’s burgesses of Nottingham have and had in the time of King Henry I and King Henry II that is to say, tol and them, and infangenethf, and toll from Dunebrug up to the bridge of Cordy, and thence to the bridge of Bradford, and thence to the bridge of Estweit, and of all men crossing the Derwent, as fully as in the borough of Derby; …’

217 Ibid. page 350-351.
218 Ibid. page 244-245.
It also stated that ‘the Derwent shall be open to navigation by the length of a pole on each side of the mid-stream.’

1268 and 1270. Simon, the Abbot of Dale built mills at Borrowash, between Derby and the Trent, and obstructed the river with weirs. In 1281 the river was so obstructed that no boat could pass. However Edward I appears to have ended this interference.

1281. ‘One man fell from a boat into the river Derwent and was drowned.’

1322. During the reign of Edward II there were lead mines in the vicinity of Wirksworth and Hartington. The accounts of William of Birchover show that he received £143 for 65 barge loads of lead which he had sold. Edwards points out that this is 44s per barge load. Thus he claims that lead must have been loaded onto the barges near the mines as otherwise it would have been cheaper to take the lead the whole way to Nottingham by road.

1325. The king ordered that as much lead be delivered ‘as might be needed for covering certain houses in Nottingham castle at the price contained in their commission, viz. 44s the barge load’.

1378. The citizens of Derby were charged with the making of a balinger for the crown.

1500-1640. ‘The corn market at Derby served a similar function for the miners and quarrymen of Derbyshire, and was furnished with corn principally by way of the river Trent.’

1783. ‘The Derby Boat Co. advertised the sale of six craft, two of 30 tons, two of 20 tons, and two lighters.’ Prior to this date no major works had been carried out on the river.

221 Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1226-57, 96.
226 Calendar of Memorial Rolls, 1326-27, 43.
Tr 10  River Dove

Lower limit. River Trent.
B. Clifton Bridge. 30 miles. n/a.
RLU. Clifton Bridge. 30 miles. n/a.

1653. ‘The river Dove … is swelled before it falls into Trent, … to such a breadth and depth as to be in most places navigable, were not the passage frequently interrupted with fords and weirs.’ Isaac Walton used to fish at Alstonefield 5 miles upstream of Ashbourne. At an earlier date there would have been fewer fords and weirs and so the river was possibly used by boats.

Tr 11  River Tame

Lower limit. River Trent.
A. Tamworth. 10 miles. n/a. Confl.
RLU. Water Orton. 25 miles n/a.

See River Anker 1221.

‘I suspect, however, that the Danes were mostly traders, and sailed up the rivers Trent and Tame from Derby and the Five Boroughs long after the subjection of the Danelaw.’

‘The Tame is in general shallow and slow … while the Ancher is deep, narrow and winds considerably.’

Tr 12  River Anker

Lower limit. River Tame at Tamworth.
A. Amington. 2 miles. 2.8 m$^3$ s$^{-1}$. 0.6 Not now usable.
RLU. Polesworth. 7 miles. 3 m$^3$ s$^{-1}$. 0.6 Not now usable.

Cole states that the name Nuneaton indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.

1221. A man fell from a boat and drowned at Amington.

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Tr 13 River Sow

Lower limit. River Trent.
B. Stafford. 5 miles. 1.2 m³ s⁻¹. n/a. Canalised.
RLU. Stafford. 5 miles. 1.2 m³ s⁻¹. n/a. Canalised.

‘The Sow and Penk affected its lower part and so continually overflowed their banks as to reduce it to the condition of a marsh (mariscum).’

Coles considers that the name ‘Stafford’ is derived from ‘ford at a landing place’.

Tr 14 River Penk

Lower limit. River Sow.
A. Penkridge. 8 miles. 2.3 m³ s⁻¹. 0.91 G. 15
B. Water Eaton. 10 miles. n/a.
(1 mile ESE of Stretton.)
RLU. Penkridge. 8 miles. 2.3 m³ s⁻¹. 0.91 P&R, CandG.

Cole states that the name Water Eaton indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.

1563. Grant was made of a ‘licence to make cole from timber in Haye Chistelin alias Chistlin Haye parcel of the possessions of Ambrose, earl of Warwick.’ ‘Cheslyn Hay was a division of the Royal Forest of Cannock and passed from the King to Bishop Alexander Stavensby in 1236. By 1250 the King had recovered the land and retained the lordship until 1550 when he granted Cheslyn Hay to John Dudley, Earl of Warwick and his heirs. In 1569 Ambrose Dudley granted land to John Leveson.’ It seems most likely that the river ‘commonly used by boats’ within 14 miles of Haye Chistelin was the Penk at Penkridge.

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237 Ibid. page 81.
238 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1560-63, 478.
Rivers of Lincolnshire Coast

L1 River Ancholme/Rase


‘Scandinavian Brygja, … originally meant “jetty, quay”, as in Brigg, Lincolnshire.’\(^{240}\)

A log-boat 48 ft 6 in long was found at Brigg in 1886. It was classified as a high-density cargo carrier.\(^{241}\)

A log-boat was found near Appleby in 1943.\(^{242}\)

1288. Complaints were made that the river was obstructed.\(^{243}\)

1290. Instructions were given ‘to clear of obstructions the water of Ancholme from Bishop’s Bridge to the Humber, at the cost of those who will benefit by such clearance, the sheriff having certified that if this is done ships and boats laden with corn and other merchandise might then go from Humber to the parts of Lindeseye, as they were wont to do.’\(^{244}\)

13th -14th C. There are ten similar references to obstructions during the following 75 years.\(^{245}\)

1375. A commission stated that the water of Ancholme should be ‘40 feet wide from its head to the Humber.’\(^{246}\)

1533. The Court of Sewers fined the abbot of Roche for failing to cleanse and scour part of the river ‘from the bridges called Byshoppe Brygges … to the water of Humber’ and other offenders were ‘punished in like proportion’.\(^{247}\)

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\(^{242}\) Ibid. page 147.


\(^{244}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1281-1292, 400.

\(^{245}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1292-1301, 113.

\(^{246}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1292-1301, 161.

\(^{247}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1307-13, 536.

\(^{248}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1313-17, 57.

\(^{249}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1327-30, 427.

\(^{250}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1330-34, 141.

\(^{251}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1343-45, 506.

\(^{252}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1348-50, 322.

\(^{253}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1354-58, 450.

\(^{254}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1361-64, 213.

\(^{255}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1374-77, 145.


\(^{257}\) Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII, Volume 6, 315.
Great Eau

Edwards includes the following record:-

1347. A commission was required to survey and clear the river ‘which runs from the bridge of Wythern as far as Herleholm, thence to Thedelbrigg, thence to Salthaven and so the sea. For the safety of the parts adjacent, the said water has of ancient time been ordained to be of a breadth and depth defined by certain limits but is now so obstructed … that the lands and holdings adjoining the same are inundated.’

This record is not accepted here as the clearance appears to have been for the purpose of drainage.

L 2 Anderby Creek

Tidal limit. Coast.  
A. Huttoft. 4 miles. n/a.

c1543. ‘At Mutetost Marsch 4 miles of cum shippes yn from divers places and discharge.’ Toulmin Smith states that this reference refers to Huttoft.

L 3 River Steeping

Tidal limit. 2.5 km upstream from the coast.  
Edwards. Wainfleet. 5 miles.  
A. Toynton All Saints. 10 miles. n/a.

1240. A agreement limited the extraction of water for the watering of cattle to alternate periods of three weeks from Easter to Michaelmas in order to preserve the port of Wainfleet.

1286. Corn was taken by water from Sturbridge to Wainfleet, Lincs.

1301. Various provisions were taken by ship from Wainfleet up the river to Lincoln as provisions for parliament. Presumably the ships went first to Boston.

1428-30. ‘At Toynton All Saints pleas between villagers concerned the sale of a boat on one occasion and a contract to repair a boat on another.’

c1543. ‘Wayneflete a praty market stonding on a creke nere to the se. To this toune long smaul vessels.’
L 4 Wrangle Drain

Tidal Limit. Coast.
A. Wrangle. 2 miles. n/a.

1189-1206. Simon le Bret gave the Abbey of Waltham permission to build a bridge over *Essewiam meam de estea* in Wrangle. But he specified that it should be built ‘*ita ut nauicule que turbam portant: subtus pontem transire possint*’. ²⁵⁵

Wapentake of Skirbeck.

1202. S was accused because ‘he tallaged ships which came through the marsh’. ²⁵⁶

L 5 River Witham.

Tidal limit. Boston.
Edwards. Claypole. 49 miles.
A. Claypole. 49 miles. 1.8 m³s⁻¹. 0.43 S. 5
B. South Witham. 71 miles.
RLU. Grantham. 61 miles. 0.8 m³s⁻¹. 0.0017 Modified

Note:- *Hydrological Data UK* p 76 states that ‘above Claypole there are material transfers at low flow’ and ‘above Grantham there is a material reduction on natural flow.’

Records of the use of the river downstream of Lincoln have not been recorded. Lincoln was a major port. ²⁵⁷

‘From near South Witham, past Grantham to Lincoln and thence to Boston, was the Witham. … And it seems almost certain that drains made to carry off the water in the low districts were often used for the carriage of corn and merchandise. We can now see how well the principal places of trade in the county, and especially Lincoln and Boston, were provided with water communication.’ ²⁵⁸

(At Lincoln) ‘What the common level of the valley was is illustrated by the survival to the west of High Street of the Brayford pool, which in the Middle Ages reached as far south as St Peter at Gowts parish, and to the south-west of St Peter it was famous for its fish and swans; and place-names such as the Holmes, Spike Island, Hartsholme, recall that there was a chain of pools stretching towards the Trent. In times of flood these pools united to form one vast mere, and many pictures exist that show the Minster from the southwest with Boultham parish under water in the foreground. When in 1795 the Trent bank broke at Spalford, and the flood-water found its way to Lincoln, …’ ²⁵⁹

1141. There was an almost impassable marsh to the south of Lincoln.  

1217. After a battle in Lincoln, ‘Many of the women took to small boats with their children and their goods, but the boats, being over-loaded and ill-handled, capsized and their occupants perished.’  

1225. A licence was granted for charging a toll on all vessels entering Lincoln, ‘every large ship 8d.; every middle-sized ship 4d.; every boat 2d.’ This toll for ships may be compared with that for every cartload ½ d. or 1d.; every pack-horse load ¼ d.  

1265. Complaint was made that the priory of St Katharine’s without Lincoln ‘had turned the course of the Witham and narrowed it, so that vessels that used to bring down turf and faggots and other things for the city’s use, were no longer able to pass.’  

1328. A commission was asked to enquire ‘on information that the water of Wythum and certain dykes and places through which divers waters in the moorland district in the Wapentakes of Lovedon, Newark, Boby, Grafhou, Flaxwell and Langhou, in the counties of Lincoln and Nottingham, flow from Claypol as far as Lincoln into the said water of Wythum, are so narrowed and obstructed with earth, sand and gravel that on that account, as well as on account of certain wears and mill-ponds on the Wythum between these points, inundations frequently occur, and that bridges and causeways are so broken up that in winter scarcely any passage is open - to survey the premises, remove obstructions and, where necessary, enlarge the channel, so that it is made 40 or 30 feet wide and 10 feet deep.’ This implies that there was a passage at least as far as Claypole.  

1336. Protection was granted to men of Beckyngham to go with a ship to York. Beckingham is 4 miles down river from Claypole.  

1363. A commission was appointed to clear the river downstream of Claypole because there were ‘bridges and causeways in the same parts, which are broken down so that there is hardly any safe passage.’  

1375. A commission was appointed ‘to enquire into obstructions on Divers waters in the counties of Nottingham and Lincoln from Cleypole to the city of Lincoln … and to widen to a breadth of 40 or 30 feet and to the depth of 10 feet.’  

262 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1225-32, 171.  
264 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1327-30, 349.  
265 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1334-38, 220.  
266 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1361-64, 371.  
267 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1374-77, 151.
1382. A commission was appointed ‘to survey the rivers Wytham and Brant and certain dykes between Cleypole and Lincoln, in the counties of Nottingham and Lincoln, running into the Witham, remove obstructions therein and cleanse and widen them between banks so that there a width of 40 or 30 feet and a depth of 10 feet.’

1415. Commission was appointed ‘on the water of Wythum in the counties of Lincoln and Nottingham from the town of Claypole to Lincoln and the water of Brant in the county of Lincoln touching offences against the statutes in Parliament of 25 and 43 Edward III and 1 Henry IV concerning the erection of weirs, mills, stanks, poles and kiddles.’

1450-1600. Barley considered that, ‘The Witham seems to have remained open to traffic throughout the middle ages, though boats on it must have encountered many difficulties.’ He lists obstructions by Norman Darcey of half the width of the river, by the lay brothers of St. Catherine’s, Lincoln, the abbot of Kirkstead, the abbots of Peterborough and Barlings, the abbess of Stainfield, the earl of Warenne and other laymen.

1491. ‘There seems to have been no general complaint about the river below Lincoln until 1491. In that year …(named men)… were appointed justices of sewers, for the removal of obstructions from the river, “to survey the water and the great river called “le Brayford” which extends from the town of Waryngton” (rectius Waddington) “to the city of Lincoln, and the great river passing through the city of Lincoln; also the great river called “le Wethom” extending from the city of Lincoln to the water of Dokdyke, in Lyndesey and Kesteven.’

16th C. ‘These “half-amphibious beings” as Macaulay described them, lived in their wooden huts erected on the isolated oozy mounds among the chain of meres surrounded by dense crops of reeds, and communicated with each other by means of crude canoes, or mounted on stilts.’

1528. All frontagers to the Sincil Dyke from East Bargate to the Stamp were ordered ‘to raise their banks before St Martin in winter (11 November), and every farmer to cut sedges and other things growing in the stream at the usual time of the year after the king’s proclamation.’ Sincil Dyke is a channel, apparently artificial, through south Lincoln which leads the water past Brayford Pool.

1585. The river divides at Lincoln. ‘The bigger arme is well able to beare their fisher botes, so the lesser is not without his severall commodities. At Lincolne also this noble

269 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1413-16, 347.
272 Rot, Hun., I, 311, 319.
273 Rotuli Hundredorum, I, 317.
river meeteth with the Fosse dike, whereby in great floods vessels may come from the
Trents side to Lincolne. 277

1762. The preamble to an Act claimed that formerly the river was navigable for
lighters, barges, boats and other vessels from the sea through to Boston to the High-
bridge, in the city of Lincoln. 278

The western two arches of the ‘great bridge at Bracebridge’ have been filled in. (Out of
the original seven arches.) 279

L 6 Hammond Beck or Newdike

Lower limit. River Witham.
A. Northorpe. 10 miles. n/a.

1281-84. In a case regarding ‘un estank’ at Swineshead it was reported that the lords
and free men had agreed ‘that all the ways which there were in this common marsh
should be stopped up, so that no boat should in future carry peat through these ways and
this was for the common good as some people who had not a foot of land within the
eight villages had been accustomed to sell ten marks of peat a year and the community
was aggrieved by this.’ 280 It would seem that this amount of peat must have been sold
in Boston.

1295. It was claimed that the Beck ‘ought to be kept three feet in depth’. 281

1301. Goods were taken from Bridge End to Lincoln by water. This would seem to
have been along drainage ditches and the Hammond Beck. 282

1336. Provisions were taken from Bridge End to Boston for onward shipping to the
army at Berwick. 283

1571. Commissioners instructed that new bridges should be built upon the sewer called
Newdike at Rusgate Ee and Surflete ‘of such heights as boats might well pass under’.
They also instructed that the bridges over the sewer at Kyrfton fen, another at Frampton
fen, and another at Lichfeld end should be reformed ‘to be of xii feet in breadth, and of
height sufficient for boats to pass under’. 284

277 Raphael Holinshed, William Harrison et al. The First and Second Volumes of the Chronicles. 2nd
278 2 George III, c. 32.
280 Roger of Huntingford v John of Brittany and others. Lincoln’s Inn MS 174, f. 47r. Cited in The
Earliest English Law Reports. Volume III. Eyre reports of 1285. Editor Paul A. Brand. Selden Society
281 Pishey Thompson, The History and Antiquities of Boston and the Hundred of Skirbeck. Boston: John
Noble Jun. 1856, 264. (Reprint 1997.)
282 TNA, E/101/568/4 Transcribed in Sharon G. Uhler, ‘English Customs Ports 1275-1343.’ Unpub. B.
PhD thesis Univ. of St Andrews. 1977, 265.
283 TNA, E/101/569/3 Transcribed in Sharon G. Uhler, ‘English Customs Ports 1275-1343.’ Unpub. B.
PhD thesis Univ. of St Andrews. 1977, 269.
284 William Dugdale, The History of the Imbanking and Draining of Divers Fens and Marshes. 2nd
1856. Within the memory of many persons now living, the inhabitants of Holland Fen used to bring their dairy and other produce down the Hammond-beck to market.  

L 7 River Slea or Kyme Eau or Old Slea

Lower limit. River Witham.
Edwards. Sleaford. 12 miles.
A. Sleaford. 12 miles. 0.53 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. < 15 m.

The Ancaster stone quarries lie close to the river. One of the quarries was situated at Wilsford, directly on the river 4 miles up-river from Sleaford. It seems that stone would have been transported from the quarry by water. (Edwards.)

1301. Wheat was taken from Sleaford to Lincoln by water for a meeting of parliament.  

1342. ‘By a petition of Gilbert de Unframvyll, earl of Anegos, it is shewn that there is a passage by the water called ‘le Ee’ of Kyme, passing through the lordship of his manor of Kyme, between Dokdyk and Brentfen, as far as the water of Wytham on both sides, very convenient for ships and boats of those parts, but in the channel thereof mud and sedge (paludes) have increased to such an extent that ships cannot pass unless it be cleansed, and the banks are fallen in, so that when the water is swollen by rain, there is no adequate passage for it, and that he will cleanse the said water and raise and keep in repair the banks for the common good if the King will grant to him and his heirs certain customs for their expenses herein, and the King, out of consideration for the earl, who has may times held a good place in his affairs and for the public good, after inquisition ad quod damnum, has granted to him and his heirs, lords of the said manor, for ever, certain specified customs on ships and boats laden with goods and merchandise passing by the said water through the lordship of the manor from Dokdyk to Brantfen.’

1375. A presentment was made that a toll was charged on wool, wine, corn, herrings, cattle and other goods for twelve years past at Homemyln dyke in Kyme.

1393. A jury was told that an unjust course of common water had been made between Haverholme and Sleaford which had flooded the common pasture of Evedon.

1479. Stone was carried by water from Appletreeness to Dogdyke near Tattershall.

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1500-24. Ancaster stone, for the church at Louth, was carried on the River Slea to the Car Dyke.  

**L 7A River Apeltrenesse** (This river has not been located.)

1316. A commission stated that the ‘Apiltrenesse’ was ‘the common passage from Kesteven unto the river of Wihum.’

1374. ‘Apeltrenesse we know was a navigable stream.’ A barrel of herrings was broken open on the river.

**L 8 River Bain**

Lower limit. River Witham.

Edwards. Coningsby. 2 miles.

A. Horncastle. 11 miles. 0.9 m³·s⁻¹. 1.8 Canalised.

‘The medieval ship was small and adaptable, and seagoing vessels could once be found as far inland as Lincoln, Horncastle and Gainsborough.’

‘According to their [Edwards and Hindle.] reading of medieval documents most of the rivers of Lincolnshire were partially navigable with the exception of the Bain. … The distribution of pottery also suggests that the Bain was used to transport pottery from Tattershall up to Horncastle.’

1200. Geoffrey the Fisherman of Coningsby, received the grant of a toft, in return for which he was to carry William of Keal or his men by boat, ‘as far as the sweet water (of Witham) extends its course.’

1457-58. Lord Cromwell had his own boats which were used to bring building materials, tiles, timber and stone, for the building of Tattershall castle.

1500-15. Building materials were taken by boat for the building of the collegiate church of Tattershall.

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298 Ibid.
L 9 River Brant

Lower limit. River Witham.
B. Brant Broughton. 7 miles.

1382. A commission was appointed ‘to survey the rivers Wytham and Brant and certain dykes between Cleypole and Lincoln, in the counties of Nottingham and Lincoln, running into the Witham, remove obstructions therein and cleanse and widen them between banks so that there a width of 40 or 30 feet and a depth of 10 feet.’

1415. Commission was appointed ‘on the water of Wythum in the counties of Lincoln and Nottingham from the town of Claypole to Lincoln and the water of Brant in the county of Lincoln touching offences against the statutes in Parliament of 25 and 43 Edward III and 1 Henry IV concerning the erection of weirs, mills, stanks, poles and kiddles.’ [Note 43 should be 45.] These Acts refer to keeping a passage clear for boats.

Rivers of the Fen Country

Fenland
Records of use in Fenland have not been recorded.

‘This survey of the Fenland cannot take us beyond the ordinary activity to and fro between the fenland settlements themselves, which kept in touch, one with another, by the numerous streams that intersected the fens in every direction.’

‘One extremely important factor for settlements that are required to act as towns in this environment [Medieval Fenland] is the additional point of access, which invariably means ‘access by water’.

‘Fenland communities knew the river systems, and had actual and legal access to them. The water, rather than isolating island communities, became a conduit for economic contact and advancement, not just within the Fenland basin, but with towns and communities throughout the east midland river systems.’

Lynn was of little account in 1095, ‘Yet only a century later, … Boston stood revealed as very probably the second port in the land, after London, and Lynn was not far behind it.’ … ‘Thus the trade of Boston and Lynn suffered a severe setback in the mid fifteenth, as in the mid fourteenth century. To some extent it revived at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, but it remained as much diminished in volume as it was changed in character, compared with the high peak of the late thirteenth century.’

300 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1413-16, 347.
303 Ibid. page 94.
These changing levels of trade must have affected the amount of goods transported on the rivers.

‘So much has been done by man and by natural processes to alter and remodel the waterways of the Fenland that not a single river now flows along the same bed and in the same direction as it did when the Conqueror invested Hereward and his English followers on the island of Ely. … I have tried to convey a picture of an area of meres, rivers and dykes and of marshy ground which must often have been flooded to a navigable depth; an area through which the native fenman of five centuries ago could guide his boat, rowing, poling or sailing as opportunity offered, by ways no longer accessible and difficult even to imagine. Among the most important links in the chain were the meres, the shallow reed-fringed lakes which used to lie along the margin of the fens.’

F 1 River Welland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit.</th>
<th>North Spalding.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards.</td>
<td>Stamford. 15 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Rockingham. 33 miles. 1.4 m$^3$ s$^{-1}$. 1.1 S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Duddington. 21 miles. 2.0 m$^3$ s$^{-1}$. 0.89 S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘In the manorial records of Crowland Abbey ‘there is evidence, in the payment of “rowyngsilver” and “menyngpeni and schiphire” in the manors of a system of carrying services by water.’

‘Abbot Litlington of Crowland had five new bells cast in London and brought to the monastery by water.’

The Deepings. ‘In the Middle Ages…The Welland served as a route for traffic and trade.’ At Market Deeping a reeve ‘kept the market-tolls, for the village was an important centre for boats coming from the “mainland” of Kesteven.’ Another reeve ‘accounted for the carriage of timber.’

14th C. ‘At Boston, wine importers supplied the royal butler with wine for delivery to the Bishop’s palace at Lincoln or for Newark, Spalding, Stamford, and Rockingham, from whence it could be taken on overland to Leicester or alternatively it could be carried south-ward to Huntingdon and St Ives.’ Rockingham is 3 km north of Corby.

14th C. Stone was shipped from Barnack to Ely.

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1332. There was a claim that some men had wrongfully arrested six boats on the river near Crowland.  

1334. A commission was appointed to, ‘survey divers lodes leading from the towns of Peterborough, Yakesle and Spaldying, in the great march of the county of Huntingdon, as far as the town of Lynn, whereby men, merchants, and others of that county and the counties of Norfolk, Cambridge and Northampton time out of mind have used to navigate their ships in winter, which are now so obstructed that navigation on them is impossible at any season of the year to the great loss of persons passing with ships by the waters of Ramesmere, Ubmere and Wytlesmere, to make inquisition as the persons who should cleanse and repair these lodes, and by whose default the obstructions have been allowed to form, and to compel the persons who should contribute to the removal of the same, whether on account of lands which they hold, or of a right in the common pasture or fishery there, to have the work done.’

1336. The Sheriff of Lincolnshire’s Accounts show that 500 quarters of grain were shipped from Crowland to Boston for onward shipping to the army at Berwick.

1337. A commission recommended that the abbot of Crowland should construct a causeway from Croyland to Spalding. The abbot wrote that, ‘since the bank is liable to be flooded in winter, the land whereon it would be made is at such times greatly loosened as well by the passing of sailors and boatmen as by the force of the wind.’ He also wrote that bridges would also have to be ‘high enough for laden ships and boats to pass under them.’

1349. Replying to a complaint about a road between Brotherhouse and Crowland, the abbot stated that, there was no King’s road from the Brotherhouse to Crowland except by the river Welland for persons travelling by ships or boats. Brotherhouse is about 4 miles down-river from Crowland and 5 miles upriver from Spalding.

1390. ‘When the servants, also, of the said abbot came to the market of Depyng ... throwing them from their boats into the water, ... they were unable to enjoy any benefit whatever of carriage by water to the said abbey.’

1432. The prior of Spalding granted permission to the abbot of Crowland to take from Spalding Fen as much earth, sand and clay as 100 boats could carry on the River Welland, each containing six cart-loads.

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311 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1330-34, 297-298.
312 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1334-38, 70.
1570. That the river had once been navigable at least to Stamford is implied by the preface to ‘An Act for making the River Welland, in the county of Lincoln, navigable’ which states ‘The town had formerly been inhabited by many opulent merchants, whose wealth had been advanced by the navigation of the River Welland, and its connexion with Boston, Lynn, and other ports.’

1571. ‘An Act of Parliament was passed for making the Welland navigable from Stamford to the sea. … The staple of wool had been lost because of the making of cloth and the ancient course and passage of the river had been altered and diverted for the erection of six or seven watermills between Stamford and Market Deeping.’

1586. Camden wrote that the inhabitants of Crowland ‘have their cattail a great way from the Towne, and when they are to milke them, they goe in little punts or boats that will carry but two a peece.’

1587. Harrison describes how the Welland divides into two branches. One of these branches joins with the River Nene. Another is ‘ceased, whereupon the inhabitants susteine manie grievous flouds, because the mouth is stanched, by which it had accesse before into the sea.’

1603. The commissioners of sewers were required by a writ of ad quod dampnum, to ensure that in the draining of some fens the work should not be prejudicial ‘either to the navigation [of the rivers Weland and Glene], or to the common-wealth, &c. requiring them to take care thereof.’

1630. The Lynn Law provided that ‘every the navigable rivers within the limits of this commission, as namely the river of Ooze, Grant, Nean, Welland and Glean, shall be likewise preserved. … provision was made for the redress of any possible interference with the navigation; and these rights were safeguarded in successive ordinances.’

1731. ‘A note in Bowen’s edition of Olgiby’s Road Book states that Crowland was built ‘on piles like Venice (if we may make ye comparison) consisting of 3 Streets which have communication by a Triangular bridge: it is so remote from Pasture that ye Inhabitants are obliged to goe milking by water in little boats called Skerrys wch carry 2 or 3 persons at a time.’

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F 2  River Glen/West Glen

Lower limit. River Welland.
Edwards. Catebridge. (1 km north-west of Baston.) 5 miles.
A. Little Bytham. 10 miles. 0.2 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 2 Not now usable.
RLU. Little Bytham. 10 miles.

14$^{th}$ C. ‘Even quite small rivers, like the Glen, a tributary of the Welland, which happens to flow within a few miles of Holywell and Clipsham, [where there were quarries] were brought into service: records exist of its use for the movement of stone in the fourteenth century.’$^{325}$ [Little Bytham is the nearest point on the Glen from Clipsham.]

1311. Grain was shipped from Catebridge to Boston via the Glen, the Welland, the Wash and the Witham for provisions for the army at Berwick.$^{326}$ At Catebridge the Market Deeping to Bourne road crosses the river near Boston. It is also the point where the Car Dyke from Lincoln the Peterborough cuts across the river.

1336. Grain was shipped from Catebridge to Boston via the Glen, the Welland, the Wash and the Witham for provisions for the army at Berwick.$^{327}$

1360’s. Stone was taken from Catebrigge to Windsor by water.$^{328}$

1603 and 1630. See Welland above.

F 3  River Nene

Edwards. Wansford. 16 miles.
A. Higham Ferrers 48 miles. n/a. Canalised.
B. Northampton. 65 miles.
RLU. Northampton. 65 miles. n/a. Canalised.

Records of Historic Use are not given for Yaxley, Peterborough, Ramsey, Sawtry, Water Newton and places downstream. See Edwards; Masschaele.$^{329}$

‘The wealthiest villages being situated along the routes of the two main rivers flowing through the county, the Ouse and the Nene.$^{330}$

There are many references to goods being taken by boat from Northamptonshire to King’s Lynn. Wansford lies on the county boundary, 9 miles upstream from Peterborough. It seems that the boats went beyond Wansford.$^{325}$

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330 Ibid. page 165.
'As the river became navigable higher up, Wansford seems to have become the usual loading point for stone from Weldon, King’s Cliff and Ketton; but once the main river was left the route may have varied from year to year and from season to season, the choice depending on the level of the waters and on the draught and size of the boats used.'

c1000. Eaton considers that stone was taken from the Roman site at Water Newton to Peterborough. Water Newton is about 4 miles upstream of Peterborough.

1184. ‘Thomas Bardolf began a voyage to Normandy from Wansford.’

1201. The burgesses of Northampton in a legal challenge over the levying of tolls at Woodston admitted that they used to carry the goods by river direct to Yaxley but had changed to unloading them at Woodston.

1222-6. ‘Among the Precentor’s Registers of Peterborough there is a confirmation without warranty by Abbot Alexander (1226-6) and the convent of a grant … of free carriage by the public road from Barnack to the water, and of the right to transport marble and any other stone or anything else bought for their own use by the river Nene between Alwalton and Peterborough.’

1227. The king granted the toll of ships at Alwalton, mid-way between Wansford and Peterborough, together with two ships in Bitlesmare.

1228. ‘Yaxley’s emergence as the inland head of the Nene is well attested in contemporary sources. When provisioning his estates in Northamptonshire in 1228, for example, Henry III sent wine purchased in Boston by ship to Yaxley and then by cart to the manors and towns he intended to visit.’

1252. ‘It could be assumed that Northampton would be provisioned … with firewood and sea fish by boat.’

1268-1591. There are ‘nearly a thousand instances in the rolls [of Ramsey, Hepmangrove and Bury] dealing with the blockage, narrowing or otherwise impeding of the several watercourses in the town.’

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1270. The toll of ships at Halwalton (Alwalton) was granted to the religious foundation at Burgh.\textsuperscript{340}

1300. The toll of ships at Alewalton was granted to a religious foundation at Peterborough.\textsuperscript{341}

Early 14\textsuperscript{th} century. ‘The change in direction in the flow of the main Fenland rivers at about the same period also limited the supply of Barnack stone to Cambridge.’\textsuperscript{342}

1314. ‘Commission to John Butchurte, Robert de Maddingle and Walter de Mollesworthe, as the King has heard that a certain river by which merchants were accustomed to pass from Lenne to Welle, and thence to divers parts of the counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon and Northampton with their ships laden with victuals, goods, wares and other necessaries, to the great gain of the men of those parts, and especially of the King’s town of Holm, situated upon that river, and of his market and fair there, has lately been obstructed at the town of Welle by some men of those parts, so that no ship can pass beyond that town, to the great injury of the town, market, and fair of Holm. The commissioners are to view the obstructions, and to enquire by oath of good men of the counties on the confines of which the obstruction was made touching the same, and the persons by whom it was erected.’\textsuperscript{343}

1331. ‘There were lengthy complaints from juries of several Fenland counties to the effect that an obstruction at Outwell, south east of Wisbech, had stopped the usual water route to Lynn. The common passage of boats from the places in the western fens such as Crowland, Peterborough, Holme and Yaxley, had been along South Eau or the Nene to Outwell, and from there along Well Creek to the Ouse at Salters Lode; this passage was no longer possible and boats were compelled to go from Outwell up the Oldcroft River by Welney to the Ouse at Littleport – fifty leagues further than necessary. The result, according to the verdict of Norfolk, was a rise in the price of the commodities which used to go by water – corn, timber, fish, turves, stone, etc.’\textsuperscript{344}

1331. Graz records that boats also went to Glatton and Ramsey, Walton, Sawtry and Conington.\textsuperscript{345}

1331. A jury referred to, ‘men who wanted to go from Lynn to “Peterborough and elsewhere to parts higher up” (that is, higher up the Nene).’\textsuperscript{346}

After 1331. Besides the Nene itself, there seem to have been, a few years later, “divers lades and trenches in the towns of Walton, Sawtry, and Conington” [in

\textsuperscript{340} Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1257-1300, 142.
\textsuperscript{341} Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1257-1300, 485.
\textsuperscript{343} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1313-17, 241-242.
Huntingdonshire] used “for the ships and boats of any men wishing to lad and carry corn.”

1342. With reference to dykes off the main river. ‘Commission to … to survey certain ancient lodes and trenches in Walton, Sautre and Conyngton, co Huntingdon, made for the preservation of the lands, pastures and meadows in those parts as well as for the passage of ships and boats to and from the sea which are said to be at the present time so narrowed and obstructed by some persons of those towns, that the ships and boats cannot pass, …’

16th century. ‘The Nen itself was navigable to Peterborough, which was ‘beautified with a “portable” river to bring and carry all merchantable commodities to five sundry shires adjoining it.”

1502. A grant of land was made for a wharf at Gunwade.

1580’s. Seven tons of freestone were transported from Gunwade to Cambridge by water for Corpus Christi College.

1586. ‘From the West side of the Shire, [Northamptonshire] holdeth on his course with many reaches of his bankes, after a sort through the middle part of this Shire; and all the way along it doth comfortable service. A notable River, I assure you, …’

1586. ‘The cattle are kept far from the town, so that when the owners milk them, they go in boats (that will carry but two) call’d by them Skerrys.’

1587. Harrison wrote that ‘(the Nene) goeth to … and so to Peterborow, where it divideth it selfe into sundrie armes, and those into severall branches and draines, among the fennes and medowes, not possible almost to be numbred, before it meet with the sea on the one side of the countrie, and fall into the Ouze on the other.’

1630. See Glen 1630 above.

1648. ‘a Boat of 3. Tun laden with Cheese was brought from Peterborow to Higham Ferrers at Michaelmas Faires the wayes that wet season being unpassable; and though the owner was forced to hire two men to unlade his Boat at every Mill shote, and after lift the Boat to the Dam, and laid her again, which he did sixteen time; yet he brought

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348 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1340-43, 552.
his Cheeses at an easier rate, then at the most seasonable time he could have done byland: (viz.) under 12 d. the hundred weight, he having first offered (2 s. 6 d.) per hundeed. . . who there sold his boat for the price he paid for it at Peterborow. 1657. ‘We saw the old passage of the River Nene, which is still made use of by Boats and Barges, for Coales and other Commodities.’

1721. The channel at the mouth of the Nene ‘changed its course a full mile from west to east, in two years’ time from June 1721.’

1724. [1724 was the date of the construction of the navigation] ‘There was limited traffic before this with small 1-3 ton boats that were unloaded and then dragged over land each time there was an obstacle.’

**Car Dyke**

Car Dyke was an artificial channel from Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire to the River Witham a few miles below Lincoln. There has been much discussion as to whether it was built for drainage, transport or both.

‘Trollope recorded that it (Car Dyke) was some times called Bell Dyke, from a tradition that the original Great Tom of Lincoln was taken by boat or raft from Peterborough to Lincoln.’

A boat-load of dressed stone was discovered in the bed of the dyke at Morton, 3 miles to the north of Bourne. Hence part of it was used at times for transport.

J.M. Steane points out that the link between the Welland and the Nene would greatly have shortened the distance between Stamford and Cambridge.

Simons claims that in the northern section the Dyke was not level and that the roads went through it not over it. Frere and St Joseph state that ‘The canal has usually been credited with a dual function. One was water management involving the control and diversion of flood-waters; the other was to provide a continuous navigation link, enabling barges carrying meat or corn from the farmlands of Cambridgeshire and the Fens to be towed to Lincoln and thence via the Foss Dyke (another canal) to the river Trent.’ They question the quality of Simons work but conclude that ‘For the present,

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the possibility that the Car Dyke was used for long-distance haulage must be regarded as dubious.\textsuperscript{363}

1230. The Dyke is mentioned in a disafforestation grant of 1230.\textsuperscript{364}

1500-24. Ancaster stone was carried from the River Slea to Appletreeness along the Car Dyke.\textsuperscript{365}

F 4 Great Ouse

Tidal limit. King’s Lynn.

Edwards. Lavendon. 115 miles.

A. River Ouzel. 126 miles. 9.2 m\textsuperscript{3}s\textsuperscript{-1}. 0.47 S.

B. Confl. Tove. 135 miles.

RLU. Buckingham. 147 miles. 2.5 m\textsuperscript{3}s\textsuperscript{-1}. 0.75 S.

Records of Use are not quoted for St Ives and places downstream. See:- Edwards; Summers.\textsuperscript{366}

‘In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the two rivers [Nene and Ouse] joined their courses via Well Creek, about ten miles inland from the port. Within Huntingdonshire, the two rivers were joined by a series of channels and inland lakes running between Earith on the Ouse and Peterborough on the Nene. Elizabethan cartographers drew this linkage as a fairly substantial waterway running via Ramsey Mere - then a substantial inland lake situated to the north and west of the town of Ramsey - and Whittlesea Mere - then the largest inland lake in the country. Feeding into these two lakes and their connecting channel were numerous smaller channels, some natural and some constructed. Many villages that appear on a modern map as being situated at a considerable remove from a navigable waterway were in fact well integrated into medieval riverine routes via these smaller channels.’\textsuperscript{367}

The town of Eaton is close to the boundary with Huntingdonshire. This may indicate that the river needed maintaining for navigation.\textsuperscript{368}

Willard, in an early, influential article, stated that Huntingdon stood at the head of the navigation of the Ouse.\textsuperscript{369} His references to the Close Rolls and the Patent Rolls are incorrect in that there is no mention of Huntingdon on the pages to which he refers.\textsuperscript{370}

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\textsuperscript{363} S.S. Frere, J.K.S. St Joseph, Roman Britain from the Air. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1983, 208-211.

\textsuperscript{364} Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1226-57, 122.


\textsuperscript{370} Calendar of Close Rolls, 1313-15, 355; Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1317-21, pp, 212, 311.

These are all references to Safe Conduct for men and mariners of the Bishop of Ely.
'A public barge quay was built in Brook Street.' This is 600 feet from the present river.\(^{371}\)

10\(^{th}\) C. The Danes constructed ‘docks’ at Willington 5 miles east of Bedford.\(^{372}\) Summers claims that these boats would have had a draught of 2 to 3 feet.\(^{373}\)

13\(^{th}\) C. ‘Cathedrals and abbeys like Ramsey, Bury St Edmunds, Ely, Spalding, Peterborough and Crowland owed their lavish size to the easy availability by water transport of the celebrated freestone from quarries on the edge of the Fens at Barnack in Northamptonshire. The majority of the ancient Fenland churches are constructed from the same material.\(^{374}\)

1247. ‘Wil. Fil. Ric. drowned from a boat in the Water of the Use.’\(^{375}\) This happened in Bedfordshire.

1247. ‘Ric. Molendinarius drowned from a boat in the Water of the Use.’\(^{376}\) This happened in Bedfordshire.

1251. ‘Eustace de Tornes had land in Soham for which he owed a rent of 5s. and the duty of sailing the bishop’s baggage from Soham to Ely; and John le Steresman had a messuage in Ely for ‘navigating the bishop’.\(^{377}\) John was probably a descendant of that Engelram, steersman of Bishop Nigel, who was given a fishery for 2 s. annual rent and “pro servicio suo de esnecca”, a description of his office similar to that found in connection with the king’s boatman about the same time.\(^{378}\)

1267. ‘R fell from a boat and was drowned at Wyboston, Bedfordshire.’\(^{379}\) Wyboston is 3 miles upstream of St Neots.

1268. Robert of Wyboston fell from a boat and was drowned at Wyboston. There were four persons in the boat with Robert.\(^{380}\)

1272-1307. Summers commenting on the navigability of the river in the reign of Edward I wrote ‘It is not easy to clarify the exact position, and this supposition [that the


\(^{375}\) *Calendar of the Roll of the Justices of Eyre, 1247.* Editor G. Herbert Fowler. Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Vol. XXI. Published by the Society. 1939, 163.

\(^{376}\) *Ibid.* page 166.


river was only navigable to St Ives] is contradicted in other sources which appear to indicate that the river was fully navigable up to Huntingdon.381

1275-78. It was claimed that ‘ships which were wont to come with their merchandise to the borough of Huntingdon from Lynn and other ports’ were no longer able to do so.382

1277. A man had carrying services by land and by water to Llyn, Cambridge, Willingham, Ditton, Ely, Somersham, Downham, Littleport, Welles, Dunnington, Benwick, Chatteris, Feltwell, Brandon, Hockwold and the like.383

1279. ‘A jury complained that a mill built by the Bishop of Lincoln in Offord Cluny restricted navigation between the two towns [of Huntingdon and Bedford].384

1286. ‘The boundary between the shires of Cambridge and Huntingdon ran in some of the meres just “as far as a man might reach with his barge-pole to the shore”.’385

1287. The men of the borough of Huntingdon complained that, ‘the water of the great river (aqua magne riparie) between the said borough and the town of St. Ives is so diminished by reason of watercourses, therefrom and obstructions in the said stream, that ships and boats laden with merchandise can no longer pass as they were wont.’386

1291. ‘In 1291 wax and tallow from Lynn, rice and sugar from Bury St Edmunds, wheels and axles from Barnwell and wine from Boston’ was taken by water to Ely.387

14th C. ‘In the early fourteenth century, ships or boats could get as far as Yaxley, Holme, Glatton, and Ramsey; and ‘divers lodes and trenches’ brought water traffic as far up as Walton, Sawtry, and Connington. (Fn. Gras, Evolution of the English Corn Market, p. 62.)’ The medieval references are dated 1331-42. There is no reason to think these small ports had been abandoned by the sixteenth century: we know that Yaxley was still active. Similarly, the Cam developed a number of river-ports reached by artificial cuts or lodes from the main river. Of these, Burwell is the best example where the numerous docks can still be traced behind the houses on the main street. Another old river-port was Reach, anciently a market town. Several of these little river-ports lay on or very near the Old North Road (the present A1) and it seems most likely that they were deliberately chosen to be transhipment points from water to a great

386 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1281-92, 270.
through road. Indeed, we can generalize and say that everywhere east of the Old North Road rivers and lodes were the normal means of carriage for goods.\footnote{W.G. Hoskins, \textit{The Age of Plunder, King Henry's England, 1500-1547.} London: Longman. 1976, 196.}

1338. A large quantity of wool was sent from Huntingdon to St. Ives in boats, and then transferred to shutes and shipped on to King’s Lynn.\footnote{J.F. Willard, ‘Inland Transportation in England during the Fourteenth Century.’ \textit{Speculum} 1 (1926), 372.}

1339. The abbot of Lavendon, near Olney, complained that various persons had ‘buried a boat with nets and other instruments for taking fish in his fishery in the sand, whereby he lost the profits of the fishery for a long time.’ A ‘fishery’ is considered to be in the river as opposed to ‘fishponds’. Lavendon is 20 miles up river of Bedford.\footnote{Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1338-40, 284-285.}

1342. ‘The Abbot of Ramsey adjudicated a dispute involving the villages of Walton, Sawtry, and Conington, the record of which mentions various ditches used by ships and boats to carry “grain, turves and other goods of certain men to various places within and beyond the country.” As these references indicate, villages with access to navigable waterways did not hesitate to make the most of them.\footnote{James Masschaele, \textit{Peasants, Merchants, and Markets.} New York: St. Martins’s Press. 1997, 191. Referring to \textit{Cartularium Monasterii de Rameseia,} ed. Hart and Lyons, vol. 1, p. 432.}

Mid 14\textsuperscript{th} C. Large stones were imported to Cottenham by barge.\footnote{Cambridge University Library Queens’ Cd 39. Cited in J.R. Ravensdale, \textit{Liable to Floods.} Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1974, 56.}

1370. A commission was set up to look into complaints, ‘by merchants and others of the counties of Leicester, Derby, Northampton, Bedford and Huntingdon that very many weirs, mills and stanks have been newly placed and erected in the water of Husee between the towns of Huntingdon and St. Ives, through which ships and boats used to pass with victuals and other merchandise, so that by the erection thereof the stream is totally turned aside and obstructed’. … and to have all such removed which have been ‘erected in and after the time of the late king’s grandfather.’\footnote{Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1370-74, 35.}

1373. ‘Lynn was constituted a staple port, on the ground that various streams ran through the counties of Warwick, Leicester, Northampton, Rutland, Bedford, Buckingham, Huntingdon, and Cambridge, by which wool and other goods could be conveyed to Lynn more easily and cheaply than to any other port.’\footnote{\textit{Rotuli Parlamentorum} ii, 319. Cited in L.F. Salzman, \textit{English Trade in the Middle Ages.} Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1931, 209.}

1386. Three men were found lying dead in the R. Ouse. They ‘went in a boat worth 12d. near Ravenstone Mill to fetch turves to make [repair?] the mill \textit{(ad molend’ faciend’).} On Fyscher’s instructions they put so many turves in the boat that it sank about the hour of vespers, and they were drowned.\footnote{\textit{Inquests and Indictments from Late Fourteenth Century Buckinghamshire.} Editor Lesley Boatwright. Buckinghamshire Record Society. No. 29. 1994, 70.}
1430. ‘This water-traffic, on some of the feeder canals at least, seems to have been seasonal. In the demesne leases for Oakington and Cottenham by the abbot of Crowland in 1430, the malt rent has to be delivered on the Feast of the Purification to the abbot’s barges (naviculae = narrow barges of the Fens?) at Cottenham. The delivery must be made “in sufficient time while there was plenty of water” (“tempore competanter dum aqua habunderaverit fieri poterit”). There is a penalty clause so that if delivery were late “so that the Abbot’s own transport should be upset and delayed by the falling of the water in part or in whole …” (“ita quod Cariaium ipsius abbatis per decrementum aque perturbatur et aretro fuerit in parte vel in toto.”) then the tenant would have to be responsible for the whole carriage right to Crowland at his own cost.’

1476. The Abbot of Ramsey granted to Huntingdon and Godmanchester limited rights of passage round his mills. Summers states that ‘this seems to be inconsistent with the existence of a public right [of navigation].’ It might equally be suggested that this shows that the abbot was obstructing a public right and had to grant the right to go over the weir in order to reduce the complaints.

1500-1547. ‘The Great Ouse was navigable right up to Bedford for ships of 15 tons., and its tributary the Cam up to Cambridge.’

c1543. ‘Newenham a howse of chanons a myle benethe Bedford apon the ryver. Ther be many holmes, otharwyse little isles, in the river betwixt Bedforde and Newham.’

1586. Harrison wrote ‘Finallie, the maine streame spreading abroad into the Fennes, I cannot tell into how manie branches, neither how manie Ilets are inforced by the same; … after it hath thus delited it selfe with ranging a while about the pleasant bottoms & lower grounds, it meeteth with the Granta, from whence it goeth with a swift course unto Downeham.’

1586. Stony-Stratford ‘standeth upon the publike Street commonly called Watlingsstreet, which was Militarie high way made by the Romanes, and is evidently to be scene yet beyond the Towne with the banks or causey thereof, and hath a fourd but now nothing shallow, and hardly passable.’

1611. ‘The rivers [of Huntingdonshire] ferrying Coale, as the Moores Turffe, for fuell.’

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1611. ‘To this Shire-Towne, [Huntingdon] and benefit of the neighbour Countries, this river was navigable, until the power of Grey, a minion of the time, stopt that passage, and with it all redresse, either by law or Parliament.’

1618. Willan writes that ‘The River Ouse had been navigable during the middle ages, (fn. I.E. Griffith, A collection of ancient records relating to the borough of Huntingdon p. 20) but when it was surveyed by Sir Clement Edmondes in 1618 it was found to be “generally foul and overgrown with weeds” and “stopped with weirs” between Huntingdon and Eley. (fn. Report of SCE dated 30 September 1618 in “Acts of the Privy Council, 1618-19, pp 293-299)”

1630. See Glen 1630 above.

F 5 Nar

Lower limit. Great Ouse.
Edwards. Castle Acre. 15 miles.
A. Castle Acre. 15 miles. n/a.
RLU. Narborough. 12 miles. n/a.

A canal, 200 m. long, was built from the river Nar to Castle Acre Priory for boats.

1070’s. ‘The River Nar, which in those days was certainly navigable by boat, at least as far as here. [Castle Acre.]’

A riverside location was attractive both for defence, and for river-borne supplies coming up the Nar from Bishop’s Lynn, now King’s Lynn.

1275. An inquisition was told that, ‘If the great hithe of Secheth was completely cleansed of wreck, rubbish and siltinig there would be a wider watercourse towards the sea, … the weirs in the said hythe should be removed.’ Setchey is 5 miles up-river from the confluence with the Great Ouse.

1350-1550. The priory at Castle Acre transported sacks of grain and barrels of beer down the River Nar to King’s Lynn.

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403 Ibid. Folio 54.
407 Ibid. page 17.
408 Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1219-1307, 304.
## F 6 Wissey/Oxborough River

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>Great Ouse</td>
<td>11 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Oxborough</td>
<td>11 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Northwold</td>
<td>14 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Hilborough</td>
<td>25 miles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The name Stoke Ferry, ‘A secondary settlement with a ferry’ dates from 1286. Previously the name was simply Stoches in 1086.410

1291. ‘Stoke Ferry Bridge was the subject of an enquiry in the year 1291, at which it was stated that “between the piles in the middle of the bridge at Stoke Ferie there ought to be a space of 16 feet, now narrowed by 7 feet in breadth.”411

1325. 136 quarters of divers grains were transported by boat from Oxborough to King’s Lynn to supply the army in Gascony.412 Oxborough is 2 miles up a tributary of the river which joins the Wissey 2 miles upstream from Stoke Ferry.

1406. ‘The lord of Oxborough was failing to provide a boat for the use of travellers between Oxborough and Northwold.’413

‘The river Wissey was navigable to Northworld at least.’414

1436. It was recommended ‘that two jetties 18 feet distant each from the other, be set upon the said river, within 200 feet of the said river Ouse’. 415

Late 15th C. ‘Joanna Dutton, was to transport her barley from Methwold to Stoke Ferry, from where it was probably carried down the rivers Wisney, Ouse, and Cam to the college [in Cambridge].416

1801. It was held that there was an ancient right of navigation due to historic use on the river at Northwold.417

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416 Trinity College Cambridge, King’s Hall accounts, XVI, fo. 120. Cited in John S. Lee, ‘Feeding the colleges: Cambridge’s food and fuel supplies, 1450-1560.’ *Economic History Review*, LVI, 2 2003, 243-264, 259.
417 *Simpson v Scales* (1801) 2 Bos & Pul 496-499.
F 7  **Little Ouse or Brandon**

Lower limit. Great Ouse.
Edwards. Thetford. 21 miles.
A. Thetford. 21 miles. 3 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. n/a. Canalised.
B. Redgrave Fen. 38 miles.
RLU. Knettishall. 33 miles. 0.45 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.53 Not now usable.

Thetford was a port in Saxon times.418

Norfolk is described as an island, bounded on the south by the rivers Waveney and Little Ouse, and on the north by the ‘main sea’; consequently, on all quarters the county had an abundance of ‘havens and hithes’.419

‘Before Denver Sluice was built, Brandon, like Thetford, “was a water town, the inhabitants gaining their livelihood by water traffic.”’420.

‘Before the fens were drained it is believed that navigation was possible across the deeper fenland meres into the Ouse, and thence past Thetford into the river system of Broadland.’421

Mr Dewhurst wrote: ‘It is hardly the case that prior to the Act of 1670 constituting the Thetford Navigation, the Little Ouse had been used by vessels erratically before then; on the contrary, there is ample documentary evidence that the subsequent Thetford Navigation was only the remnant of an extensive navigation which, before the blockage of the tidal flow in 1653 by the erection of Denver Sluice, reached back into early medieval days at least; and that it had operated right into Thetford without any staunches.’422

‘Concerning Thetford: Barnack stone was used on a vast scale in building the twelfth century Priory here, and blocks of the same stone are found worked into walls all over, and even outside the town. There was thus heavy traffic in stone up the Little Ouse in and after the twelfth century.’423

12th century. ‘Lynn deprived Thetford of a great deal of river and road trade. Access to Lynn improved, and the difficult navigation of the shallow and winding Little Ouse became an unattractive proposition; once the upgrading and straightening of the Fenland water-ways had commenced, … This additionally benefitted towns such as Wisbech and

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Ely, which were on major waterways, leaving Thetford a disadvantaged, awkwardly-placed and remote river port. ⁴²⁴

12th, 13th centuries. ‘Only one river of any size, the Little Ouse, flowed past Lynn, connecting the town with Brandon and Thetford.’ ⁴²⁵

1294-1348. The purveyance accounts show that goods were taken by water downstream from Santon Downham. ⁴²⁶

1330. Robert Gopayn claimed that another peasant had illegally removed his boat from its mooring at Gopaynesshythe. ⁴²⁷

1529. ‘A commission of 1529 was told that among the problems of the town [Thetford] was that the river was “stopped, turned and apayred” to the hindrance of trade.’ ⁴²⁸

c1550. ‘In the mid-sixteenth century, vessels carrying between 12 and 16 loads (c. 12-16 tons) could pass from Thetford to the ‘main sea’. ⁴²⁹

1555. ‘A petition stated that Thetford was “invyroned with a goodly freshwater river, the which transporteth to and from the maine sea by vessels of xii or xvi lodes burthen”’. ⁴³⁰

1555. ‘Manorial accounts note that wool merchants had free passage by boat on the Little Ouse as far as Thetford.’ A petition stated that vessels of twelve or sixteen loads burden could reach the town. ⁴³¹

1611. ‘Northfolke is an Iland inclining to an Ovall forme, closed on the South part with the Rivers of Waveney and the lesser Ouse, which divide it from Suffolke.’ ⁴³²

1651. Edmond Russel stated that about 60 years previously he had travelled by boat from Thetford to Lyn with ten Chaldron of coals. Francis Ruderham, aged 66,

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reminded Barges loaden with 14 or 15 Chaldron of Coals coming up to Christopher’s Bridge in Thetford.433

1668. ‘A notable storm blew sand for 5 miles from Lakenheath Warren to Santon Downham, … obstructing the navigation of the Little Ouse.’434

F 8 River Lark

Lower limit. Great Ouse.
A. Bury St Edmunds. 25 miles. n/a. Canalised.
RLU. Bury St Edmunds. 25 miles. n/a. Canalised.

Throughout the period under consideration there was a port at Isleham.435 The volume of trade passing through this quay is emphasised by the large sixteenth-century stone warehouse which stands in the grounds of Hall Farm.436

‘Similar cargoes of building stone have been recovered from fenland waterways very much further from Barnack such as Upware and Prickwillow.’437 Prickwillow is three miles upstream from the Great Ouse.

‘The Lark [was navigable] to Mildenhall and Worlington.’438

There was barge access via a Millstream to Tuddenham.439

Bailey in his section on transport by water wrote ‘There is evidence of an agreement … to deliver goods at a Bury residence.’440

1078-95. An order of King William I commanded the abbot of Peterborough to ‘take a sufficient amount of stone for his church as he has done so far, and you shall course him no more hindrance in the transportation of stone by water than you did previously.’441

1253. Various persons, ‘came on the Friday night before St. Bartholomew’s to the park of Edmund de Sardelowe in Middehal and carried away his hay in boats (cum navigiis).’442

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442 Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1219-1307, 558.
13\textsuperscript{th} century. ‘We know that Normandy stone was brought to Bury St Edmonds … via Lynn for ecclesiastical buildings in the twelfth century, and that the river was later the means for exporting woollen cloth.’\textsuperscript{443}

1379. ‘The royal council saw fit to authorize the burgesses (of Bury St Edmunds), along with their comrades from Thetford, another inland town, to build a ship to be incorporated into the royal navy.’\textsuperscript{444}

1411. ‘A cutting at Mildenhall was occasionally dredged to ensure that laden craft could reach the annual fair from the river Lark.’\textsuperscript{445}

1450. ‘(King’s Lynn) stood on the wash, at the headwaters of the River Ouse, into which the Lark and the Linnet flowed, and proved a convenient entrepot for heavy goods, such as raw wool and hides. The lack of quantifiable evidence makes definitive statements impossible, but it is likely that by 1450 about half of all of Bury’s exports were shipped through Lynn.’\textsuperscript{446}

\textbf{F 9 River Kennett.}

Lower limit. River Lark.
A. Kennett. 5 miles. n/a.

13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} C. The river was navigable at least until the early 14\textsuperscript{th} century connecting the parish [of Kennett] to the fenland waterways.\textsuperscript{447}

In 1995 the river had ceased to flow.\textsuperscript{448}

\textbf{F 10 River Snail / Soham River}

Lower limit. River Cam.
A. Soham. 5 miles. n/a.

Soham was a port throughout the period 1200-1600. Soham Mere was 500 ha.\textsuperscript{449}

c.1140. William of Malmesbury wrote that the lake was ‘once dangerous to boats wanting to reach Ely, but in his day a road had been made across the marsh so that it could be crossed on foot.’\textsuperscript{450}

\textsuperscript{448} \textit{Ibid.}
14th C. Turf and sedges were taken from Soham for sale in Cambridge.\textsuperscript{451}

c.1300. Two millstones bought by the Earl Marshall of Cambridgeshire were transported by water to Soham and then by land to Kennett.\textsuperscript{452}

**F 11 River Cam**

The tributary flowing from Saffron Walden and river downstream of Granchester are called the ‘Cam’. The tributary flowing from Ashwell is called the Rhee. The tributary flowing from Linton is called the ‘Granta’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower limit.</th>
<th>Great Ouse.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards.</td>
<td>Grantchester. 16 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Great Chesterford. 28 miles. 0.6 m(^3) s(^{-1}). 1.7 S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Saffron Walden. 32 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Audley End Station. 33 miles. 0.6 m(^3) s(^{-1}). 1.9 S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Records of Use are not given for Cambridge and places downstream. See Edwards, Lee.\textsuperscript{453}

Dr S.M. Haslam states that ‘R. Cam proper has a good stone wharf at the upstream end of Saffron Walden.\textsuperscript{454}

12th century. At Walden Abbey there was found ‘mid-late 12th century chevron ornament in Barnack stone, and mouldings and ornament of the 13th, 14th, and 15th/16th centuries, in a variety of stone including Purbeck marble, Ketton, Barnack, Reigate and clunch. … Walden seems to lie at the limit of distribution southwards (of Collyweston stone slates).\textsuperscript{455}

c1200. The River Cam and the King’s Slade at Walden Abbey were described as *aquis irriguus* which would seem to imply that they were swampy rivers at that point.\textsuperscript{456}

1120’s. An undated charter of Henry I states that, ‘ “I forbid that any boat shall unload at any hithe (litus) in Cambridgeshire except at the hithe of my borough of Cambridge, nor shall barges be laden except in the borough of Cambridge, nor shall any one take toll elsewhere, but only there.” However the sentence was not repeated in later Cambridge charters. It was a very unusual privilege even in the twelfth century, and is

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\textsuperscript{454} S.M. Haslam, Personal letter 2.4.2006.


unlikely to have been of any practical significance by the later thirteenth. In general burgesses could control trade only within the immediate proximity of their market place.  

1271. From Chesterford a boat from and to Littleport and Southwood cost 1 s.  

15th C. ‘The river formed a waterway from the barns and kilns and threshing-floors of Grantchester almost (for I suppose the mills of Cambridge would interrupt navigation) to the very precinct of the College. In the Mundum Books I have found traces of a College barge, perhaps we may imagine this craft passing and repassing on the upper River, each year in autumn, carrying down wheat or flour for the College bakehouse, malt for the brewery and hay for the stables.’  

1481. A stone wall was built on the west side of Peterhouse which is upstream of the King’s Mills. The wall was built *juxta aquam* and there is a gate in the wall, now blocked up, with the arms of John Hotham, Bishop of Ely (1316-1337) above the gate on the outside and of John Alcock, Bishop of Ely (1486-1500) on the inside. The gateway appears to be part of the original construction. This would seem to imply that boats used the river above the mills at times between 1316 and 1500.  

16th C. There is a brick Water Gate at Walden Abbey, ‘apparently of the 16th century’.  

1628. There is a reference to *Freshman’s Boate* upstream of King’s mills. Stokes considers that this refers to a ‘Pool’ but this meaning is not recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary.  

1630. See Glen 1630 above. ‘Grant’ is an early name for the Cam.  

F 12 River Bourn  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower limit</th>
<th>Cam.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Great Eversden 4 miles. n/a.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1397. An inquisition of the property of William Castelacre in Great and Little Eversdon, Co. Cambridge recorded a boat worth 20s. Great Eversden is 4 miles upstream of Granchester.  

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F 13  **River Rhee**

Lower limit. Cam.
B. Barrington. 5 miles.
RLU. Guilden Morden. 15 miles. n/a.

Parker considers that blocks of stone may have been used for ‘a small wharf or landing-stage’ at Barrington.464

‘There is a tale sometimes told in the village [Barrington] that a landing stage once existed at the bottom of the garden of Orchard House. Barges from Cambridge were supposedly unloaded there.’465

‘The quarries at Eversden, Barrington and Haslingfield were also near to the upper reaches of the river, and may well have made use of it. … for “white stone from Haslingfield and Barrington” and “stone from Barnewell” costs are recorded only as “digging and carriage”. This suggests that the clunch from the Southern group of quarries came by road; but it is not conclusive evidence that this was normal.’466

The copious manuscript accounts for Peterhouse, the only college backing onto the river above King’s Mills, have not been examined.

1923. Conybeare suggested that it was impossible to take a canoe upstream of Wendy, some four miles from the source, due to the ‘reeds and weeds and rushes and bushes’.467

**Granta**

RLU. Babraham. 3 miles. 0.23 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. Weir downstream.

F 14  **River Ivel / Flit / Hiz**

Lower limit. Great Ouse.
A. Flitton. 17 miles. n/a.
RLU. Hitchen. 20 miles. n/a.

1324. Timber was taken from Chicksands in Bedfordshire and Stourbridge to Ely.468

c1640. The inhabitants of Fletton [Flitton] complained about the loss of navigable rivers due to the works carried out to drain the fens.469

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463 Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1392-99, 98.
F 15  **River Ouzel or Lovat**

Lower limit. Great Ouse.

A. Eaton Bray. 20 miles. n/a. Now not usable.
RLU. Leighton Buzzard. 15 miles. n/a.

1271. William Whiteside fell from a boat and was drowned at Eaton, Bedfordshire.\(^{470}\)

c1540. Less than half of a small river boat was found at Caldecotte.\(^{471}\) ‘In the Middle Ages the surrounding area was marshland.’\(^{472}\)

F 16  **River Tove**

Lower limit. Great Ouse.

B. Towcester. 10 miles.
RLU. Towcester. 10 miles. 1 m\(^3\) s\(^{-1}\). 1.3 S. 8

‘The large mixing bowls called mortaria made near Peterborough are believed to have travelled by river.’\(^{473}\)

**Rivers of the East Anglian Coast**

EA 1  **Babingley River**

Tidal limit. Coast.

A. Flitcham. 10 miles. n/a.

‘[Castle Rising] was once a seaport.’\(^{474}\) It is 7 miles from the sea.

1301. The port of Flitcham was ordered to send ships to Berwick on Tweed.\(^{475}\) Flitcham is 10 miles from the sea.

1595-1607. A lease was assigned of ‘the toll of boats and carts with fish from the sea to Stourbridge Fair passing by the liberty of Rising Chase in Babingley and Newton near Broade Water’.\(^{476}\)

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\(^{470}\) *Select Cases from the Coroners’ Rolls, 1265-1413.* Editor Charles Gross. Selden Society, Vol. 9. 1895, 16.

\(^{471}\) Gillian Hutchinson, ‘Boatfind at the Caldecotte Lake Site.’ *Archaeology in Milton Keynes.* 1982, 7-8.

\(^{472}\) Ibid. page 127


\(^{476}\) Howard (Castle Rising) Collection. Norfolk Record Office. How 147 342 x 6 date: 1595-1607. Entry in A2A Index.
EA 2  River Heacham

Tidal limit. Coast.
A. Heacham. 1 miles. n/a.
B. Eaton. 2 miles.
   (1 mile SE of Heacham.)

Barley shows Osnettisham as the upper limit of navigation on the river.\textsuperscript{477}

Speed shows Hacham Haven which because of the nature of the coast must now be above the tidal limit.\textsuperscript{478}

Cole states that the name ‘Eaton’ indicates that the town was to ‘keep the river open for navigation.’\textsuperscript{479} Eaton is 2km south-east of Heacham.

EA 3  River Stiffkey

Tidal limit. Coast.
A. Little Walsingham. 8 miles. 0.4 m\textsuperscript{3}s\textsuperscript{-1}. 1.8 Not now usable.

Brooker’s Dock in Walsingham is shown on Ordnance Survey maps.

Walsingham is stated to be a port in two lists of ports from the second half of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{480}

1565. Referring to a list of ports Hoskins writes, ‘The inclusion of Walsingham in at least two lists (1565 and 1575) sets a problem in itself. It is difficult to believe that the Stiffkey river was ever navigable, even for barges, as far up as this, but the possibility certainly needs to be examined carefully on the large-scale map and on the ground.’\textsuperscript{481}

EA 4  River Bure

Tidal limit. 1 mile downstream of Wroxham
Edwards. Wroxham. 1 mile.
A. Aylsham. 15 miles. 1.1 m\textsuperscript{3}s\textsuperscript{-1}. Canalised.
RLU. Aylsham. 15 miles. 1.1 m\textsuperscript{3}s\textsuperscript{-1}. Canalised.

It is thought that in medieval times the Thurne, and possibly the Bure, drained north-east to the sea.\textsuperscript{482}

\textsuperscript{480} TNA, SP12/135 dated 1575.
\textsuperscript{482} W.G. Hoskins, \textit{Fieldwork in local History}. London: Faber and Faber Limited. 1967, 63.
\textsuperscript{483} Tom Williamson, \textit{The Norfolk Broads}. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1997, 76.
1291. There was a court case concerning a boat on the River Bure between Burgh and Aylsham.483

1437. 100½ quarters of barley were taken by water from Wroxham to Great Yarmouth.484

1500-1547. ‘The Bure was navigable for lighters of up to 30 tons as far as Aylsham.’485

1611. ‘The whole county aboundeth with Rivers and pleasant Springs, of which the Ouse is chiefest, … The next is Hierus or Yare, passing from Norwich to Yarmouth, where it receiveth the Bure comming from Aylsham, both of them of great service for water carriages. … The Waveney and the lesser Ouse are also Navigable & of great use. The residue I omit.’486

1611. On his diagram of Norwiche Speed shows small boats upstream of the bridges which implies that they had come from upstream of the city.487

EA 5  Pickerill Holme

Lower limit. River Bure. 3km west of the coast.
A. Caister. 3 miles. n/a.

1432. ‘Goods [for the building of Caister Castle] were conveyed from Yarmouth to the castle by the river Bure, Pickerill Fleet, and the Barge Ditch.’488

1432. In the Caister Castle accounts is an entry ‘In repairing boats £1. 9s. 7d.’489

1760. ‘By this ditch [Caister Castle Barge ditch] goods, etc. were more easily convey’d to and from Yarmouth than by land. … This ditch is entirely useless (except as a common drain to the adjoining lands) and almost choked up.’490

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490 ‘Swindon’s Plan, 1760.’ Cited in ibid. 178.
**EA 6  Dobb’s Beck**

Lower limit. River Bure  
B. Rackheath. 3 miles.

Ann Cole considers that the name is derived from *hyo* a landing place.\(^{491}\)

**EA 7  River Ant**

Tributary of the River Bure.  
Tidal limit. 1 km upstream of junction with the River Bure.  
Edwards. East Ruston. 9 miles  
A. East Ruston. 9 miles. 0.3 m\(^3\)s\(^{-1}\). Canalised.  
RLU. Spa Common. 13 miles. n/a.

A logboat was found between Smallburgh and Stalham.\(^{492}\)

1290. Complaint was made that the Abbot of Hulme had erected a barrier of timber between Ludham and Irsted. It was agreed that boats had a right to pass though the bridge at Warthford [Wayford].\(^{493}\)

1360. It was claimed that ‘the river fell out of use at the time of the pestilence and nothing was carried on it so that weeds continually grew in it from that time until the present time; that it was not known who ought to clean it because none had cleaned it since the memory of man; that the towns that had advantage and profit from the said river were Stalham, Sutton, Catfield, Ludham, Smallburgh, Barton Turf and Irstead.’\(^{494}\)

Thus there was traffic at least as far as Smallburgh 7 miles upstream of the confluence with the river Bure.

1360 It was claimed that, ‘The Abbot of St. Benet Holme … has stopped and reversed the course of a water called Smale Ee for twenty years past between Ludham and his several fishery and the town of Horning and refuses to amend it, though many presentments have been made.’\(^{495}\)

1367. Complaints were made that the Prior of Bromholme had ‘stopped and diverted a common watercourse … between Ridlington and Witton.’\(^{496}\) Both these places are to the east of North Walsham. It appears that the watercourse was a navigable channel leading to the River Ant.

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\(^{493}\) *Abbreviatio Placitorum*, 222.  
\(^{496}\) *Ibid*. page 97.
1374. Two boats were damaged and 8 boats taken away at Eslriston. East Ruston is between Smallburgh and North Walsham.497

1812. In 1812 an Act was passed for making a navigable Canal from Wayford Bridge to Antingham. This would seem to imply that prior to 1812 barges could reach Wayford Bridge.

**Borough of Yarmouth**

1257. It was claimed that R and W seized a boat in a marsh where J had the right of mowing grass.498

**EA 8 River Yare**

Tidal limit. Norwich.
RLU. Bawburgh. 8 miles. n/a.

Referring to the export of goods through Yarmouth Adams wrote ‘It is hardly surprising that there are few entries for the villages along the Yare and none for the Wensum above Norwich as the Norwich men must have virtually monopolised the trade.’499

1316. Norwich Cathedral Priory purchased 400,000 peat turves, many of which would undoubtedly have been delivered by water.500

1671. It was claimed that in the City of Norwich ‘every vessel passing thro’ the same river by the said key, should pay a certain sum.’ ‘It was held a void custom as to those vessels which did not unlade at the said key, nor any other place in the city; … they only passing by, and were bound for another place, and therefore could have no imposition upon them.’501 The wharfage monopoly existed in 1379.502

**EA 9 River Wensum**

Lower limit. River Yare.
Edwards. Tavenham. 7 miles.
A. Morton. 12 miles. nk. < 10 m.
RLU. Ringland. 10 miles. 4.0 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. < 10 m.

1281. There were carrying services to Morton.503

497 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1370-74, 491.
Calendar of Close Rolls, 1374-77, 220-221.
498 *Select Cases of Procedure Without Writ under Henry III.* Editor H.G. Richardson. Selden Society Vol. 60. 1941, 84.
501 Haspurt *v* Wills, (1671), 1 Vent, 71. 1 Sid. 454.; 1 Mod. 47, 104, 231; 2 Keb. 624, 665; Raym. 232.
503 *Abbreviatio Placitorum*, 200.
1295. Part of the hundred of Taverham, 7 miles above Norwich, was included in a list of ‘maritime’ places.\textsuperscript{504}

1375. The Bishop’s Bridge in Norwich was blocked by a boat which had sunk. Normally a sunk boat would only block a bridge if it had been operating upstream of the bridge.\textsuperscript{505}

1611. Speed shows boats both upstream and downstream of New Mills.\textsuperscript{506}

1671. The City of Norwich claimed a custom that inasmuch as it maintained a common quay for the unloading of vessels, every vessel passing through the river should pay a toll, whether it unloaded at the quay or not.\textsuperscript{507} The wharfage monopoly existed in 1379.\textsuperscript{508}

**EA 10 River Tud**

Lower limit. River Wensum.
A. Honingham. 6 miles. 0.25 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.86 C&G. 7

1216. A boat was stolen at Honingham.\textsuperscript{509}

**EA 11 River Waveney**

Tidal limit. Ellingham.
Edwards. Mendham. 13 miles
A. Mendham. 13 miles. 1.9 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.57 S.
B. Redgrave Fen. 31 miles.
RLU. Diss Bridge. 26 miles. 0.7 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.57 Not now usable.
Diss Bridge is not used for the analysis as it is usable only in spate.

An anchor was found in the bed of a tributary of the river at Weybread.\textsuperscript{510}

1306. Boats were apparently stolen from Mendham, near Harleston.\textsuperscript{511}

1444. A crowd of about 500 gathered at Ellingham Mill and demolished the sluices. Pluck states that ‘As the majority of these persons came from Bungay it appears that

\textsuperscript{504} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1292-1301, 169.
\textsuperscript{505} The Leet Jurisdiction in the City of Norwich. Editor Rev W. Hudson. Selden Society, Vol. 5. 1892, 67.
\textsuperscript{507} Haspurt v Wills, (1671), 1 Vent. 71. 1 Sid. 454;., 1 Mod. 47, 104, 231; 2 Keb. 624, 665; Raym. 232.
\textsuperscript{511} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1307-13, 123.
there might well have been a shortage of water in the Bungay area making navigation difficult if not impossible."  

1500-1547. ‘The Waveney could take 20-ton barges or keels as far up as Bungay.’

1500-1547. ‘A survey of Mettingham Castle, just outside Bungay, in 1562 says that timber growing locally could be sold at high prices because it could be conveyed to London by water.’

1562. According to an Elizabethan survey of Mettingham the river, ‘wyll beare a kele or barge of xx tunne’.

c1631
1. ‘The county of Norfolk is an island enclosed on the south side towards Suffolk with the river of Waveney running to Yarmouth, and the lesser Ouse passing by Lynn, on the north side with the main sea; and aboundeth by these means with havens and hithes, places of exportation and importation.’
2. That part of it towards the sea, and much of the rest westward is champion, the other part towards Suffolk woodland and pasture ground. …
15. … it hath been the custom of these parts for many hundreds of years past, to utter their corn at the havens, hithes, and landing places upon the sea and rivers' sides, as the proper market there; and this custom is to this day testified by another notorious custom of this country.
16. ‘That because the venting of the corn is by sea and water carriage, whereby it suffers hurt and diminution; therefore according to the censure of St. Gregory Epist. Lib. 1, cap. 42 Nantae iuxta consuetudinem super accipiunt quod minui ipsi in navibus attestantur. The seller is tied to deliver 21 coomb for the 20 coomb and vi coombs for every six score to recompense the hurt and diminution. …
21. If they of the woodland will (as the patriarchs did) fetch it constantly where it is to be had at the market of the champion, it will no doubt be brought thither abundantly; but they shall find the carriage of it so chargeable from thence (if the quantity be much) as that they will rather fetch it 40 or 50 miles by water, than 12 or 15 by land.’

Post 1600. ‘Wherries might be trapped for days on end above the bridge [at Beccles] when the river was running high, for the headroom was very limited. Floodwater held up by the bridge would spread far across the marshes on the Norfolk side of the river and travellers would have to be ferried by boat across Gillingham Dam, and this gave some wherry-men a way round the obstruction. Masters of small wherries returning

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downstream without cargo would sail across the flooded marshes, regaining the river below Beccles.\textsuperscript{517}

Pre 1670. ‘Although an Act was passed in 1670\textsuperscript{518} for making the river navigable it is said to have been navigable in former times for lighters, keels and other boats of considerable burthen. It was at that time so obstructed as to be unnavigable above Beccles, causing great poverty to the inhabitants of the surrounding district.’ \textsuperscript{519}

\textbf{EA 12 River Blythe or Dunwich}

Tidal limit. Walberswick
A. Dunwich. 1 mile. n/a.

1463-67. Expenses were incurred in a dispute between the lord of the manor and the town of Dunwich about a boat for ‘the rivers and other waters of the lord’.\textsuperscript{520}

\textbf{EA 13 River Deben}

Tidal Limit. Melton.
B. Debenham 16 miles.

‘According to the early Victorian \textit{White’s Dictionaries} there was once navigation on the Deben right up to Debenham and an anchor was even found in the river bed in the Gull just above the town. … It is quite possible that early medieval people did use the Deben to move bulk goods. Once the river was dammed to create mill ponds this would have been impracticable.’\textsuperscript{521}

\textbf{EA 14 River Rattleden/Gipping / Orwell}

Tidal limit. Ipswich.
A. Stowmarket. 16 miles. 0.6 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.7 Canalised.
B. Rattlesden. 21 miles.
RLU. Stowmarket. 16 miles. 0.6 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.7 Canalised.

11\textsuperscript{th}C. ‘It was said that Caen stone for the abbey church at Bury St Edmunds had been carried by water as high up as Rattlesden, 5 miles beyond Stowmarket along this now tiny stream, to be carted the last 8 or 9 miles by road.’\textsuperscript{522}

12\textsuperscript{th} or 13\textsuperscript{th} century. The River Gipping ‘unites with another stream coming from Rattlesden, and it then becomes broader, deeper, and in the 12\textsuperscript{th} or 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries was unquestionably navigable for vessels of some burden, or boats from Ipswich to a bridge near Rattlesden. The navigation appears to have been neglected after serving the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item (1670) 22 Charles II. c. 16.
\item Blois Family Archives. ‘Compotus Roll of John Hoo, bailiff.’ Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch. HA30/314/18/4. A2A Index.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
purposes of the abbey at Bury. … The inhabitants of the town do not appear to have employed it, except on very rare occasions."^523

1530’s. Richard Cavendish of Trimley said that before the erection of certain mills at Ipswich, ‘bottis, barges and othere vesselles might passe and carye be the water into the countre far above the saide towne to the grete profet and comoditie of all the inhabitantis of the said counter and to the comone weth of the same’.^524

1586. Harrison stated that there was a port at Sproten [Sproughton] 3km above the tidal limit.^525

17th century. The inhabitants of Stowmarket ‘brought in the 17th century some of the bells for the church, which had been recast in at Ipswich, by boats to Stowmarket.’^526

**EA 15 River Suffolk Stour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit</th>
<th>Lawford.</th>
<th>Sudbury.</th>
<th>20 miles.</th>
<th>2.2 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.</th>
<th>0.63</th>
<th>S. 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Stoke by Clare.</td>
<td>32 miles.</td>
<td>1.2 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>S. 15</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

‘It is likely that the River Stour has been used to a limited extent from the earliest days of human habitation in the area, although there are few records before the 17th century.’^527

‘Manningtree, I should imagine, came into use chiefly as a transit port for Dedham and Sudbury during the wool days. I think that, generally speaking, after the great church building era of the 13th and 14th centuries when stone was hauled up the higher reaches by barge and lighter, these shallow waterways were largely disused except by an occasional trader. By the end of the 17th century, they had become almost completely choked, hence the schemes at the Stour, Giping and even the Deben, to re-open them.

… The stone bridges built across the head of the river were another factor leading to its disuse. Cattawade, Stoke and Wilford, with their low arches, effectively barred the upper reaches to anything but the lightest barges.’^528

1412-13. Alice de Bryene Acton regularly purchased three and half pipes of red wine and two hogsheads of white from Ipswich. ‘A pipe at 105 imperial gallons contained double the quantity of a hogshead. … Richard Mody once claimed 18d. in expenses for going with a cart and seven horses to Colchester to collect a pipe of red wine.’ When

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wine was purchased from Ipswich the delivery cost was 3s.\textsuperscript{529} ‘The distance from her home at Acton to Ipswich was about 32 miles, and from Acton to Colchester about 32 miles, so these charges work out at roughly 0.3d and 2.7d per tun mile respectively, suggesting that the carriage from Ipswich must have been largely by water, probably along the coast to the Stour estuary and then via the Stour to Sudbury, only 3 or 4 miles from Acton.’\textsuperscript{530}

1500-47. ‘The Stour, … tapped the richest cloth-making region in England, up past Manningtree to Nayland, Bures and Sudbury, with Lavenham, Kersey and Hadleigh not far away. It is inconceivable that it was not used for many miles as a route to London. We know it was used up to Manningtree at least, though much Suffolk cloth went to London directly by road.’\textsuperscript{531}

1586. Harrison stated that there was a port at Dedham 3 km upstream of the tidal limit.\textsuperscript{532}

\textbf{EA 16 River Colne}

Tidal limit. Colchester. A. Chappel. 10 miles. 0.9 m\textsuperscript{3} s\textsuperscript{-1}. 1 G.

14\textsuperscript{th} Century. The purveyance accounts include transport on the River Colne.\textsuperscript{533} Chappel appears to be the first place at which such goods could be purchased.

1353. Complaints were made on behalf of the burgesses of Colecestre of ‘the obstruction of the king’s river there by wears, mills, stanks, palings and kiddles contrary to the act of 25 Edward III [stat. 3, caps 3 and 4] and to punish pursuant to the act such as are found guilty herein.’\textsuperscript{534} It would seem that the burgesses wished to travel above the tidal limit.

1365. Complaint was made about ‘divers purprestures, stoppages and obstructions by raising weirs, driving stakes, enclosures and other works in the arms of the sea, waters and fleets of the Swyn, Southgedenege, Parrokflete and Skybhoke and in other waters flowing down to the port of Colcestre.’\textsuperscript{535}

1474. The Curia Regis Rolls record that an indenture was arranged ‘to make a brigge of Stone or Tymbyr, or of bothe, over the said Haven, Rever, and Water for men, hors, and carte to passe there over to and fro for ever, with a Draughte (drawbridge) in the

\textsuperscript{534} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1350-54, 509.
\textsuperscript{535} Calendar of Close Rolls, 1364-68. 156-157.
same, that Sippez, boytez and oder Water-vessellez shall mowe passé there, if the Water will serve therefore.536 This appears to refer to a bridge in Colchester.

**EA 17  Rivers Pant/Blackwater**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit</th>
<th>Kemvedon</th>
<th>8 miles</th>
<th>1.2 m$^3\cdot$s$^{-1}$</th>
<th>1.2</th>
<th>G.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Kemvedon</td>
<td>8 miles</td>
<td>1.2 m$^3\cdot$s$^{-1}$</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Radwinter</td>
<td>31 miles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

1294. ‘Tenants of Westminster Abbey owed a customary payment called “ship-hire” (schipur) in lieu of carrying quantities of grain and malt from Kemvedon to Salcott, Heybridge or Maldon, presumably down-river along the Blackwater.’537

14th C. The purveyance accounts include transport on the River Blackwater.538

1586. Harrison, vicar of Radwinter539 wrote of the brook Pant, ‘Certes by the report of common fame it hath been a pretty water and of such quantity that boats have come in time past from Beeleigh Abbey beside Maldon unto the moors in Randwinter for corn. I have heard also that an anchor was found there near to a red willow, when the watercourses by act of Parliament were surveyed and reformed throughout England which maketh not a little with the aforesaid relation.’540

1768. Morant wrote of the previous record ‘I leave it to the Reader’s judgement, whether it is credible, that there could ever be sufficient water to bring Boats from Maldon to Radwinter. Tho’ certainly the face of the country hath in many places been altered by Time. There are signs of a strong Tide, or an arm of the Sea, having at some time or other, come as far as Brandon, in the river Ouse, between Suffolk and Norfolk.’541

**EA 18  River Chelmer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit</th>
<th>Maldon.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Boreham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Little Waltham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1586. Harrison states that there was a port at Borow. This is placed between Goldanger [Goldhanger] and Maldon which Speed shows to be on the south side of the

river. The only place with a similar name now is Boreham which is 9 km upstream of the tidal limit.  

EA 19  **River Roach**

Tidal limit. Rochford.  
B. Rayleigh. 5 miles. n/a.

1267. The king’s cook, was given permission to transport 50 quarters of corn from the parts of Wallingford by the water of the Thames to his house at Rayleigh.

**River Thames Basin**

**Th 1  River Thames**

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radcot Bridge.</td>
<td>128 miles. 8 m³ s⁻¹. 0.34  Canalised</td>
<td>142 miles. 1.4 m³ s⁻¹. 0.71  Canalised</td>
<td>139 miles. 1.4 m³ s⁻¹. 0.4  Canalised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The records for the Thames are divided into three sections. Use upstream of Oxford; Use Oxford to Henley; Obstructions Oxford to Henley. Records of use downstream of Henley are not recorded. Blair wrote in 2007 ‘The navigability of the lowest stretch is not in doubt, while that of the highest has not been seriously considered.’

**Use of the River Thames at and above Oxford**

‘The concentration of four such names on the uppermost Thames (Water Eaton and Castle Eaton below Cricklade, Eaton Hastings below Lechlade, Eaton below Newbridge), and two more on the lower Cherwell (Wooden and Water Eaton below Islip), therefore suggests a local concern for what she [Ann Cole] calls “keeping the narrower reaches of rivers open for navigation, and for maintaining fords in a fit state to allow both road and river traffic to pass.” (fn. As Cole observes on p.80 above, the concentration of Eaton names on the upper but not the lower Thames supports a particular association with river routes which - being narrow and liable to obstruction by silt, weeds, and debris - required regular maintenance.)

In the late middle ages there was a canal from Black Bourton to Bampton and Shifford.

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543 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1266-72, 26.  
‘There must have been a great deal of coming and going around the mill [at Faringdon] with grain-laden boats, belonging both to tenants obliged to grind here and to other landowners who found it a convenient mill to patronize.’

Our texts refer to “ships” (“naves”) at Abingdon and Dorchester, “ships and little ships” (“cum navibus et navicellis”) at Kyndelwere [Faringdon].

Durham considered that The Hythe was upstream of Castle Mill.

1016. Cnut came with 160 ships, and Ealdorman Eadric with him, over the Thames into Mercia at Cricklade, … and Cnut travelled towards London with all his ships.

1020. King Canute ‘travelled up the Thames in the royal barge as far as Buscot.’

12th–16th C. At Cirencester ‘Huge outbuildings adjoined the abbey, and here the abbot stored anything up to twenty thousand bales of wool - he, as Lord of the Manor, having the sole right to weigh it and control its sale and profits. Lively fairs were held to which merchants commuted from London, and the bales they bought were taken in torchlight procession to Lechlade, where they were loaded on to barges for transport to the capital. From early in the thirteenth to the end of the eighteenth centuries Cirencester maintained a great commerce in wool, and the Thames as continually bearing laden wool-barges downstream to London.

1199-1216. King John allowed merchandise to be shipped down-river from Radcot to London.

1271. ‘The boat wherein Gilbert son of Walter le Messer was lately drowned by misadventure in the Thames at a place called ‘La Juresherd’ within the said Matthias’s liberty of Radecote, with 5½ quarters of whet, an iron chain, a lock and eleven sacks found in the said boat.’

1279. ‘A cartulary of Beaulieu Abbey (which held Faringdon) reveals that the barges of grain merchants were using Radcot Wharf.’

1282. There was a wharf by Hythe Bridge in Oxford.

1299. In 1299 and 1331 stone was brought from Eynsham to Oxford.

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547 Ibid. page 282.
548 Ibid. page 284.
552 Ibid. page 44.
554 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1266-72, 610.
c.1300. Two documents confirm the right of the monks at Faringdon to ship grain down river in vessels (nave), potentially as far as London.  

1302. N. ‘fell out of a boat crossing from Botley Mead to Wyke’ and was drowned.

1305. ‘Robert was found dead in the water of the Thames at the Hithe, in the parish of St. Thomas-the-Martyr. … (Robert and Hugh) were after dinner in a boat with turves for the use of the said monks; and because the boat was too much laden with turves, it began to sink in deep water; and the said Hugh scarce escaped, and the said Robert was drowned by misfortune.’

1317. Grain was regularly shipped from Bampton to Oxford.

1329. A grant of pontage was made on ‘every boat which comes by water laden with mechanize, etc.’ to Oxford.

1334. ‘Radcot stood on the Thames and its inhabitants are thought to have prospered by the trade of the river.’

1345. N. ‘was navigating a boat on the Thames between Seacourt (“Seukworth”) mill and Oxford, and by misfortune fell from the boat into the Thames, and so was drowned. … the boat belonged to the said mill.’

1350-1369. Three Commissions were appointed to survey and remove all weirs, mills, stanks, palings and kiddles that have been erected since the time of Edward I and obstructed the passage in the river between Rotecote … and London.

1350. ‘The watercourse of the Thames in the suburb of Oxford used to be common for fishery and the passage of boats; the abbot and convent of Oseney two years past and more built two mills and obstructed the watercourse; they have also made two new weirs.’

1439. A grant for life was made of the office of searcher of nets in the ‘river of Thames, its streams and members between the bridge of Stanes and the town of

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560 Ibid. page 13-14.
565 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1350-54, 204.
566 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1367-70, 346-347.
567 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1369-74, 11.
568 Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous. (Chancery.) Volume III. 1348-77, 20.
Surcestre, [Cirencester] and in all weirs, lokkes, marquettes, and other engines belonging thereto.  

16th C. Hay, wood and stone were unloaded at a wharf at Hythe Bridge.  

16th C. Many of the portions in Bullstake Mead could best be reached by water, and we assume that when the hay was made it was conveyed in punts to the hithe at Hithe Bridge, and thence by cart to the spot where a rick was made.  

1572. The mayor and his party when perambulating the city of Oxford made part of the journey by boat on the Thames.  

1581. St John’s College paid for the carriage of five loads of timber from Eaton to ‘high bridge’ Oxford by water. This could have been from Water Eaton on the Cherwell or Eaton Hastings upstream of Oxford on the Thames.  

1581/2. St John’s College paid for the carriage of two boatloads of wood ‘from Bablock hyve to Hye bridge’ Oxford by water.  

1583. Having recently obtained possession of a wharf, Oxford City Council resolved that every freeman unloading ‘haye, woode, stone, slate, or other carriage whatsoever,’ at their wharf should pay a fee ‘towards the mayntenaunce of the bancks and scowringe of the ryver theare, which by suche carige and unlodinge theare is fflowndered.’ The wharf was upstream of High Bridge and there was a charge of 3s. 4d. for every load which should pass under the bridge.  

1583. ‘The first boatman was admitted a freeman of the city of Oxford.’ It seems that he was from the community of Fisher Row and would have worked upstream of Oxford.  

1592. ‘Most of the monarchs barged it in their royal vehicles as far as Lechlade and then were entertained by the nobles or citizens of Cirencester as the town nearest the head of the river. One of them, Elizabeth I, fortunately arriving in the dry summer of 1592, commanded that she be borne in her litter the whole way along the river bank from Lechlade to “the very first trickly of my jyne Thames before going on to Cirencester.”

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570 Ibid. page 66 -67.  
572 Ibid. page 116.  
17th C. ‘The river above Oxford, however, remained passable and in the 16th century hay, stone, and slate were unloaded at the wharf owned by the city at Hythe Bridge.576 … The nature of the bulk of the trade at the wharf is revealed by the name Timber Wharf, which it acquired in the 17th century.’577

Wood wrote that Hythe bridge obtained its name ‘because of an “hith” here, that is (it being a Saxon word) a petit haven to land wares out of vessels and botes, as is used here to this day at this end of the towne as at the south where the wharf is.’578

1607. The Oxford-Burcott Authority fixed Cricklade as the upper limit of their proposed improvements. … 579

1623. ‘The river was navigable for many miles west of Oxford.’580 There is no record that the river had been modified prior to this date.

1627. Twyne wrote ‘Free and open passage by water then [1329] was between Oxford and London, as we are able to prove by good records, and there is good hope that ere long it is likely to be so again.’581

1641. John Taylor rowed a boat from London to Cricklade and then, with difficulty, up the River Churn to within a mile of Cirencester.582

1644. In the Civil War Parliamentarian soldiers crossed the Thames at Newbridge in boats.583

1661-66. Wood wrote ‘For (if wee may believe antient scripts) the rivers and rivulets were farre deeper formerly then now; and that the river running by Oxon to Greeklade [Cricklade] was navigable at all times in the yeare.’584

1751. The Thames and Isis Navigation Act 1751 stated that ‘the Rivers of Thames and Isis have, Time out of Mind, been navigable from the City of London to … beyond Lechlade …’585

In the early 20th century there were people who could remember the Thames being open for barges as far as Waterhay Bridge due to the riverbed having being dragged by horses in a dry summer.586

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580 (1624) 21 James I. c. 32.
585 (1751) 24 George II c2. The Thames and Isis Navigation Act.
Evidence of the use of the River from Oxford to London

c.1050. At Abingdon ‘In the time of Abbot Ordric (1052-66) the river ran on the other side of the church’s land (which the inhabitants call Barton) close by the hamlet of Thrupp. This caused the oarsmen no little difficulty, for the land below rose more steeply than the land above, often causing the river to dry. For this reason the citizens of the city of Oxford (for it was their shipping which made the passage most often) besought that the course of the river should be diverted through the church’s meadow, which lies below it on the south, on condition that for the rest of time 100 eels should be paid as custom to the monks’ cellarer by each one of their boats. This request was granted, the terms agreed, and the promised custom is paid to this day.’

1066. ‘King Edward had … and they who dwelt there [Borough of Wallingford] did service for the king with horses or by water as far as Blewbury, Reading, Sutton Courtenay [and] Benson [Oxon], …’

1110-11. Boatmen were sued before the King’s sheriffs in Oxford for non-payment of the toll granted in c. 1050 and the custom was confirmed.

1163. There was a dispute between the Abbott and the men of Oxford at Wallingford about a right of market. It was held that the Abbott ‘could have the fullest type of market, except that it could not be used by the freight barges which plied the Thames (navibus onerariis per aquam Tamisiae currentibus) though he could use his own boats for his own affairs.’

Pre.1205. An Andrew of the Exchequer was granted a patent ‘to have a ship carrying blada [corn, grain (esp. wheat)] and victuals, and other necessaries for him and his, from Abingdon to London, unmolested by any toll going and returning as long as he remained at the Exchequer.’

1205. ‘Letters Patent were granted to William, son of Andrew, to have one ship going and returning upon the Thames between Oxford and London, and the Governors of Wallingford and other river ports were to give him free passage.’ The letter patent referred to ‘any toll and exaction which belongs to us; and that he might freely and without hindrance load that vessel wherever on the Thames he desired between Oxford and London.’

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1205. ‘Madox, in his History of the Exchequer [1711] explains that there were at that time duties payable to the Crown on Thames borne merchandise. “The duty paid for trafficking along the Thames, or at one sort of that duty, was called Avalagum Thamisiae.”’

1210-11. ‘Brightwell, Harwell, Wargrave, and West Wycombe hired boats to carry 1,130 qr of grain to Southwark.’

After 1210. In later years, the bishop of Winchester sent a great deal of timber and firewood by river directly from Wargrave to Southwark.

After 1210. ‘The Harwell virgaters had the duty of carrying grain the seven miles to Wallingford. … The vergaters of Wargrave (berks) and its sub-manors had to load grain in the bishop’s boats moored by the bank.’

1234. Henry III built a hospital in Oxford and commanded that all riparian owners should facilitate the passage of men bringing timber by boat from Reading.

1253. The sheriff of Middlesex had all weirs destroyed for the whole length of the river to the west of London. This may have only referred to the river downstream of Staines, the normal limit of his responsibility.

1253. The Constable of Windsor Castle stated that vessels which passed Bray ‘without making stay’ were allowed to do so without charge but that a charge was made for those that ‘fix a stake or load there’.

1301-2. ‘Officers of the bishop of Winchester transported 900 pieces of tall-wood and 20 quarters of charcoal by boat from Wargrave.’

1338. ‘Part of the Oxfordshire wool production was collected at Oxford, carried to Henley overland and then shipped to London in “shutes”.

1343. Timber was carried by water from Byfleet to Wallingford Castle.

595 Ibid. page 16.
1344. John Waleraund was appointed ‘to arrest on the river Thames between Graveshende and Henle as many punts for stone and other necessaries … as shall be required’ to carry goods to Windsor.605

1359. Faggots were carried downriver from Nuneham Park to Reading.606

1383. Two men were killed when a shout was being pulled through Hambledon Lock where two winches were being used.607

1405. An agreement was made about the passage of shouts and boats from the Thames to the centre of Reading along the River Kennet.608

1432. The countess of Warwick travelled by barge and boats from Brentford to Caversham.609

1448-9. ‘(Stone) from Taynton was carried by road as far as Culham, and then transferred to barges which brought it to Eton. This route was not adopted until Keys had personally inspected the river between Abingdon and Eton from a barge, a task which occupied him for eight days. (fn. John Keys accounts.) Owing to weirs and other obstructions it did not prove satisfactory, and later consignments of Taynton stone were carried by land as far as Henley before being put onto barges.’610

1456. Stone which was transported from Taynton (near Burford) to Eton was carted overland to Henley and shipped from there.611

1459. ‘The manor of Wooburn in Buckinghamshire was granted freedom of access to its wharf and exemption from tolls and customs payable to the Crown on goods to and from the wharf and from obligatory conveyance of goods for the King’s use.’612

1460. Peberdy considers that Elmes may have traded from Oxford downstream before his death in 1460 but that the trade then stopped due to insufficient demand.613

1496. After a dispute between Magdalen College and St. Frideswides Priory a free passage by water was reserved to Magdalen College.614

605 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1343-45, 283.
c.1535. Sir Walter Stonor wrote to Cromwell ‘The king has certain weirs in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, which I have commanded the hundreds to pluck up, but they want to know who shall give them meat and drink and wages. They desire that certain barges and bargemen may be at the locks, to the intent that such ‘gynys’ as must be used may stand on the barge to winch up the great timber. On Monday they will be at one of the king’s weirs, called North Stoke. I beg I may be excused from plucking up every weir, for every owner who ought to pluck them up at his own charge now waits to have it done at the charge of the country.’ North Stoke mill probably stood on the little stream that enters the Thames there.615

1552. Grant was made of ‘the passage and “fery barge” of Caversham, ... “the mill barge” and “le loke” called Caversham Locke.’616

1555. Barges were carrying stone from Reading Abbey and lead from Abingdon and Wallingford to Windsor.617

1555. Wykes states that there was a pleasure boat cruise from Abingdon to Oxford.618 However when asked he could not recall the reference for this event.619

1562. Abingdon Corporation paid for the carriage of wine from London to Culham in a barge.620

1567. Thomas West had to carry his portable winch from Wallingford to Caversham by road as his barge could not travel without it at Easter.621 From his accounts it is clear that by 1562 traffic could move as far as Culham near Abingdon, whilst at Burcot goods could be trans-shipped for Oxford. His outstanding debts at his death related to 40% wood and timber, 20% coal, over 20% corn and malt, 6% fish and the balance of about 15% small goods.622

1573. ‘Talle wood’ was transported by water from Whitchurch.623

1574. A complaint was made that the river was being blocked by the ‘castynge of trees into the same river and stoppynge of the passage of bargemen travelynge unto this

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615 Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Volume 9, 170.
cyttye above the Towne of Stanes.\textsuperscript{624} It seems that rafts of timber or firewood were being floated down the river.


About the Year 1578, or 1579, there were Three and twenty Locks, Sixteen Mills, Sixteen Floud-gates, Seven Wears between \textit{Maidenhead} and \textit{Oxford}. Whereof one \textit{John Bishop} made a Complaint to the Lord Treasurer \textit{Burleigh}. To whom he shewed, how by these Stoppages of the Water, several Persons, to the Number of 15 or 16, in four Years only, had been drowned, and their Goods lost; having been Persons belonging to Barges and Vessels using the River. But notwithstanding these Complaints, about the Year 1584 or 1585, there were above Seventy Locks and Wears (that is, Thirty more at least than there was but Six Years before.) And whereas before there were not above Ten or Twelve Barge employed to and fro, now the number was encreased to Fourscore; and were of much greater Build and Bigness than before was used. Some of these Locks were extraordinary dangerous in passing. The going up the Locks were so steep, that every Year Cables had been broken that cost 400\textpounds and Bargemen and Goods drowned. And in coming down, the Waters fell so high, that it sunk the Vessels, and destroyed Corn and Malt wherewith they were laden.\textsuperscript{625}

1580 and 1585. Bishop made a two petitions concerning the obstruction to the river. The second petition was in verse and contained 43 quatrains. The petition states that due to the condition of many of the ‘Mylls, weares and locks’ many people are drowned. However the weirs were still being used.\textsuperscript{626} Bishop does not differentiate between the weirs upstream of Abingdon, where many commentators consider the river was unusable, and the weirs below Burcot where they consider that the river was used at this time. Bishop listed the names of 20 men who had drowned.

Strype wrote that the mills and locks were ancient, and that they were necessary for grinding corn and for the passage of boats. He continued

The causes of the increased peril of the passage was that the Barges were become of greater burthen; almost double what they used to be; that they laded them beyond reason; that they used partly to unload below the lock and reship again above, even when they used to bring but seven or eight Loads. Now they came with twenty they would unload nothing; they employed people of no skill; they travelled so late & so early as to be unable to see what they were doing; they commonly spared neither the Sabbath Day nor others. And lastly it was likely there would be more accidents, as the number of Barges was increased from ten or twelve to fourscore.\textsuperscript{627}

\textsuperscript{624} Fred S. Thacker, \textit{The Thames Highway. Volume I: General History}. (First published 1914.) Newton Abbot: David & Charles. 1968, 44.
1586. Harrison wrote ‘the more that this river is put by of hir right course, the more the water must of necessitie swell with the white waters which run downe from the land: because the passage cannot be so swift and readie in the winding as in the streight course. These landfloods also doo greatlie straine the finesse of the streame, in so much that after a great landfloud, you shall take haddocks with your hands beneath the bridge, as they flote aloft upon the water, whose eies are so blinded with the thicknesse of that element, that they cannot see. …’

‘… beside those huge tideboats, tiltbotes, and barges, which either carrie passengers, or bring necessarie provision from all quarters of Oxfordshire, Barkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Herfordshire, Midlesex, Essex, Surrie, and Kent, unto the citie of London.’

He wrote of Henley ‘The Inhabitants whereof be for the most part Watermen, who make their chiefeest gaine by carrying downe in their Barges wood and Corne to London.’

1586. ‘Polydore saith that this river is seldom increased or rather never over-floweth her banks by landfloods, (fn. Polydore Vergil, English History, Camden Society Soc. XXXVI, 20.) but he is herein very much deceived, as it shall be more apparently seen hereafter.’

1586. ‘The inhabitants whereof [Henley upon Tamis] be for the most part Watermen, who make their chiefeest gaine by carrying downe in their Barges wood and Corne to London.’

1586. There are on the River Thames ‘two thousand wherries and small boats, whereby three thousand poor watermen are maintained through the carriage and recarriage of such persons as pass or repass from time to time upon the same, beside those huge tide boats, tilt boats, and barges which either carrie passengers or bring necessarie provision from all quarters of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Essex, Surrey, and Kent unto the city of London.’

1586. ‘The North part of the river … running with a winding channel full of reaches, but carrying a very gentle streame.’

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629 Ibid. page 82.
630 Ibid. page 389.
streams below Oxford, the Isis with a swift and deeper current passes on to the south. 635

1595.  ‘To prevent accidents, arrangements had been made, for the masters of the Watermen’s Company to examine all candidates for admission, before permitting them to ply for hire; a provision which was further strengthened in the first year of James I by an Act (I Jac. I, c. 16 1603-4) regulating the apprenticeship of watermen by reason “that divers and sundrie people passinge by water upon the River of Thames, betweene Windsore and Gravesend, have byn put in greate hazarde and danger.” 636

1606. An Act was passed for ‘Clearing the Passage by Water from London to and beyond the Citye of Oxforde.’ 637 In the preamble it was stated that ‘The river Thames is from the Citye of London till within a fewe miles of the Citye of Oxforde verie navigable and passeable with and for Boates and Barges of great Content and Carriage, and whereas it is conceived that by the remooing rectifying and amending of some fewe Letts Impediments and Obstructions in or about the Channell of the saide River, the same would be made also passable both unto the Citye of Oxon, and from thence into some parte of the Counties of Oxon Berkes Wiltes and Glouceser.’

1623. An Act was passed for ‘making of the Ryver Thames navyable from Burcott to Oxford.’ 638 The preamble to an Act stated that ‘whereas the said River of Thames for many miles beyond the Citie of Oxford Westward, is already navigable and passable for Boates of good Burthens and Contents, and likewise is alreadie navigable for Barges from London to the Village of Bercott in the Countie of Oxford, being within sixe or seven myles of the Citye of Oxford.’

1634. Cartwright, a Christ Church man, wrote about the frost of 1634 ‘Our ships stand all as planted, we may swear / They are not born up only but grow there.’ 639

1635. Madan wrote ‘the Thames was made navigable up to Oxford itself”; ‘and the first barge reached the city on August 31, 1635.” 640

Evidence of the obstruction of the river between Oxford and London

1197 and 1199. A charter was ‘granted and steadfastly commanded that all kyddells that are in the Thames be removed wheresoever they shall be within the Thames.’ In 1199 this Charter was extended to the Medway. 641

1215. Magna Carta stated that ‘Henceforth all fish-weirs shall be completely removed from the Thames and the Medway and throughout all England except on the sea coast.’ 642

637 (1606) 3 James I c. 20.
638 (1624) 21 James I c32.
1227. Henry III issued a patent ‘to inspect and measure all weirs which to the hinderance of vessels passing through them had been heightened or increased in the counties of Oxford and Berkshire, etc., … so that vessels could pass over them without hinderance or damage as before (1209).’

1235. ‘It was ordered that weirs should be made to stand at that height, and width of opening between the posts, as in the reigns of Henry II, Richard I, and John.’

1256. Henry III had 30 tuns of wine sent by river to Henley and then carried by road to Woodstock.

1275. ‘The sheriff of Oxford and Berks. Order to cause the water of Thames in his bailiwick to be so widened that ships and great barges may ascend from London to Oxford with victuals and other necessaries, and may descend from Oxford without any hinderance from any weirs, so conducting himself in the execution of this order as to merit the king’s commendation, as the king understands that the water of Thames between London and Oxford is so narrowed in divers places by weirs made in it, that ships and barges with goods and victuals are unable to pass by it.’

Davis records ‘complaints and injunctions were made in 1278, 1281, 1294, 1316, 1320, 1351, 1352, 1358, 1364, 1371, 1376, 1377, 1388, 1391, 1399 and on into the 15th century concerning obstructions to the river.’

1285. There was an inquisition for purprestures regarding a gurgitem raised by the praecceptor or master and brethren of the Holy Temple of Temple Cowley within two miles of Oxford.

1290. A load of grain was taken from South Warwickshire to Henley by road and then transferred to a boat.

1294. A court ruled that where a person has a right in another person’s water, if the river channel changes due to the work of a man or naturally the right follows the water wherever it run.

Early 14th century. The river was used ‘perhaps as late as about the time of Edward I or II [1272-1327] when the merchants who frequented [hauntent] the water between

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644 Ibid. page 19.
645 Calendar of Liberate Rolls, iv, p 300.
646 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1272-79, 216.
Oxford and London complained that their common passage for ships of merchandise was obstructed.\textsuperscript{651}

1302. ‘The river was soe stopped that a petition was put up in parliament.’\textsuperscript{652}

1316. A charge was made that ‘the abbot of Abingdon and others, who have weirs on the river Thames between Oxford and Wallingford, have reconstructed them of such height that the lands on each bank are flooded; and have constructed certain obstacles on the weirs, called “lokes,” by which ships and boats are obstructed.’\textsuperscript{653}

1327. It was claimed that ‘Divers men of riverside counties have kidels along the banks of the River; have made weirs in the same River; and fixed piles and pales along its course, and tied the cords of their nets athwart the stream, contrary to divers charters of the citizens, and more especially to Magna Charta.’\textsuperscript{654}

1327. A charter was granted which gave permission for the removal of ‘all weirs in the water of Thames and Medway.’\textsuperscript{655}

1338. Commission appointed “on complaint of the counties of Oxford, Berks, Surrey and Middlesex” to investigate and remedy obstructions by “fishermen in the river Thames, keepers of weirs, sluices and piles fixed across the river, and millers of the mills on or near the river … that, the stream is so narrowed by these weirs, sluices and piles that the passage of ships and boats with victuals for London and other places is greatly impeded.”\textsuperscript{656}

1348. A petition to Parliament claimed that ‘ships can pass to London and other good towns of the realm only in time of extreme abundance of water [outrageous cretin de ewe] … so the common carriage of victuals by ship is greatly impeded and victuals daily grow dearer.’\textsuperscript{657} Although mentioned there is no complaint about the obstruction of the other three great rivers, Severn, Ouse and Trent.

1350. The first of seven Acts of Parliament against the inhancing of gorges, mills, weirs, stanks, stakes and kidels.\textsuperscript{658}

1350-1369. Several Commissions were appointed to survey and remove all weirs, mills, stanks, palings and kidels that have been erected since the time of Edward I and obstructed the passage in the river between Rotecote [Radcot] … and London.’\textsuperscript{659}


\textsuperscript{654} Ibid. page 23.

\textsuperscript{655} Ibid. page 24.

\textsuperscript{656} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1338-40, 149.


\textsuperscript{658} (1350) 25 Edward III s. 4 c. 4; (1371) 45 Edward III c. 2; (1399) 1 Henry IV c. 12; (1402) 4 Henry IV c. 11; (1413) 1 Henry V c. 2; (1472) 12 Edward IV c. 7; (1531) 23 Henry VIII c 5.

\textsuperscript{659} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1350-54, 204, and 276.

Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1367-70, 346-347.
Pre 1369. The men of Oxford broke down the locks of Standford.\footnote{660}

1369. A Commission \textit{de kidellis} was appointed for the waters of Thames between Henle and Rotecote.\footnote{661}

1383. A Commission of oyer and terminer was appointed concerning the erection of certain ‘weirs, mills, mill-ponds, stakes and kiddles in the Thames between Wallingford and Goring.’\footnote{662}

1388. Inquisition in Oxfordshire and Berkshire ‘concerning those who set weirs, mills, stanks, stakes and kiddles in the river Thames between Walynesforde and Goryng to hinder the passage of ships and boats and the flow of water.’\footnote{663}

1391. This inquisition was still continuing.\footnote{664}

1395. ‘Presentment by jurors of the hundred of Langtree that there were 18 locks which caused the land to flood and which were ‘so narrow and dangerous from the force of the water flowing through it that men with shouts, bargets and kiddles cannot pass there towards Oxford as they were wont to do of old,’ and that the locks had been so kept since the time of Edward III. [1327-1377]’\footnote{665}

1395. ‘Presentment by jurors of the town of Henley that William Dreyton, knight, and his ancestors from time immemorial had a sewer called a lock and a machine called a winch built on the said lock in the Thames at Rotherfield Peppard by Meedmelle so that boats and shouts coming from London to Oxford with victuals, wine and other merchandise might be drawn along by ropes and other means since the water in midstream is too shallow for the navigation of the said boats and shouts without the said engine, and that he ought to repair the said lock and winch, as his ancestors have ever done, so that the said boats and shouts could be drawn there with ropes, without his making any profit thereby, and that the said lock is now stopped up with sand, gravel and the increase of the water, and the winch altogether taken away so that boats and shouts cannot be drawn or navigated there to the hurt of all the country and the towns by which the river flows.’\footnote{666}

1574. There was a complaint that bargemen had pulled down mill weirs.\footnote{667}

1584. A plan shows a Fulling Mill at Wallingford with no weir.\footnote{668}
1586. ‘The river at Weybridge is ‘scarce six foote deepe.’

In 1619 Drayton recorded that there was an ancient tradition that the Thames used to flow through St Albans. Salter (1905), Sherlock (1924) and Woodbridge (1927), and A.G. Brown and twenty other geologists, also suggested that the Thames flowed through St Albans to Chelmsford.

**Th 2  Mar Dyke**

Tidal limit.  Coast.
B.  Orsett.  2 miles.  n/a.

‘There is a tradition that the tide used to flow so strong by Purflete up the brook, that Boats could sail up to Orset-hall, or higher.’

**Th 3  River Darent**

Lower limit.  River Thames.
B.  Riverhead.  13 miles.

Ann Coles considers that the name ‘Riverhead’ is derived from ‘cattle hythe’.

**Th 4  River Ingrebourne**

Lower limit.  River Thames.
B.  Riverhead.  8 miles.
A.  Havering.  8 miles.  0.33 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. n/a.

1266. Timber was cut at Havering and taken on the Ingrebourne and Thames to Westminster.

1351-52. There was a dispute about cleansing the river between Havering and Rainham.

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675 Calendar of Liberate Rolls, 1260-67, 203.
### Th 5 River Roding

Lower limit. River Thames.
B. Wanstead. 3 miles. 1.6 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. < 10 m.

‘The little River Roding [is navigable] as far as Ilford bridge (formerly only to Barking).’

1670-80. There was a presentment for not repairing a wharf at Wanstead.

1774. The map produced by Chapman and Andre shows a short cutting off the river near Chigwell which appears to be a hythe. Barrett seems to have described the same cutting in 1893. ‘A little backwater here – how formed it is difficult to say, runs back a short distance into the meadow.’

### Th 6 River Lea

Lower limit. River Thames.
Edwards. Hertford. 28 miles.

A. Hertford. 28 miles. 2.7 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.9 Canalised.
RLU. Not in BCU Guide due to land owners’ objections. Assumed 28 miles.

Records are not given for use of the river to Watford. See Burnby and Parker.

1066. There were nine mills in Stratford. ‘The various channels along this stretch of the Lea probably had their origin as mill streams.’

1408. ‘Ware or Wayre de Cataractis of the wayres and water stoppes near it, … It was drowned in anno 1408, by the great inundation of waters that from the upland passe by the town, and since, and before, there was great provision made by wayres and sluces, for the better preservation of the town, and the grounds belonging to the same.’

1585. ‘Angry road carriers stated that “threescore thousand quarters of mault” were carried to London every year by the bargemen.’

1588. There were 150 boats on the River Lea owned by 44 people. The great barge laden draweth 16 inches; the least also 16 inches.

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1598. The River Lee ‘used to take boats and ships to Hartford though now and [for] many years past affording only access for small boates or barges to Wayre.’\textsuperscript{686}

**Th 7 River Stort**

Lower limit. River Lea.
A. Stanstead. 16 miles. n/a.
RLU. Bishop’s Stortford. 14 miles. n/a. Canalised.

The Stort flowed through an area which was described in the Domesday Book as ‘inter pratum et marese’, half meadow, half marsh. The ancient trackways avoided it.\textsuperscript{687}

1485. A few years earlier a legal representative of the churchwardens had travelled on a ‘bote to fullham to speke with my lord of London about chantry lands’.\textsuperscript{688}

1584. Lord Burghley wrote ‘all those of London who wished to send anything by water to Stanstead, Ware or Hertford … and by this all the smiths and eight or nine mills beyond do daily save in their coals and iron.’\textsuperscript{689}

1586. Some bargemen came from Stanstead.\textsuperscript{690}

**Th 8 River Rib**

Lower limit. River Lea.
B. Standon. 8 miles. \(0.4 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}\). 1.7

There was a wharf at Standon. ‘Standon is, after all, the upstream village before (from a navigation viewpoint) the river splits into two half-size channels, much less suitable for navigation.’\textsuperscript{691}

**Th 9 River Beane**

Lower limit. River Lea.
A. Cromer. 13 miles. n/a.

896. The remains of Viking ships were found in the River Beane near Hertford.\textsuperscript{692}

\textsuperscript{686} John Norden, \textit{Speculi Britaniae, the description of Hartfordsire. (1\textsuperscript{st} Edition 1598.)} Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum. 1971, 4.


\textsuperscript{688} Jacqueline Cooper, \textit{Bishop’s Stortford}. Chichester: Phillimore. 2005, 27.


1292. 50 quarters of wheat were sent by water from Weston in Hertfordshire to London.  

Th 10  River Fleet

Lower limit. River Thames.

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An anchor was found just north of Camden Town so the river may have been navigable for small boats as far as this.

1110-1133. Stones were carried on the river for the rebuilding of St Paul’s cathedral.

1306. A petition was presented to Parliament which stated that ‘the water-course under Holbourn and Fleet bridges used to be wide and deep enough to carry 10 or 12 boats up to Fleet bridge … and some of them passed under that bridge to Holbourn bridge.’

1307. A commission was set up to investigate this complaint and to cause the obstructions to be removed.

1355. ‘The Fleet ditch ought of right be ten feet wide and to run in such volume towards the east and back towards the west that boats laden with a tun of wine can float theron.’

Th 11  River Tyburne

Lower limit. River Thames.

B. Claridge’s Hotel. 2 miles. n/a.

c1585. ‘In Brook Mews, below Claridge’s Hotel, a ‘pier wall was laid bare with iron rings for mooring boats.’

695 Ibid. page 74.
697 4 June, Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1301-07, 548.
8 November, Calendar of Patent rolls, 1307-13, 38.
Th 12  River Effra

Lower limit. River Thames.
Edwards. Brixton.  2 miles.
B. Brixton.  2 miles.  n/a.

King Canute in the 11th century and Queen Elizabeth in the 16th century sailed to Brixton.700

Th 13  River Brent

Lower limit. River Thames.
A. Brentford.  1 mile. 1.3 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. n/a.

1443. Grant ‘to freely carry goods from the wharf of “le Brieke ooste” as far as the water of Thames for the abbess of the monastery by Brayntford, co Middlesex.’701 The Augustinian monastery of St. Saviour, St. Mary, St. Bridget Syon, was in Brentford.

Th 14  River Mole

Lower limit. River Thames.
A. Dorking.  30 mile. 5.4 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.1
RLU. Horley.  45 miles. 1.35 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.8 S.

c1300. The manor of Thornton [in Leatherhead] on the River Mole purchased a boat to transport grain.702

1235. ‘William de Cruce was drowned from a certain boat in the Hundred of Wotton.’703 Dorking is at about the northern limit of the Hundred of Wotton.

Th 15  River Wey

Lower limit. River Thames.
A. Godalming.  20 miles. 5.5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1 Canalised.
RLU. Farnham.  36 miles. 0.7 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1 S&G.

‘A logboat was found in 1907 ½ mile NNE of Wisley Bridge.’704

1128. It is claimed that the stone for Waverley Abbey was transported on rafts on the river.705

701 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1441-46, 159.
1177-83. For the building of Waltham Abbey ‘Timber was brought from the Surrey woods by road to Weybridge and thence by the rivers Wey, Thames, and Lea to Essex.’

1540. A small boat dating from 1540 was found 8ft down when a sewer was being dug in a meadow (or in a riverbank) near Weybridge.

1547. Thomas Seymour was granted five hundreds and the moiety of three hundreds in Sussex including ‘Fysshergate, Suss., and the amercements and other profits (including passage of the water of Wele), pertaining to the said hundred and river, late of the said duke; [Thomas duke of Norfolk].’

Harrison in 1577 and 1586 used the spelling Weie for the River Wey. It appears that there was an error either by the writer of the Patent Roll or the editor of the printed edition in replacing the i with an l.

1558. A statute provided that ‘no timber tree of Oak, Beech or Ash … growing within fourteen miles of the Sea, or of any Part of the Rivers of Thames, Severn, Wye, Humber, Dee, Tine, Teese, Trent or any other River, Creek or Stream, by the which Carriage is commonly used by Boat or other Vessel to any Part of the Sea.’ Exception was made for the County of Sussex, the Weild of Kent, and the Parishes of Charlewood, Newdigate and Ligh in the Weild of the county of Surrey.

This implies that either the Wey or the Mole was commonly used by boats. Also that one or more of the rivers of Kent and of the rivers of Sussex were commonly used by boats more than 14 miles from the sea. Due to the sink on the Mole it is most likely that this refers to the Wey.

1560. A licence was granted for the use of wood from Wotton, otherwise Wodton, and also from Abynger, Capell and Ockle, otherwise Ockley otherwise Ockleigh, for the smelting and working of iron ; ‘notwithstanding stat. 1 Eliz.’

Since Wotton is more than 15 miles from the River Thames either the River Wye or the River Mole must have been considered to be navigable otherwise no licence would have been required.

16th C. ‘The Thames, Lea, Wey and associated systems formed a massive source for London’s barley and malt, even in the sixteenth century.’

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708 Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward VI, 1547-48, 27.
711 (1558) 1 Elizabeth I. c. 15.
Th 16  River Middlesex Colne

Lower limit. River Thames.
A. Uxbridge. 10 miles. n/a. divided river.
B. St Albans. 30 miles. n/a.
RLU. West Drayton. 7 miles. n/a. divided river.

c960. ‘Hard by the bank they happen’d upon certain oaken planks, which had nails sticking in them, and were covered over with pitch, as also some other shipping-tackle, particularly, Anchors half eaten with rust, and Oars of fir.’

11thC. ‘The first use of Caen stone in England seems to have been at St. Albans, where Paul of Caen was appointed fourteenth Abbot in 1077.’ It seems likely that the stone would have been transported by water.

1433. A commission de kidellis was appointed ‘pursuant to the statutes of 25 Edward II and of 1 Henry IV to …(names) … for the water and great river called ‘Colneystreme’ between the towns of Woxebrigge and Stanes, in the counties of Buckingham and Middlesex.’

1593. Norden wrote of this river ‘Though this river as some affirme have passed shipping to Saint Albans. Minima credendum.’

1598. If any boates in former times, came thither, [to St Albans] they came from Stanes and up the Colne river to Rickmansworth to Watforde and so the S. Albans, but in no sense to the place where the anchor was founde … There is indeed a field below S. Albans called keyfeyld, and below Rickmansworth called Westhythe, which may in some sort argue some such passage for boates’ Norden continues by giving possible alternative derivations for these names.

1613. Drayton wrote of the Colne:-
Thou saw’st great-burthen’d Ships through these thy valleyes pass,
Where now the sharp-edg’d Sithe sheeres up the spyring grasse.

Selden considered it more likely that the anchors that have been found were left ‘of fish-boats in large pooles’.

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715 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1429-36, 303.
719 *ibid.* 324.
Th 17 River Bulbourne/Gade

Lower limit. River Clone.
B. Berkhamsted. 11 miles.

12th C. Hutchinson states that stone for the building of Berkhamsted Castle was transported by water. 720

Th 18 River Loddon

RLU. Swallowfield Bridge. 13 miles.

Th 19 River Kennet

Lower Limit. River Thames.
A. Hungerford. 30 miles. 4.0 m³ s⁻¹. 1.3 Divided river.
B. Marlborough. 40 miles.
RLU. Not in BCU Guide due to perceived legal objections. Assumed 30 miles.

Selkirk quotes a report of a Roman villa beside the River Og, a few miles north of the Roman town of Cuetio on the River Kennet. It was reported that the villa had jetties and that a boat-hook was found. 721

During the excavation of the 1st/4th century villa complex at Littlecote, near Ramsbury, two water-filled dykes, cut at right angels to the River Kennett, were identified by Bryn Waters as boat-channels used by shallow-draught barges. 722

Ann Cole considers that ‘Hidden’ was a dry valley running down to the Kennet at Kintbury where a landing place would have been. 723

1452. A commission de kidellis was issued to certain people ‘in the waters called Kenett, Aldeburne and Lambornestrem between Hungerford and Reading’. 724

1673. Bourne stated that the river was ‘large and navigable for Barges’. 725 At this time the river had not been modified.

**Th 20  Badford’s Brook**

Lower limit. River Thames.

B. 2 miles west of Wallingford. 2 miles.

17thC. ‘Navigation on the system westward from the western edge of Wallingford occurred from the late 17th century but would have been equally possible in medieval times.’

**Th 21  River Thame**

Lower limit. River Thames.

A. Wheatley. 17 miles. 3.9 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.45 P&R. G. RLU. Aylesbury. 31 miles. n/a.

1241. ‘Four men of Rycote were drowned from a boat in the river Thame.’

1241. ‘One man fell from a boat into the water at Harpeford [in Wheatley] and was drowned there.’

**Th 22  River Ock**

Lower limit. River Thames.

A. Stanford-in-the-Vale. 2 miles. n/a.

1581. Re traffic on the Thames above Burcot in 1581 and the River Ock. ‘The churchwardens of Stanford-in-the-Vale, Berkshire, paid 4d ‘for bringing leade from Oxforde by botte’. This implies that a boat could pass from Oxford to Abingdon and then up the river Ock.’

**Th 23  River Cherwell**

Lower limit. River Thames.

Edwards. Islip. 7 miles.

A. Islip. 7 miles. n/a.

RLU. Aynho. 20 miles. n/a.

See River Ray. Usable to the confluence at Islip.

1398. It was presented that a bridge called Shutpulche at Marston was broken. Flower considered that the real name was Shutpusche and that it was a manual drawbridge. This would have enabled boats to navigate on the river Cherwell.

1496. ‘There was a hythe on the Cherwell, probably above Magdalen Bridge.’

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1535. Sir Walter Stoner pulled up a weir at Water Eyton.\[^732\]

1572. The mayor proceeded ‘by boat down the Cherwell to Magdalene Bridge.’\[^733\]

**Th 24 River Ray**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower limit</th>
<th>River Cherwell.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>Ot Moor. 2 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Fencott. 4 miles. 1.6 m(^3) s(^{-1}). Flat. Canalised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1260. ‘The toponyms of people who were accused of attacking a mill-dam at Islip may imply that men from Chalton-on-Otmoor via Merton, Arnott, Blackthorn, Piddington, [Steeple?] Claydon were involved.’ Blair implies that this may have been because their transport interests were obstructed.\[^734\]

1294. A commission was appointed to view and remove the ‘gorces and weirs in the Thames, in the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, Berks, Buckingham and Oxford, as it appears that divers magnates and others having tenements by the river Thames and the river of the moor of Ottermor, between the city of London and the said moor, have erected gorces and weirs where they were not want to be, and have straitened and raised the height of others, … by reason whereof vessels cannot pass ass they were wont.’\[^735\]

1375. A commission was set up to ‘survey the hythe called La Ree of Ottemore, co Oxford, which is said to be so choked in divers places by the planting of trees and making of sluices of timber, stone and earth therein ….’\[^736\]

**Th 25 River Evenlode**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower limit</th>
<th>River Thames.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Bladon. 8 miles. 3.7 m(^3) s(^{-1}). 1.1 S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Charlbury. 15 miles. n/a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1241. ‘One man was drowned from a boat in the river Bladon. [Evenlode.]’\[^737\]

**Th 26 River Windrush**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower limit</th>
<th>River Thames.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Taynton. 15 miles. 2.2 m(^3) s(^{-1}). 1.2 C&amp;G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Bourton-on-the-water. 23 miles. 0.73 m(^3) s(^{-1}). 1.9 Modified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre 1549. Some of the stone for St Mary’s Church Reading ‘was transported by river from the Taynton quarry on the Windrush valley, Oxfordshire.’\[^738\]

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\[^735\] Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1292-1301, 114.
\[^737\] The Oxfordshire Eyre 1241. Editor Janet Cooper. Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol. 56. 1989, 150.
17thC. Much of the Reigate stone used in Westminster Abbey was ‘replaced by Taynton oolite from Oxfordshire, brought by river from Burford.’

1641. John Taylor rowed from Burford to Oxford in August in a year of ‘great drought’.

**Th 27 River Churn**

Lower limit. River Thames.
B. Cirencester. 7 miles.

1641. John Taylor rowed upstream to Cirencester in July in a year of ‘great drought’.

**Rivers of the South East**

**SE 1 River Medway**

Lower limit. Allington.
Edwards. Maidstone 2 miles.
A. Tonbridge. 19 miles. n/a. Canalised.
B. Penshurst. 25 miles.
RLU. Balls Green. 35 miles. n/a. (Nr Withyham Stn.)

References to the use of the river downstream of Maidstone are not quoted. See the Act of 1423 below and ‘The river is tidal nearly to Maidstone, and has been navigable up to the town from time immemorial for craft up to 50 tons.’

*Edwards* quotes a reference to timber felled in Tonbrugge forest and then carried by ‘land and water’ to Rochester. It is not stated where the timber was placed on the river. This is not accepted here as a record of the use of the river to Tonbridge.

‘Nowadays we are accustomed to seeing a river consisting of one main current with firm banks defining its course. In the fifteenth century, however, the Medway looked very different. Doubtless in some places it did have a recognisable main course, especially where the river valley narrowed or the water was channelled for strategic purposes at Tonbridge or Maidstone. But in Hadlow the floodplain was, and still is, wide and a multitude of subsidiary streams wound their way alongside. Farmers having land hereabouts naturally altered the course of the streams to suit themselves and where

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741 Ibid.
our survey touches on the Medway we are aware that the sluices and weirs controlling
the watercourses are an important and integral part of daily lives.'\(^{743}\)

‘Additional details about the condition of the river in 1627-1629 make it clear that
occupiers of land on the banks had been accustomed for centuries past to do what they
liked with their own stretch of water. Intelligent self-interest and common sense
obliged them to clear away trees and shrubs from the banks and pull out fallen logs, but
individuals had freely constructed bays to make use of the flowing water for washing
and watering animals as well as other jobs, and had erected weirs to catch goodly
quantities of fish for themselves and for sale.'\(^{744}\)

‘Several logboats were found in c 1720 in the marshes near the R. Medway above
Maidstone.'\(^{745}\) The fact that one of them was used as a boat after excavation may
indicate that they were used in the period 1200-1600.

1284. There was a landing place from boats at Hadlow Stair.\(^{746}\)

1423. Commission to … (names) … to hold inquisition as to weirs, stakes and kiddells
… Thames and Medeweie, from a place called Reculver to Yendale, and thence to the
bridge of Maydeston, to the impediment of navigation, contrary to the statutes of 25
Edward III and 45 Edward III.\(^{747}\)

1460. ‘The Stair was the wharf and landing place on the Medway where most goods
for Hadlow were loaded and unloaded. It is usual to say that the Medway was not made
a navigable river until the 1740’s, but that was for larger vessels of 4 tons and more.
Before that the river was constantly used by small, flat-bottomed craft plying up and
down on local errands carrying small goods. Hadlow people were sufficiently satisfied
to make no loud complaints. It was not until the second half of the sixteenth century
when commercial traffic intensified, that an agitation began to move larger vessels
down the river, resulting in the early seventeenth century in a survey of all the
obstructions, and endeavours to clear them.'\(^{748}\) There was a ‘lane to the Medway’
leading to the Stair, or wharf.\(^{749}\)

c1567. In a survey of 1627-29 it is stated that ‘David Willard, who had occupied the
forge at Postern some 50 to 60 years previously, was blamed for having turned the
course of the Medway “for his own use for the passage of his iron boats from thence
down to Fishall.”’\(^{750}\)

\(^{743}\) Joan Thirsk, Ed., *Hadlow Life Land and People in a Wealden Parish 1460 – 1600.* Kings Lynn:
Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd. 2007, 54.
\(^{744}\) Ibid. page 49.
\(^{746}\) Joan Thirsk, Ed., *Hadlow Life Land and People in a Wealden Parish 1460 – 1600.* Kings Lynn:
Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd. 2007, 97.
\(^{747}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1422-29, 123.
\(^{748}\) Joan Thirsk, Ed., *Hadlow Life Land and People in a Wealden Parish 1460 – 1600.* Kings Lynn:
Heritage Marketing & Publications Ltd. 2007, 8-9.
\(^{749}\) Ibid. page 52.
\(^{750}\) Ibid. page 55.
1570. ‘Kent hath also sundrie fresh rivers and pleasaunt streames, especially Derent, Medway, and Stowre, of the which, Medwey is more navigable then the rest, for which cause, and (for that it crosseth the Shyre almost in the midst) it is the most beneficall also.’

1580. ‘From at least 1580 small boats could intermittently travel upstream from Maidstone for six miles to Yalding.’

1586. The river divided into five streamlets at Tonbridge.

1627. ‘When another attempt was made by the Sewer Commissioners to clear the river from Penshurst to Maidstone, and the locals protested at new restrictions which seemed to them to prevent them fishing from their boats and taking their friends on board with them.’

1635. ‘By taking down the wears and one foot bridge, and cutting down some wood on the banks, boats have passed since Hallowtide last, five miles up the river [from Maidstone] with two tons and brought down six tons and a half. The chief hindrance arises from undertenants who oppose the towing of boats upon the bank sides.’

Note:- the objection was to the towing, not to the boats on the river.

**River Len**

Lower limit. River Medway.

*Edwards* quoted a record that in 1359 ‘Timber, stone, iron, boards, tiles, charcoal and all other necessaries’ were taken to that place [Ledes’ Castle] ‘by land and water’. If the order of ‘land’ and ‘water’ is correct then the final part of the journey would have been up the River Len. This record is not accepted here.

**SE 2 River Beult**

Lower limit. River Medway.
B. Headcorn. 12 miles.
RLU. Headcorn. 12 miles. n/a. Modified. Weirs.

1634. James Farrance was indicted for erecting a dam at Headcorn. There is no obvious reason for this unless the dam obstructed the use of the river.
SE 3 River Kentish Stour

Tidal Limit. Fordwich.

Edwards. Canterbury. 2 miles.

A. Wye. 14 miles. 2.2 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.6 C.

B. Great Chart. 20 miles.

RLU. Ashford. 18 miles. 2.1 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.85 Confl.

Roman. A Roman Quay was found 18-20 feet below the present ground level on the River Stour in Canterbury.758

Roman. A riverside Roman port has been found at Sturry.759

An anchor was found at Chilham, six miles upstream of Canterbury.760

During excavations it was found that 13 ft. 6ins. below the present ground level there was the bed of an early river, possibly Anglo-Saxon. The present river level is 7 ft. below ground level and the bed of the river about 3 ft below this. It appears that there was no river at this point in Roman times.761

1264. In August 1264 the Minor Friars of Canterbury received a licence to build a bridge “over the water of Stour between the site of their house and their place called Brokmede,” on condition that “little ships (navicule) may pass under without impediment.” 762 Brokmede was an island between two branches of the River Stour in Canterbury.

1309. A licence was granted to the Minor Friars of Canterbury to build a bridge for the benefit of persons wishing to attend their church, and this bridge also had to be of sufficient height to allow ‘a clear passage for boats underneath’. 763, 764 It would appear that this bridge led to an island site and so it was one branch of the divided river which was used by boats.765

1311-12. Oats were transported from Great Chart, Little Chart, Hollingbourne and Appledore to Canterbury. This would normally only have been economically viable if river transport was used.766

762 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1258-66, 342.
764 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1307-13, 178.
766 Bruce M.S. Campbell et al., A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply. Historical Geography Research Series Number 30. 1993, 152.
16th C. Sixteenth-century records show boats reaching as high up the river as Wye, at least on occasions.\(^{767}\)

1515. An Act was passed for making the River Stour navigable to Great Chart.\(^{768}\) The Act did not create a right of navigation. It seems the right must have existed, and been used by small boats, prior to the passing of the Act.

1592. ‘The Privy Council ordered the Kentish justices of the peace to put in present execution an Act of 6 Henry VIII, 1515 for making the Kentish Stour ‘navigable or portable for craiers, boats and lighters to pas to the towne of Fordwich in such sort as they presently do from Fordwich to the towne of Sandwich.’ As Canterbury could not bear the whole cost, it was to be levied on the county as a whole.\(^{769}\) [It seems that the first reference to ‘Fordwich’ should be to ‘Canterbury’ or a place further upstream.]

1628. ‘A wooden bridge crossed the Stour in the fourteenth century. The present stone bridge dates from 1628.\(^{770}\) Hence prior to 1628 the bridge may have been high enough to allow boats to pass under it.

18th century. ‘In the museum is an interesting collection of engravings and etchings which show views of the city during the eighteenth century. Westgate and Blackfriars Bridges are depicted with pointed arches, as is also one shown alongside a large mill. This last one is difficult to identify.’\(^{771}\) The bridges may have been pointed to make it possible for boats to pass under or because it made construction easier.

1770. Lambarde refers to the river at Ashford as an example of ‘a great river’.\(^{772}\)

**SE 4 Little Stour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit</th>
<th>West Stourmouth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Bekesbourne</td>
<td>6 miles. n/a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Bridge</td>
<td>7 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU. Seaton</td>
<td>3 miles. n/a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bekesbourne was one of the non-corporate members of the Cinque Ports.\(^{773}\) This statement proves that the manor had the privileges of the Cinque Ports not that it necessarily had navigable waters.

‘Lyon in his “History of Dover” says, “The fruitful valley in which we now find the villages of Littlebourne, Bekesbourne, Patricksbourne and Bridge, at the time of Julius Caesar’s expedition was a considerable branch of the large estuary, leading through the


\(^{769}\) (1514) 6 Henry VIII c 17.


central vale from Rutupiae (Sandwich) to Ashford. In the reign of Edward III this branch had a sufficient depth of water to float one of their ships of war.\textsuperscript{774}

1327-1377. ‘Philippott (\textit{Villare Cantianum}, 1776, p. 62) stated, that in the reign of Edward the Third “there was a small navigation out of the river Stour up to this place, referring to Bekesbourne. In fact, Bekesbourne was at one time a non-corporate member of the Cinque Ports, attached, curiously enough, to Hastings as head port (Boys, \textit{Collections for History of Sandwich}, 1792, p. 770).\textsuperscript{775}

SE 5 \textbf{River Dour}

Tidal limit. The coast at Dover.
B. \textfrac{1}{2} mile upstream from the coast.

A boat dating from around 1550 BC was found up a side creek of the river. ‘The valley floor was marshy along the course of the river with grassland around it.’\textsuperscript{776}

SE 6 \textbf{Eastern Rother}

Tidal limit. Scots Float.

Edwards. Etchingham. 20 miles.
A. Etchingham. 20 miles. 1.5 \text{m}^3\text{s}^{-1}. 1.6 S.
RLU. Etchingham. 20 miles. 1.5 \text{m}^3\text{s}^{-1}. 1.6 S.

‘The Rother was made navigable at a very early period by means of “shuts,” probably a primitive form of lock, remains of which have been found at Appledore.’\textsuperscript{777}

‘There was formerly an erection across the Rother, opposite Bodiam Castle, called the shuts, which was built for the purpose of penning back the water to bring canons down from the foundry at Robertsbridge.’\textsuperscript{778}

‘At Udiam, … there were “Iron Houses for storage pending shipment.”\textsuperscript{779}

‘It has long been known from documentary sources that Small Hythe was one of the most important shipbuilding centres of medieval England.’\textsuperscript{780}

150-300. Iron was taken from Bodiam by boat.\textsuperscript{781}

\textsuperscript{774} William Holloway, \textit{The History of Romney Marsh}. London: John Russell Smith. 1849, 96. The text cited has not been found in the original work.
\textsuperscript{778} William Holloway, \textit{The History of Romney Marsh}. London: John Russell Smith. 1849, 82.
1272-1307. ‘An action was started by the Abbot of Robertsbridge against the lord of the Manor of Knell for enclosing salt marshes from the sea, whereby barges and boats were hindered from bring up provisions and merchantize, to the market at Robertsbridge.’

1287. A 16th century boat was found in an old channel of the river.

14th C. ‘Records exist of the carriage by water of stone for the building of Bodiam Castle in the 14th century.’

1300-1420. ‘Large areas of woodland in the Weald were an important source for firewood, timber and tan. Wood was cut either side of the River Rother in Kent and Sussex for export, particularly to Flanders, and also for shipment to elsewhere in England. There were wharves on the Rother in Kent at Reading Street, Maytham and Newenden, and in Sussex at Bodiam, on the River Brede at Damme and Sloghdam near Winchelsea and in the Combe Haven valley at Bulverhythe. Land transport was used to reach the ports from woods, such as those in Battle not within reach of the Rother, and the presence of wood-merchants at Cranbrook and elsewhere in the Kent Weald suggest that it was moved similar distances from the north to the quays on the Rother.’

1326. Timber was carried from Tonebrugge ‘to Newendon’.

1327 ‘(x) Hire of 3 scows (shoutarum) and 1 ship for carriage of the timber from Newyndenne to Dover, viz. 2 scows each carrying 40 tons (pondus quadraginta doliorum vini) for 3 trips, 1 carrying 30 tons for 1 trip; and the ship carrying 50 tons for a trip ….’

(xii) carriage from Newenden to Dover castle of 32 bloms (blomarum) of iron.

1331. Commissioners were appointed to investigate the blockage of the river by the throwing out of ballast [at Bodiam] and were ordered to appoint places where ballast was to be discharged.

1337 An old trench was ‘so obstructed by shingle and sand that ships can no longer pass by it to Romeneye as they used to do, as there is another trench made by the sea

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782 William McPherson Rice, ‘Account of an Ancient Vessel recently found under the old bed of the river Rother in Kent.’ Archaeologia, Vol. XX. (1790), 553-565, 564.
787 Calendar of Memoranda Rolls, 1326-27, 95, 339.
788 Calendar of Memoranda Rolls, 1326-27, 339-40.
better adapted for the passage of ships.

The new trench was 2.5 km long and 100m. broad.

1345 Provisions were transported from Newenden to Portsmouth by ship.

1348 A commission was set up to investigate the building of a sluice and a wall across the river. It was claimed that ‘it will be to the great damage of the King and the petitioner (James de Echyngham) especially as by it the passage of ships and boats with victuals from divers .. manors .. to (the) manor of Echyngham will be hindered, as well as to the destruction of his market town of Salehurst, situated on that water and his market there.’

1354 It was claimed that ships from France, Flanders, Zeeland, Estland and elsewhere were loading their ships higher up the river than at Sloghdam with wool and covering it with firewood and so avoiding dues. The king instructed that boats should only load at Sloghdam and so pay dues.

1357 Men of Cranebrok and other towns and places within La Welde, co. Kent claimed that in times past they used to sell their firewood at their will at Rethyng, Bodyam, Maythame, Newenden and elsewhere in those parts and that ‘there was no abundant growth of wood in those in la Welde’. They asked to be allowed to continue selling wood from the river bank. The king allowed their petition.

1382 Certain persons alleged ‘that divers goods of the King’s enemies in ships, some belonging to the king’s friends and some to his enemies, captured by them in war in the year 46 Edward III (1373) and taken to Dover, Rye and Apoldre, were unjustly taken from them by Richard Lyons, now deceased, and that no restitution has been made by him or his executors.’

14th C. Even smaller streams, like the Lymne in Kent or the Welland in Northamptonshire, could be described as ‘the king’s highroad’. Limene or Lymne was another name for the River Rother.

15th C. Stone for the walls of Bodiam came up to the castle dock from Wadhurst quarries.

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790 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1334-38, 457.
793 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1348-50, 80, 177-78.
794 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1354-58, 70.
795 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1354-60, 37.
796 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1354-58, 578-79.
797 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381-85, 144.
A commission was set up, ‘to survey the port of Wynchelse from a place called Comer to Bodyham and appoint certain convenient places where stones, sand and other ballast may be shot and to proclaim that such shall not be shot in the channel, which in this manner been filled up and blocked, and to certify to the King.'

John Biddenden was contracted to carry 18 tons of iron from ‘The Oke’ above Bodiam Bridge to Rye. In the 1560’s cast-iron plates were shipped to Rye from Cardiff and carried up the Rother to Bodiam.

The Robertsbridge works were able to ship iron from Bodiam Bridge.

‘Robertsbridge iron only had to go by cart as far as Bodiam bridge, whence it was carried by barge down the Rother.’

‘Bodiam bridge was the collecting point for iron from elsewhere.’

Hence it seems that Bodiam was the upper limit of navigation for barges carrying iron in the 1560s.

Iron was shipped in smaller barges from Udiam Bridge.

Fish was sent up river in lighters.

J fell out of an old small boat on the stream that runs between Kent and Sussex at Northiam and was drowned. The boat was worth 5s.

‘The Rother dividing his water into three channels, passeth under Roberts bridge.’

A stop was made in the navigation at Thorney-Wall. Lightermen were allowed a tonnage for carrying goods over the stop.

‘I and F were “towinge certaine tymber from” Scots Float to Rye “at a cockes sterne”’. The cooke overturned and they were drowned.

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799 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1399-1401, 346.
803 Ibid. page 159.
1635. The Mayor and Jurats of Rye stated that the iron from Robertsbridge, Echingham and Hawkhurst would cost £100 per annum more if sent by road, besides spoiling the highways.  

SE 6A River Tillingham

Tidal limit. Rye.

1750-1770. Iron was taken from Beckley to Rye by water this may have been on the Tillingham or Eastern Rother.  

18th C. The tidal reaches had been used for water traffic since the 18th century, and in 1786 a navigational sluice was erected above Strand Quay to prevent the tide flowing up and to improve the scouring of the Strand Channel. The navigation was used by narrow barges from Rye servicing the farms in the Tillingham Valley. Wharves were established at Ferry Bridge, Leasam Farm, Marshall’s Farm and Marley Farm. (two miles from Rye), and there may have been occasional traffic further upstream. Navigation above Rye ceased in 1928.

SE 7 River Brede

Tidal limit. Rye.

A. Sedlescombe. 10 miles. n/a.

‘At … Brede Bridge… there were “Iron Houses for storage pending shipment.”

140-150. ‘The Nodal point of all these communications would therefore appear to be the head of the Brede estuary, and it would seem to be justifiable to postulate a port installation somewhere in that area.

1287 A storm rendered the old port of Winchelsea uninhabitable.

1300-1420. There were wharfs at Damme and Sloghdam.

1344 ‘The men of the town of Ihamme near Wynshelse have shown the King that although they and their predecessors from time out of mind have had free access and egress by the port of water leading from their town to the sea, with their ships and boats, for fishing and other affairs and to return to that town at will, yet the bailiffs strive to prevent them from doing so by putting stakes in the water and iron chains, wherefore those men have besought the King to provide a remedy: the King therefore orders the

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bailiffs to desist from such impediment, and to permit those men to come and go as they
and their predecessors have been wont to do.'\(^81\)

1357. Works were ordered to be carried out at so that ‘the sea water might flow swiftly
by its ancient course to the town of Battle’.\(^81\)

1360s. There was a quay at the Damme.\(^81\)

15\(^{th}\) C. In the 15\(^{th}\) century lead purchased in London was being shipped up the tidal
river from Rye to Sedlescombe for the Lady Chapel of Battle Abbey.\(^82\)

1419-1442. ‘(An artificial ditch was dug) about 150 m wide and at least 7.5 km long
and flanked by walls. Its intention was clear, to allow an increased quantity of sea water
to ebb and flow in the Brede valley in a new broad course, and so scour the bed of the
river, enable access to the port at Winchelsea and the free draining of water from the
marshes either side.’\(^82\)

1456. A commission *de walliis et fossatis* was appointed for the area ‘between
“Sedlescombebregge” in the parish of Sedlescombe on the west side to Snaylham and
“le Pyke” in Brede and Gestlyng on the east, on either side of the common watercourse
running between Sedlyscombe and Wynchelsee, co. Sussex.’\(^82\)

Late 1520s. Goods for Battle Abbey were brought by boat to Bredebregge.\(^83\)

1573-1787 Cleere and Crossley consider that iron was taken from Westfield forge to
Rye by boat.\(^84\)

1574. There was a wharf at the Strand at the foot of Winchelsea Hill. ‘The flowing
watercourse of the haven of Winchelsea’ formed one boundary of a plot of land.\(^85\)

**SE 8 Reading Sewer**

Lower limit. River Rother.
A. Small Hythe. 2 miles. n/a.

15\(^{th}\) C. ‘Small Hythe was known to be functioning as a ship repair yard in the fifteenth
century.’\(^86\)

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\(^81\) Calendar of Close Rolls, 1343-46, 446.
\(^82\) Calendar of Close Rolls, 1354-60, 315.
\(^86\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1459-61, 300.
\(^89\) East Sussex Record Office. Winchelsea Corporation Records. WIN/53. A2A Index.
SE 9  **Combe Haven**

Tidal limit.  The coast.
A.  ½ mile from coast.  ½ mile.  0.33 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.  < 5 m.

The name Combe Haven means ‘A short, broad valley forming a place of safety for boats’. The river’s name changes to Furnace Stream at Bine’s Farm where the gradient becomes steeper.  

13$^{th}$ C.  Combe Haven was a place where ships sheltered from the SW winds. Bulverhythe was a landing-place on a river.  

1300-1420.  Wood was exported from Damme and Sloghdam.  

SE 10  **Waller’s Haven**

Tidal limit.  Coast.  
See Ashbourne Stream.  5 miles.  n/a.  

Puddledock is a farm at TQ 665100  

SE 11  **Ashbourne Stream**

Lower limit.  Waller’s Haven  
A.  Ashburnham Forge.  2 miles.  0.24 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.  < 5 m.  

16$^{th}$ century.  Iron was shipped from Penhurst Docks.  

1579.  Thomas Ashborneham of Ashburnham was to deliver 6 tons of English iron at Buttolphs Wharf near Thames Street, London.  

1667.  A deed conveyed the right, ‘of carrying iron in boats, down what is now but little more than a ditch, from the forge to Boreham Bridge, through other owners’ property, including the power to cleanse and scour and cast the slab, mud, etc., on the banks, also to set up bayes and pens to stay the water.’  

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830 Personal Comment: Keith Datcher, Estate Manager, Beech Farm, Nr Battle, Sussex.

831 East Sussex Record Office. Lavington Estate Archives. LAVINGTON/833. A2A Index.

SE 12 **Nunningham Stream**

Lower limit. Waller’s Haven
A. Bodle Street Green. 2 miles. 0.19 m$^3$ s$^{-1}$. < 5 m.

1607. ‘The Pelham accounts mention both Pevensey and The Sluice, and in either case the iron was stored to await a vessel. The iron was brought down the marsh channels in the winter time; Lord Dacre of Hurstmonceux hired out his boats to convey it. A likely spot at which the barges may have been loaded is Chilhurst Bridge on the Nunningham Stream. Colonel D. MacLeod has found here brick abutments which possibly belonged to a hatch for raising the water-level, with remains of camp-shedding, and there is a raised causeway containing iron slag, which leads to Bodle Street Green.’

SE 13 **Pevensey Haven**

Tidal limit. The coast.
A. Northeye. 3 miles. n/a.

(3km SE of Hailsham.)

Pevensey Haven flows from Rickney to Pevensey.
Hurst Haven flows from Hailsham to Rickney.
Iron Stream flows down from Herstmonceaux. TQ 633106.

13$^{th}$ C. Northeye was a non-corporate member of the Cinque Ports under Hastings.

1438. There were ‘Two dokkes near the port of Pevensey made for boats to land at and lie in.’ Salzmann refers to this record and states that ‘Docks of the kind here mentioned, little bays cut in the side of the dykes, are to be seen in many places in the marsh, especially near the sea, to the present day, though for the most part they have been long disused.’

1580. ‘About 1580 Herbert Pelham and Mr Stolion had started bringing iron, the principal export of the district, down the ditches in barges in the winter when the “tuggs” or wagons were unable to use the marsh roads. This water-borne iron was stored close to Pevensey Bridge and exported from the haven.’

1607. See Nunningham Stream, 1607.

1644. ‘There is more than one receipt for carriage of iron in “my lord’ lighter at Pemsie;” so in March, 1645, 15s was received for the carriage of 30 tons.’

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836 Ibid. page 53.
837 Ibid. page 59.
SE 14  **Middle Sewer**

Tidal limit. The coast.
A. Hampden Park. 4 miles. n/a.

13th C. Hydneye [in Hampden Park.] was a non-corporate member of the Cinque Ports under Hastings.  

1396. A Commission stated that the sewer to Wyllindonstrow from Pevensey should be 2 perches wide, 3 feet deep. 

SE 15  **River Cuckmere**

Tidal limit. Milton Lock.
A. Upper Dicker. 5 miles. 1.2 m$^3$/s. < 10 m.

About 13th C. Caen stone was used in the construction of Michelham Priory. Pelham considered that it would have been transported by river.

1587. In a Survey of the Coast of Sussex it is noted that ‘No ships now enter it’ implying that previously ships did enter it.

SE 16  **Sussex Ouse**

Tidal limit. Barcombe Mills.
A. Lindfield. 10 miles. n/a. Modified.

‘Lower down, between Fletching bridge and Gold-bridge, comes in a small tributary from Nutley, and yet lower a bifurcated stream, one branch of which passes Ford Green and Maresfield Park, the other coming from Oldland, the seat of the Roman iron works, and Maresfield village and pond. In the bed of one of these streams the Rev. E. Turner some years since discovered an ancient British canoe, hewn, like that described in a former volume of these Collections [Vol X, page 149] out of a solid oak-tree.’

‘There is a section of the Ouse above Lewes, near Isfield, called the Iron River; although the Ouse was not canalised until 1790 it was doubtless navigable for a considerable distance.’

1405-09  Edwards considered that entries in the *Calendar of Close Rolls* may indicate that the river was navigable to Ifelde.

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‘Certain persons were instructed “to make inquisition by whose default the walls, dikes, gutters, sewers, bridges, causeways, weirs and leats on either hand between Ifelde and the sea upon the river of Lewes and between Pulberowe ferry and the sea on the river of Arundell in Sussex are burst.”’

1577. A ferry carrying a man, a boy and 58 sheep sank at Southease. The boat was worth 10s.

1579. ‘J was in a “bote” on the common stream at South Malling’ the quant pole he was using became stuck and threw him out of the boat and into the stream and so he was drowned. The quant was worth 1d.

1586. In Holinshed’s Chronicles it is stated, ‘The fift [tributary of the Ouse] riseth about Storuelgate, and meeteth also with the maine streame aboue Linfield, and these are known to lie upon the right hand as we rowed up the river.’

1724. It should be noted that the ‘Copy of a map of the Maresfield Forge in 1724’ showing boats on the stream leading to Maresfield is fictitious.

1724. Budgen’s map of Sussex shows what appears to be a boat crossed through on the west bank of the river near Isfield. It seems that this is the limit point for either barges or boats but it does not indicate which.

SE 17 River Adur

Tidal Limit. Shermanbury Place and 1km above Bines Bridge.
A. Henfield. 1 miles. n/a.
B. Shipley. 4 miles.

It is certain that so small a stream as the Adur in Sussex floated barges up to the boundaries of Shipley parish.

1583. ‘J and A were getting into a small boat worth 2s in a pond at Cuckfield to enjoy the water, by misadventure, the boat being weighed down, water entered into it, it immediately sank in the depths of the pond and J and A were drowned.’

1598. ‘R and R were crossing the Adur at Henfield by a “troughe boat”, by misadventure the boat suddenly drowned them. The boat is worth 3s 4d.’

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845 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1399-1402, 186.
846 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1405-09, 78.
848 Ibid. page 49.
854 Ibid. page 126
SE 17A  River Arun

Tidal limit. Previously Ford, now Pallingham Lock. 11 logboats have been found between Arundel and Pulborough. Two have been dated to 295AD and 640AD.

1086. Arundel is described as a port.

14th C. A log-boat, reported to be of the 14th C, was found at North Stoke.

About 14th C. It was written in about 1636 that ‘It anciently began at a place in the River call’s Turning-stream some three Furlongs beneath Stopham Bridge, … But at this Day it begineth at Pallingham Key, some two Miles below [?above] Stopham Bridge, the River being cleared, from the said Bride to the said Key, about the beginning of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth.’

1405-09 The river was navigable to Arundel.

1405-09 See River Ouse, 1405-09.

16th C. The River Arun was made navigable to Stopham Bridge during the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1.

1550. ‘Timber was being exported from the newly built wharves. (At Arundel)’

1569. A man fell from a ship of ‘about 60 “toonnes” in capacity …into the salt water called the Tarrant at “Arundell Key” in Arundel and was drowned’.

1573. ‘A trowhebote loaded with wood on the “Amberley river” sank. The boat remained with the bailiff of Amberley. The boat was worth 2d.’

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859 Ibid. page 25.
1578 & 1580. There were ships at Arundel. In 1572 there was a bargeman of Amberley. It would appear that at this time ships sailed up river to Arundel where goods were transhipped into barges for transport upriver.  

**SE 18 Western Rother**

Tidal limit. Hardham.

A. Fittleworth. 2 miles. 5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. < 10 m. Modified.

RLU. Midhurst. 13 miles. 2.2 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. Modified.

About 13th C. Caen stone was used in the construction of Shulbrede Priory which is near a tributary of the river Rother. R.A. Pelham considered that it would have been transported by river.

1615. At Fittleworth, ‘Close to the mill stood a wharf supported by timber piles and near this wharf was a “close used for sales”’.

**SE 18A River Lavant**

1586. The city of Chichester ‘had certainly been much frequented and very rich, had not the haven been a little too far off, and less commodious.’

1695. Gibson recorded that ‘the course of this river’s stream [the Lavant’s] is very unaccountable, sometimes being quite dry, but at other times, and that very often too in the midst of Summer, it is so full as to run very violently.’

**SE 19 River Itchen**

Tidal limit. Woodmills.

Edwards. Winchester. 16 miles.

A. Winchester. 16 miles. 4.2 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.7 C.

B. New Alresford. 26 miles.

RLU. New Alresford. 26 miles. 3.5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 2 Confl.

*Edwards* gives the upper limit of New Alresford but his references are now considered doubtful.

Rogers in his study of the History of Agriculture and Prices states that ‘The Thames, the Severn, the Ouse on which Bristol was built, the Cambridgeshire Ouse, the Humber, the

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Itchin, the Test, the Stour, the Wye and many other rivers, were navigable and commonly navigated.\textsuperscript{871}

Biddle wrote in 1976 ‘Godfrey de Lucy was responsible for the foundation of New Alresford. The tradition that he had the artificial pond at Alresford constructed as a reservoir for a waterway extending to Winchester and thence to the sea may therefore be correct. (fn. M.W. Beresford, New Towns of the Middle Ages (London, 1967), 442. For the tradition, see Milner i. 173-4.) The Itchen canal does not seem to have continued in use, for by 1275 its course was obstructed by a number of mills belonging to the bishop, (fn. VCH Hants v. 451 and PRO, C143/3/11.) and this state of affairs persisted into the seventeenth century. (fn. E. Course, ‘The Itchen Navigation’, Proc. Hants FC 24 (1967), 113-26)\textsuperscript{872}

Roberts in 1985 claimed that the Alresford Pond was a fishery, mill pond and causeway but not a reservoir for a canal.\textsuperscript{873} A canal would have required pound locks which were unknown in England before the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. However he does not consider whether the river was used as a navigation. He claims that the charter granted by King John to Godfrey de Lucy was a forgery.

Currie in 1995, in an article concerned mainly with a potential Saxon channel at the tidal limit of the river, reviewed the evidence for the use of the River Itchin for navigation in the medieval period. He concluded that the river may well have been used for navigation as far as Bishopstoke but considered that it would not have been used for navigation above that point.\textsuperscript{874}

In an article published in 2007 Currie again concluded that ‘the navigation … was unlikely to have extended further than Bishopstoke. Edward Robert’s argument against the existence of the de Lucy canal to Winchester and Alresford remains convincing.\textsuperscript{875}

10\textsuperscript{th} & 11\textsuperscript{th} C. The erection of mills and the cutting of the leats associated with them in the late Saxon period probably modified the course of the main stream to a considerable extent.\textsuperscript{876}

10\textsuperscript{th} & 11\textsuperscript{th} C. There seems to have been even more extensive works on the river some miles to the south of Winchester in the tenth or eleventh centuries, for the Anglo-Saxon boundaries of land at Stoneham included both the old and new courses of the Itchen. The new waterway may have been cut to improve navigation, but there is no other

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evidence for this use of the river before the episcopate of Godfrey de Lucy (1189-1204).  

11th C. ‘At that time, the Itchen is said to have been navigable through to Bishop Sutton.’ (Bishop Sutton is upstream of Alresford.)  

1042-66. A reference to a New River in a charter from the time of Edward the Confessor.  

12th C. It is believed that stone for Winchester Cathedral was transported by water right up to the city since this would be far easier than trying to carry it overland.  

12th C. ‘Round the coast it [the Purbeck marble] travelled, and up the rivers, to Exeter, Salisbury and Winchester (for the church of St. Cross).  

12th C. ‘Stone for the cathedral had to be imported. … It would be brought up the river Itchen by barge.’  

c.1189. ‘Bishop Godfrey appears to have enjoyed rights over the passage of water in the Itchen (fn. In 1446 Bishop Beaufort ratified a charter of de Lucy dated 1202 allowing Hugh de Chikehull, lord of the manor of Wollston, free passage on the river Itchen by Southampton: WCL, Register of the Common Seal, vol. I, fo. 71) similar to those of his successors, who in the later Middle Ages controlled the entire flow of water from Alresford pond to Itchen Ferry by Southampton.’ (fn. In the sixteenth century the bishops appointed an officer who had the custody of the pond and of the river down to Itchen Ferry, eg. WCL, Register of the Common Seal, vol. ii, fo 95v.)  

1199-1216. ‘King John confirmed to Bishop Godfrey the duties on certain articles of merchandise coming to or going from Winchester to the sea per trencheam quam dictus Wontoniensis Episcopus fecit fieri.’ Reg Pontissara, 741-743. This charter is not entirely above suspicion.  

1199. ‘The Bishop of Winchester controlled the Itchen and took all tolls from traffic on the river by virtue of a charter of 1199.’ The amount of goods taken up the Itchen is therefore not recorded in any Southampton records.  

In recognition of the bishop’s enterprise King John conferred upon him by charter (fn Charter Roll 1 John, m. 10) licence to levy tolls on all hides, leather and other goods entering the river by the trench or canal (per trancheam) he had made.  

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884 Ibid. page 270.  
885 The Brokage Book of Southampton 1443-1444. Editor Olive Coleman. Southampton: At the University. 1960, xxv, fn 5.  
End 12th C. The Bishop of Winchester, Godfrey de Lucy, `developed Alresford pond, making it into a reservoir of two hundred acres, built a dam across, largely at his own expense, and made the river navigable right through to the port nearly thirty miles away. Much of the canal remained open for many centuries, but difficulties arose during the late seventeen hundreds when England was building up her Navy, for bargees became a prime target for the press gangs, so that they were issued with a special certificate which forbade the gangs to take them. Even so, the last barge was towed up the river around 1865.  

13th C. `The only Winchester manor to sell them (faggots) with any frequency in the thirteenth century was Twyford.' Twyford is on the River Itchen between Winchester and Southampton and it would have been possible to transport the faggots by river transport rather than the more expensive road transport.

1200. The river was made navigable to New Alresford by Bishop de Lucy. In recognition of this King John conferred on him the right to levy tolls `on all hides, leather and other goods entering the river by the canal he had made.

1276. `The jurors summoned on an Inquisition ad quod damnum (4 Edw. I) said that they did not think the citizens of Winchester would be able to bring the flood and ebb of the sea as far as their city. They might, however, be allowed by the king to bring it to Stoke, distant 4 leagues from Southampton, on the way to Winchester. The jurors also said that this must harm the bishop, because it would be necessary to remove a mill called the Wodemilne, worth £5 a year, and a salmon fishery of the annual value of 10 marks, and … [six other named mills of given value]. Finally, the jury also declared that it would not be necessary to widen the water-course, but rather to make it more narrow and deepen it in various places.

1313. It was held that the tenants of the Bishop of Winchester should not pay toll on all goods bought in Southampton whether for their own use or for sale. Thus the movement of their goods on the Itchin would not be recorded in the Port Books.

1344. Forst and Sampson were charged with concealing ‘the custom of wines and other customizable things (taken out) of the town [Southampton] by water, by merchants of London, men of Winchelsea and Yarmouth, and servants of the bishop of Winchester, the prior and citizens of Winchester and the abbots of Netley, Titchfield and Bearulieu Regis.’ The accused’s reply was that all these men were free of such custom in Southampton and this plea was also confirmed by a jury at Winchester in 1345.

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893 Cooper v Shirley and others. 1313.
1617. ‘The Itchin navigation had not outlived its reputation in 1617, when it was styled, in a petition to the Commissioners of Sewers, that ‘most famous and profitable river. (fn Hants N. and Q. ix, 100)’

SE 20 River Alre

Lower limit. River Itchen.
B. Bishops Sutton. 1 mile. 1.5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. n/a.

1208. There is an entry in the Bishop of Winchester’s Pipe Roll recording ‘carriage of wool ‘per aquam’ between Bishops Sutton and … Beaulieu.’

SE 21 River Test

Tidal limit. Totton.
Edwards. Romsey. 5 miles.
A. Romsey. 12 miles. 11.01 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. Divided.
B. Longstock. 15 miles.
No RLU due to perceived legal objections.

Longstock above Stockbridge. ‘At the riverside dock the Viking longboats were overhauled and repaired.’

A log-boat was found at Bossington before 1829. The log was only partly hollowed out.

971-975. ‘The earliest record of the (Middle Bridge) site appears in a charter of King Edgar, 971-975, defining the boundaries of Romsey Abbey. The charter mentions ‘the street where the Test runs’ suggesting that the road now known as Middlebridge Street ran down to the water’s edge without actually crossing it. At this date the site could have been a landing place, for in Anglo-Saxon times the Test must have been an important waterway and a landing place here would have served the small, growing settlements of Romsey, Romsey Abbey and neighbouring villages.’

1339. Romsey was the collection centre for grain and oats which, it appears, were sent down the river.

1358 A grant of pontage was made ‘on things passing over or under the bridge of Rudbrigge’.

900 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1358-61, 29.
1697. The inventory of ‘John Moody (Mowdy) of King’s Somborne, Hampshire, Tailor’ included ‘Two Boats £1 – 1 – 0.’

King’s Somborne is about 8 km upstream of Romsey.

SE 22 Salisbury Avon

Tidal limit. Christchurch.
Edwards. Salisbury. 35 miles.
A. Salisbury. 35 miles. 14.5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.82 Modified.
B. Manningford Bruce. 62 miles.
RLU. Scales Bridge. 60 miles. 1.48 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.2 G.

John Chandler states that ‘The River Avon … is not in its natural state a navigable river for any but the slightest of sea-going vessels.’ This seems to imply that it is, in its natural state, navigable by small sea-going vessels and by craft designed for river transport.

It seems likely that the Blue Stones at Stonehenge were transported up the river.

Bryn Waters considers that the Roman Villas at Manningford Bruce, Netheravon and Amesbury were supplied by river transport.

Crane Street in Salisbury was named after an inn. It would seem likely that the inn was named after a crane on a wharf beside the River Avon.

‘There is a tradition that the stone of the Cathedral of that city (Salisbury) was transported thither by barges.’

‘Round the coast it [the Purbeck marble] travelled, and up the rivers, to Exeter, Salisbury …’

1220. 15,000 tons of Purbeck marble were carried up the river from Worth Matravers near Poole to build the cathedral.

1220. 60,000 tons of stone were quarried or mined at Tisbury or Chilmark and taken down the Nadder valley by cart or raft for the building of Salisbury Cathedral.

400 tons of lead were brought to Salisbury for the roof of the cathedral.

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901 Hampshire Record Office. 1697A/099. Will, Inventory of John Moody (Mowdy) of King’s Somborne, Hampshire, Tailor.
904 John Chandler, *Endless Street*. Salisbury: The Hobnob Press. 1983, 300. Chandler states that ‘The suggestion that there was a wharf in Crane Street (hence the name) – see Hammond, 1910, 371-372 – cannot be sustained. The road is named after an inn.’ He did not consider why the inn was named ‘The Crane’.
1220. Oak timbers were brought to Salisbury from Ireland for the construction of the roof of the cathedral.  

1339. It appears from the Sheriff’s Accounts for ‘Southampton Provisions to King Overseas’ that grain was taken by river from Fordingbridge and Avon to Christchurch and then by the sea to Southampton. Unlike some other Sheriff’s Accounts these do not state the mode of transport but only the total cost including transport.

1372. The King ordered that a barge ‘be made at Salisbury … to resist the malice of his enemies of France’.

1378. ‘The mayor, bailiffs, and good men of Salisbury’ were given exemption from ‘making a small barge, called a “balinger” for the King’s fleet now at sea.’ As the earl of Salisbury had undertaken to ‘provide the same in their stead’.

1402. Certain persons were ordered ‘to make inquisition by whose default the passage of ships and boats in the rivers of Wiltesir was hindered.

1408. The bailiffs of Gloucester were ordered to set free one John Milbourne who had been imprisoned for obstructing the Avon because ‘certain pales were set by him in the bed of the river at New Sarum’.

1419. A ship, the Catherine of Salisbury, is mentioned in a will.

1422. ‘It is also recorded that, in the reign of Henry VI, Salisbury played a part in the Hundred Years war since “the river Avon was navigable from Christchurch to Salisbury until the reign of Elizabeth I, the city was technically a seaport and as such it had built and manned a ship “The Trout”, which helped in the defence of the Kent coast.” (This initial statement is surprising in view of later history!)”

1428. The Southampton Port Books record the arrival of one boat loaded with teasels for wool processing in Salisbury.

1455. In an accounts book there is an entry for rental of le Crane, which appears to be an inn. This may have been adjacent to a wharf.

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912 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1377-81, 108.
913 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1399-1402, 518.
914 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1405-09, 332.
917 Ibid. page 3.
1535. ‘The Commission for the River Avon was established and the Commissioners, as in other areas, were appointed to remove all weirs and obstructions on the Avon. This suggested plans for opening the river further for navigation and the improvement of Christchurch port, but nothing more is known of these plans.’

1535. [Sir] Peter Philpot wrote to Cromwell

‘Your commandment for the weirs of Kyrcheche [fn Christchurch, Hants] shall be accomplished as soon as possible. Mills, weirs and fishgarths are being plucked down, and by Whitsuntide next every man that hath any ground adjoining this river shall cut the trees away, “and the shelpis to score,” so that a boat may have free passage.’

1535. John Husee wrote to Lord Lisle

‘And likewise for the Bishop of Winchester’s weirs in Hampshire and those that long to Christchurch shall be pulled down, so that the king, as all others, from the highest to the lowest, pass all one way, and none excuse will be heard. … there is no redemption but pull them down, although the same weirs have stood since 500 years before the Conquest.’

1538. John Salcot, Bishop of Bangor, and also Abbot of Hyde, wrote to Cromwell about the effect of pulling down all the weirs in Hampshire. There was an abundance of salmon and every man came to fish for them.

1590-1591. An order for the regulation of the River Avon made at the Salisbury Quarter Sessions states that the free passage of boats have been let [obstructed] and stopped and provides for the river to be kept open.

1592. An Order of the Commissioners of Sewers refers to the obstruction of ‘the free passage of fishe swannes and boates’ on the river between Harnham Bridge, Salisbury and Christchurch.

1604. ‘From time immemorial, the river Avon had been subject to commissioners of sewers, to preserve various rights of fishery and passage. The antient custom of this part of the river was, that a passage was to be left free, fifteen feet wide, and twelve feet distant from either bank. This custom was confirmed by the commissions, in the third year of James the First, 1604, and the eighth of Charles the First, 1632.’

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923 Hampshire Record Office. 24M82/PZ3.
924 Order of the Commissioners of Sewers for the Avon. Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, PR/Salisbury St Martin/1899/223 - date 1592.
1623. John Taylor and his companions rowed a wherry upstream to Salisbury.⁹²⁶

1632. The inventory of Joseph Warne of Bisterne, Ringwood, Yeoman, included ‘2 boats and Netts @ 1£’.⁹²⁷

**Rivers of the South West**

**SW 1 Dorset Stour**

Tidal limit. Christchurch.
B. Sturminster Newton. 42 miles.
RLU. Marnhull. 46 miles. n/a.

‘An inland navigation map of England and Wales, published in 1808, shows a cut known as the Dorset and Somerset Canal running northwards from the Stour at Sturminster Newton to Bradford on Avon in Wiltshire. Yet the Stour itself is not marked as being navigable.’⁹²⁸ There were several maps published at about this date which showed canals which were planned but never built. They nearly always showed the canal starting at a point where a river was legally and physically navigable.

**SW 2 Dorset Frome**

Tidal limit. Wareham.
B. Maiden Newton. 42 miles.
RLU. Dorchester. 23 miles. \(3.0 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}\). 2.4 G.

The river from Maiden Newton to Notton was used by the Romans for the transport of wood, bricks and stone. These were then taken by canal to Dorchester.⁹²⁹

**SW 3 Devon Axe**

Tidal limit. Colyford.
B. Axminster. 6 miles.

1339. Tenants of a manor at Branscombe were required to take two loads of corn to either the Exe River or the Axe River, presumably so that it could be transported further.⁹³⁰

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⁹²⁷ Hampshire Record Office 1632AD/87. Inventory of Joseph Warne of Bisterne, Ringwood, Hampshire, Yeoman.
SW 4  River Exe

Tidal limit.  South Exeter.
Edwards  Exeter.  1 miles.
A.  Exeter.  1 miles.  n/a.
RLU.  Tiverton.  20 miles.  n/a.

1290.  Two weirs were built out from each shore at Topsham leaving a gap for boats. Then the gap was blocked by the Earl of Devon. An inquisition ordered that an opening should be made in the weir to enable boats to continue to pass. ‘Between 1317 and 1327 this passage was, however, blocked by Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon.’ It was said that ‘such was their power and authoritie and such was the iniquitie of those daies as no justice could take place, nor lawe have his dewe course.’

1566.  A canal was built from Exeter to the sea for boats of 15-16 tons. ‘And now by this time, *Isc* or *Ex* growing bigger, and sporting himselfe, as it were, with spreading into many streames, very commodious for mils, …’

1586.  ‘But Excester received not so great damage at these enemies hands, as it did by certaine dames, which they call *Wears*, that Edward Courtney Earle of Denshire, taking high displeasure against the Citizens, made in the river *Ex*, which stop the passage so, that no vessel can come up to the Citie; but since that time all merchandize is carried by land from Topesham three miles off. And albeit it hath beene decreed by Act of Parliament, to take away these Weares, yet they continue there still.’

1695.  The dames at Topsham were removed in the time of King Charles ‘to such advantage that Lighters of the greatest burden come up to the city-key.’

SW 5  River Teign

Tidal limit.  Newton Abbot.
B.  Confluence with Bovey.  3 miles.

See SW6 River Bowey.

SW 6  River Bovey

Lower limit.  River Teign.
B.  Bovey Heath.  2 miles.  n/a.
(2 km downstream of Bovey Tracey.)

A logboat was found at Bovey Heathfield 2 km downstream of Bovey Tracey.

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934 Ibid. page 205.
SW 7  **Tory Brook**

Tidal limit.  East of Plymouth.
B.  Plympton.  3 miles.  n/a.

A logboat was found at Newnham Park, Plympton before 1839. Newnham Park is 4km above the tidal limit.  

SW 7A  **River Fowey**

Tidal limit.  Tywardreath.
A.  Lostwithiel.  Tidal.

Norden wrote of Lostuthiel (Lostwithiel) that ‘It is reported, that Foath water flowed up as far as this town, and conveyed boats; now far unlike.’

1326. Lostwithiel was listed as a port.

1586. Camden wrote ‘Now it (Lestuthiell) is a little town and not at all populous; for the channel of the river Fawey, which in the last age us’d to carry the tide up to the very town, and bring vessels of burthen; is now so stope up by the sands coming from the Lead-mines, that it is too shallow for barges; and indeed all the havens in this County are in danger of being choak’d up by these sands.’

SW 8  **River Red**

Tidal limit:  Coast.
B.  Tuckingmill.  5 miles.  (Nr Camborne.)

A logboat was found at Tuckingmill, nr Camborne, 8 km upstream of the tidal limit.

SW 9  **River Tresillian**

Tidal limit:  Tresillian.
B.  Probus.  3 miles.

Norden wrote about Probus that ‘nere unto this place hath a braunch of Foye haven come with boats; and belowe Probus churche is a rock, called Hayle-boate rocke,

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937 Ibid. page 253.
939 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1323-27, 640-42.
wherin to this day are many great Iron rynges whereunto Boates haue bene tyed: Now noe show of a haven, but a little brooke runneth in the valley.\footnote{John Norden, \textit{Speculi Britanniae Pars. A Topographicall & Historical description of Cornwall.} London: The Editor. 1728. Reprinted 1966, 43.}

\textbf{SW 10  River Torridge}

Tidal limit. Landcross.
A. Monkleigh. 2 miles. 16 m$^3$ s$^{-1}$. < 10 m.
RLU. Hele Bridge. 16 miles. n/a. 1.4
(North of Hatherleigh.)


\textbf{SW 11  River Taw}

Tidal Limit. Tawstock.
B. Confl. River Bray. 12 miles.
RLU. Newnham Barton Bridge. 12 miles. n/a.
\(1/4\) mile above confl. Bray.

1383. A commission of ‘oyer and terminer’ was set up to inquire into ‘the construction of divers weirs, mills, pools, stakes and kiddles in the river Towe between Brastaple and Mollond, co Devon, contrary to statute of 25 Edward III’.\footnote{Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381–85, 355.}
The inclusion of mills and the reference to 25 Edward III imply that Mollond was upstream of the tidal limit. Its position has not been found.


\textbf{SW 12  River Bray}

Lower limit. River Taw.
B. Filleigh. 10 miles. n/a.

1535. A weir described as ‘Fortescue’s of Filleigh’ was destroyed under the provisions of 23 Henry VIII c.5.\footnote{\textit{The Lisle Letters. Volume 5}. Editor Muriel St. Clare Byrne. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1981, 57.}
Rivers of the Somerset Levels

Most details of the use of rivers on the Somerset Levels are not recorded. See:- Helm,948 Williams, 949 Russett,950 and Rippon.951

1547. There were botes on Le Meere, Somerset.952

SW 13 River Parrett

Tidal limit.  3 miles downstream of Langport.
Edwards.  Langport.  3 miles.
A.  Kingsbury Episcopi.  7 miles.  2.4 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. n/a.
B.  Norton Sub Hamdon  11 miles.

‘Probably the most important river of the Levels was the Parrett, winding up from the sea to Bridgewater and then continuing far into the flat lands of Somerset, the tide travelling some twenty miles inland, almost to the town of Langport. From early times, river traffic took place to Langport Bridge, where any goods destined for the wharves of Thorney, three miles upstream on the Parrett, or Ilchester, on the tributary River Yeo, had to be transhipped, because the bridge totally obstructed the navigation.’953

13thC. ‘There was a bridge over the River Parrett at Langport as early as the 13th century and although it restricted the passage of anything but the smallest boats heading further inland the associated works helped to reclaim useful land and create river-side unloading places. In the 15th century the 9-arch Great Bow Bridge was damaged by flood waters several times and its restrictive water depths and clearances continued to hinder trade beyond Langport and on up the Parrett, Yeo (Ivel) and Isle rivers. …

Until the end of the 17th century the river trade was still the province of small boat owners, merchants and carriers who specialised in buying commodities like salt at Bridgewater and then acted as chapmen in meeting local demand in mid-Somerset.’954

‘Ham Hill’s only traditional waterborne route was to the north-west by way of the River Parrett passing through Langport and Bridgewater. Exactly how it was used is not clear.’955

1280. ‘The burgesses of Bridgewater complained that Acton had stopped them “towing their boats on the waterway of Peret, along the moorlands and meadows between Bruewat” and Langport.” 956

952 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1547-1548, 118.
1633. ‘From Ivechester the river passeth under Pillbridge, whither are brought up boates and crayes from Langport and Bridgewater.’

1633. Gerard wrote that ‘The moors at Kingsbury Episcopi, Muchelney, Aller and around Burrow Bridge, were “soe covered with water you would rather deeme them Sea than land”, and the inhabitants of the uplands surrounding Aller Moor were forced to come to church in boats “and in them also carry their dead corpses to burieall”.

1633. Thomas Gerrard wrote of Langport ‘The river then [King Henry the first’s time] being large enough noe doubt to bring up vessels of some burthen as it doth barges at this day.’

**SW 14 River Cary**

Tidal limit. Dunball.

B. Somerton. 15 miles.

Pre 1780. ‘It was said that “in wet winters people have been known to come from the Parrett in boats to the very doors’ of houses in Somerton,” presumably sailing from an overflowing River Parrett, across a flooded King’s Sedgemoor, and up the River Cary.’

**SW 15 River Tone**

Lower limit. River Parrett.

Edwards. Taunton. 10 miles.

A. Taunton. 10 miles. 4 m³ s⁻¹. n/a

‘The River Tone seems to have been improved for navigation as early as the 14th century. … The Dean and Chapter [of Wells] received numerous complaints regarding the building of Ham Mill in the early 16th century. … the navigation to Taunton previously enjoyed by the inhabitants and merchants of that town was stopped.

Pre 1250. The abbey of Athelney collected one boat-load of brushwood daily from Michaelmas to Holeday from Stan Moor.

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959 Ibid. page 131.


1364. The abbot of Glastonbury was accused of maintaining ‘in Monketon trees hanging over the Tone right across it, so that boats cannot pass as they were wont.’ Monketon is 3 km downstream of Taunton. He responded that the copse had recently been removed. He was further accused of owning a fulling mill recently erected so that the passage of boats and fish between Bridgewater and Taunton was prevented.963

1414. The abbot of Glastonbury was accused of building a water-gate ‘across the middle of the King’s deep river running from Taunton to the town and port of Bridgewater that boats and small ships called ‘botes’ and ‘trowys’ suitably laden with divers wares called ‘avoir de poirs’ and other necessaries, viz. wood for fuel, timber, coal, pitch, salt, iron, lime, grain, malt, wine and other victuals, for the King’s people in the town of Taunton and the country adjoining, which used to be brought up from to Taunton from Bridgewater by the force of the water from time immemorial, …’964

1490. ‘The Chapter of Wells erected a mill at Ham on the Tone, which was said to cause severe flooding upstream and to be a hindrance to navigation. In answer to the latter point the chapter gave some interesting details about the flow of the Tone: “and all the somer season the water is so lowe and so meny shelpes and bayes in the ryver between our myll and Taunton, that it is not possible to convey eny bote that way; and in the winter season the medewes be so filled and replenysshed with water, that the bootes may go over at every place, so that they shall not be lett by the myll.”965

1505. ‘The men of Taunton complained of a new mill which prevented their having “course recourse and free passage upon the water of Toon [Tone], Bathepolemyll and Brigewater for all maner of marchaundyses, corne, cole, stones and all other stuff”, water carriage being “in every ton better chepe by ijs”.’966

SW 16 River Yeo or Ivel

Lower limit. River Parrett.
B. Ilchester. 6 miles.

‘There is evidence of two Roman wharves at Ilchester, (fn. Information given by Mr J. Stevens of Ilchester.) but in modern times it is likely that boats only reached Ilchester wharf - on the left bank, below the bridge - at times of flood.’967

‘From early times, river traffic took place to Langport Bridge, where any goods destined for the wharves of Thorney, three miles upstream on the Parrett, or Ilchester, on the tributary River Yeo, had to be transhipped, because the bridge totally obstructed the navigation.’968

963 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381-85, 511.
964 Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1399-1422, 259.
1633. ‘Two miles below Ilchester the River Yeo is crossed by a pack-horse bridge
knew as Pill Bridge. … Thomas Gerard (c. 1633) stated that “the River (Parrett)
passeth under Pillbridge, whither are brought upp boates and crayes from Lamport and
Bridgewater.’

SW 17  River Brue

Tidal Limit. Highbridge. 13 miles.
Edwards. Glastonbury. 13 miles. n/a.
A. Glastonbury. 18 miles. 2 m³ s⁻¹. n/a.
B. Baltonsborough. 13 miles. n/a.

Four hythes near Butleigh are mentioned in a charter.

Two logboats have been found at Glastonbury, and one each at Meare, Shapwick and
Woolavington.

Medieval times. Williams states that the interpretation of the complicated system of
inter-connected watercourses of the Brue valley ‘are further complicated by the
deliberate attempt to maintain even water-levels, for water transport was widespread in
this area in medieval times in order to overcome the great obstacle of the marsh.

Medieval period. Rooksbridge was the port at which goods were transferred from sea-
going ships into smaller barges which took goods to Glastonbury. Rooksbridge is on
the Mark Yeo or Pilrow Cut from the River Axe to the River Brue.

‘The (Pilrow) Cut certainly contributed little to the drainage of the moors through which
it passed, being excavated on slightly higher ground than the more badly drained areas
on either side; once again, like other medieval cuts in this area of the Levels, its purpose
would seem to be primarily one of navigation, being a connecting link between the four
coastal manors of the Brents, Lympsham and Berrow, with the Abbey of Glastonbury.’
Evidence for the existence of the cut goes back perhaps to the early thirteenth century
and certainly to the early fourteenth century.

Rippon states that boats reached to Baltonsborough from Glastonbury.

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SW 18  **River Whitelake**

Lower limit  Brue.
A.  Piltown.  7 miles.  n/a.

Early 13th C. Robert Malerbe ‘ought to provide a boat that can carry eight men, and be the steersman, and carry the lord abbot where he wishes … and all his men, and the cook, the hunter with his dogs, and all those who can or ought to be carried by water … He ought to be responsible for the Abbot’s wine at Pilton, after it has been put in the boat and until it has been brought to Glastonbury … To look after all waters between Clewer and Street bridges, and between Mark bridge and Glastonbury.’

976

SW 19  **River Axe**

Tidal limit:  Brean.
Edwards.  Panborough.  15 miles.
A.  Bleadney.  15 miles.  0.6 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.  n/a.
(1 km downstream of Henton.)
B.  Wells.  20 miles.

Ann Coles claims that the name ‘Bleadney’ is derived from *hypo*, a hythe.977

‘From Rackley, as it is now called, barges carried goods right up to the great abbey of Glastonbury. There was indeed a considerable system of watercourses in these northern Somerset Levels, comparable with that round the Tone and Parrett in the southern levels.’

978

‘Not far from Rackley is Hythe, now less than a hamlet, which was a similar little port. Here the grass-covered wharves can still be seen; and there are other small loading and unloading places.’

979

‘Small craft could work higher up [than Rackley] to Panborough and Bleadney. The abbots of Glastonbury had their own port lower down, at Rooksbridge near East Brent, on a tidal pill of the old river, whence the Pilrow Cut ran for some 6 miles south across the moor to Mark, and then south-eastwards to join the Brue opposite Burtle. Thence goods were taken up the Brue, through Meare Pool, and so the mill stream near Glastonbury.’

980

‘The Axe also provided access between the important minster, later the cathedral, at Wells and the sea.’

981

Early 12th C. ‘There was a port on the Axe at Rackley, the tidal limit, which sea-going vessels could reach to transfer their cargoes to smaller barges. These would then proceed to Wells, returning with lead from the Mendip mines.’\(^{982}\)

1178. ‘One such old river port is Rackley, on the former course of the Axe in Somerset, about 2½ miles west of Axbridge, now a mere hamlet on a quite insignificant stream (see the O.S. 2½-inch sheet, ST35). It has long since ceased to figure on the one-inch map. Lying under a bank of red marl, where the Cheddar Water comes nearest to the road from Axbridge, it was originally called Radeclive (‘red cliff’) and is first referred to in a Wells Episcopal record of 1178 as portus de Radeclive in the parish of Compton Episcopi.’\(^{983}\)

13th C. ‘By the thirteenth century there were a series of small ports and landing places in the Axe valley, suggesting that the amount of traffic was not inconsiderable (Bleadney, Northlode near Wedmore, Clewer, Brinscombe, Hythe near Cheddar, Axbridge, Lower Weare, Rackley, and Rooksbridge.’\(^{984}\)

13th C. ‘In the thirteenth century ... Sea-going ships could reach up the Axe to Wells.’\(^{985}\)

1200. ‘Richard the Lionheart approved the construction of a wharf at Rackley, near Axbridge.’\(^{986}\)

Early 13th C. See:- SW18 River Whitelake.

1242. ‘The Abbott of Glastonbury (was) accused of breaking three fisheries with his boats in the Axe river between Rackley and Glastonbury.’\(^{987}\)

1273. It is recorded that the Axe was ‘adequate for the Abbot to take stone and lime and corn from his manors and from other places in those parts to his abbey at Glastonbury’\(^{988}\) and that it was so used.\(^{989}\)

1275. ‘A document states that the watercourse between Nyland, in the Axe valley, and Bleadney “was adequate for the Abbot to take stone and lime and corn from his manor


\(^{986}\) *Ibid.* page 64.


and from other places in those parts to his Abbey of Glastonbury and [they] were used to go from their Abbey to the manor of Andredesye [Nyland] in their boats.”

1303. ‘Another tributary canal of the Axe is suggested by the place name “Northlode” in Theale.’

1347. The sheriff of Somerset was ordered to announce that no ship or boats were to be loaded with wool, hides and merchandise in the water of Radcliff except at the quay of Bridgewater or Bristol.

**SW 20  Cheddar Yeo**

Lower limit. River Axe.
B. Hythe. 5 miles.
(2km downstream of Cheddar.)

‘Imported potsherds have been found at ... Cadbury Congresbury, a reused hillfort by the Congresbury Yeo, a navigable river.’

1212. Hythe (meaning landing place) was first recorded.

**SW 21  River Sheppey**

Lower limit. River Axe.
A. Mundenmede Hurn. 1 mile. 1.10 m³s⁻¹. n/a.
(3 miles downstream of Coxley.)

1326. Two bridges on the waterway from Monkenmede (Hurn) to Bleadney bridge were to be high enough for boats to pass underneath.

**SW 22  River Banwell**

Lower limit. Coast.
B. Eton. 8 miles.
(0.5 mile south of J21 on M5.)

Cole considered that the name Eton indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’. Eton is now only represented by Eton Lane.

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SW 23  **Bristol Avon**

Tidal limit: Bristol.

Edwards. Bath. 16 miles.
A. Bath. 16 miles. 20 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. Canalised.
RLU. Chippenham. 42 miles. n/a.

1276. ‘To cause the banks of the water of Avene ... to be widened and opened by the view and testimony of two men of Bath and two of Bristol specially elected by the men of those parts, so that boats and ships may freely pass without hindrance or danger throughout the whole water in those parts.’

1365. The river between Bath and Bristol was obstructed by ‘weirs, piles and palings and land raised on both sides of it that the adjacent lands, meadows and pastures are flooded and the passage of crayers and boats with victuals impeded.’

1372. *Plea.* ‘Also, the commons of the counties of Somerset and Wiltshire pray: concerning the river called Avon between the city of Bath and the town of Bristol, which runs for part of its course between the counties of Somerset and Gloucester, and by which victuals necessary to the said commonalty have to be brought in vessels and boats rather than by land; as a result of obstacles placed in the marshes, weirs of stone and straw set and built in the said river, and the raising of the land on either side of the said river, the water has been stopped, restrained and constricted, the adjacent lands, meadows and pastures are flooded, the said lands, meadows and pastures are often destroyed and the passage of the said vessels and boats with victuals and other necessaries for the said commonalty is disturbed between the aforesaid places, to the damage and grievance of the said commonalty. Wherefore they pray remedy, that the said weirs might be knocked down or removed so that the vessels and the boats can pass between the two towns, in ease of the aforesaid commonalty.

*Answer.* He who shall feel himself aggrieved shall pursue this, and justice will be done to him according to the form of the statute ordained in this case.

1383. The river was again obstructed so that boats could not pass.

c1543. ‘A 2. miles above Bristow [Bristol] was a commune *trajectus* by bote.’

1641. John Taylor rowed from Bristol to Bath and back crossing four or five mills and weirs.

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997 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1272-79, 354.
998 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1364-67, 140-141.
1000 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1381-85, 259.
1001 *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543. Volume I*. Editor Lucy Toulmin Smith, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. 1964, 136.
SW 24  Bristol Frome

Tributary of the Bristol Avon.
A.  Stapleton.  1 mile.  1.7 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.  <10m

1221. Richard Palmer fell into the River Frome out of a boat and was drowned. Value of the boat 10 s. A second man also drowned in the river for reasons unknown.\textsuperscript{1003}

c.1450. William of Worcester records that bosco [wood] was carried on the Frome into Bristol.\textsuperscript{1004}

SW 25  River Stroud

Lower limit. River Severn.
B.  Stonehouse.  5 miles.

1641. John Taylor rowed from Stonehouse to the Severn in July in a year of ‘great drought’\textsuperscript{1005}

Rivers of the Severn Basin.

Se 1  River Severn

Tidal limit: Gloucester.
Edwards.  Montford Bridge.  97 miles.
A.  Welsh Border.  116 miles.
RLU.  Welsh Border.  116 miles.

Most reports of the use of the river are not recorded. See Green,\textsuperscript{1006} also Acts of 1430 and 1503 below.

1221. J was struck on the head by a stake at the Tewkesbury dam as he was in a ship going up towards Hanley.\textsuperscript{1007} (Dam for Gurgitem. Ship for navi.)

1256. A man was drowned having fallen from a boat into the River Severn in the Hundred of Pimhill.\textsuperscript{1008} This is upstream of Shrewsbury.

1284. The Sheriff of Shropshire was granted the power to fine rafts of firewood or timber which damaged the Montford Bridge which is 16 km upstream of Shrewsbury.\textsuperscript{1009}

\textsuperscript{1003} Pleas of the Crown for the Hundred of Swineshead and the Township of Bristol. Editor Edward James Watson. Bristol: W. Crofton Hemmons. 1902, 137, 123.
\textsuperscript{1004} Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre. Editor Jacobus Nasmith. Cambridge. 1778, 238.
\textsuperscript{1006} Colin Green, Severn Trader. Lydney: Black Dwarf Publications. 1999.
\textsuperscript{1008} The Shropshire Eyre Roll of 1256. Editor Alan Harding. Selden Society Vol. 96. 1980, 287.
1285, 1318, 1328, 1381, 1412. Charters show that trading vessels were required to pay tolls at Montford Bridge.\footnote{Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1281-92, 116.} These vessels must have started upstream.

1386-7. ‘Earnwood (Salop) made 60,000 “talwode” [Faggots] for £9, spent a further £5 12s. 6d. in carrying them to the Severn, and sold them there for £36.’\footnote{David L. Farmer, ‘Marketing the Produce of the Countryside.’ In Edward Miller, The Agrarian History of England and Wales. Volume III 1348-1500. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 413.}

1387. ‘Anslem said that the Severn had from time immemorial been a river in which many weirs (gurgites) were built, a space of eighteen feet in breadth being always reserved for the passage of boats, and that he and his ancestors, … had had from time immemorial a weir, which the king’s attorney supposed to be a sewer (seweram), pertaining to the said manor, eighteen feet being left for the passage of boats on the west side of the river, which he and his ancestors had always been wont to maintain and repair and which he himself so repaired, without hindering the course of the said river, except as had always been customary.’\footnote{Public Works in Mediaeval Law, Volume I. Editor C.T. Flower. Selden Society Vol. 32. 1915, 155.}

1427. The commons complained that people had attacked boats, floats and drags carrying ‘all kinds of goods and merchandise and other things whether timber or other wood and fuel … both in Wales and other privileged places.’\footnote{Parliamentary Rolls of Medieval England. Henry VI, 1427 October, XV, 42, iv-332-333.}

1430. An Act was passed confirming free passage on the River Severn.\footnote{1430. 9 Henry VI, c 5.}

1500-1700. ‘During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the river was usable nominally above Shrewsbury as far as Welshpool. But it had its own interruptions - low water in summer and floods in winter - and the bargemen were certainly as undependable as the carriers.’\footnote{T.C. Mendenhall, The Shrewsbury Drapers and the Welsh Wool Trade in the XVI and XVII centuries. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1953, 36.}

1503. An Act was passed confirming the right of free passage on the River Severn except for tolls for which lawful title could be shown. The Act also provided that, when people haling or drawing boats caused damage, then fair compensation should be paid to the riparian owner.\footnote{1543. 19 Henry VII, c 18.}

c1535. ‘To this bridge resorte many flat and longe vessels to cary downe and up all maner of marchandise to Bewdley and above Beudeley.’\footnote{The Itinerary of John Leland. Volume II. Editor Lucy Toullmin Smith. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. 1964, 86.}

1543. A ‘picardes’ is described as a boat carrying 15 to 36 tons.\footnote{Select Pleas of the Court of Star Chamber, 1509-1544. Volume II. Editor I.S. Leadam. Selden Society Vol. 25. 1910, 266.}
1570-1700. ‘Of the 600 adult males (living in Broseley and Madeley) between 1570 and 1700 whose occupations are known, … 23 per cent were workers on the river.’

1575. Lord Burleigh’s map of Shrewsbury shows a timber raft coming downstream and three rafts on the bank by Welsh Bridge.

1577. Harrison wrote of the Severn ‘As the said stream, in length of course, bountie of water, and depth of chanel commeth farre behind the Thames, so for other commodities, as trade of merchandize, plenty of carriage … it is nothing at all inferior to or second to the same.’

1586. ‘Hereabouts are those old-fashion’d boats, call’d in Latin Rates, i.e. Flotes, made of rough timber planks, joyn’d together with light ribs of wood, which with the stream convey burthens.’

1599. A barge coming downstream collided with Welsh Bridge in Shrewsbury.

Se 2 Warwickshire Avon

Lower limit. River Severn.
Edwards. Evesham. 28 miles.
A. Alveston. 47 miles. n/a.
B. Bretford. 82 miles.
RLU. Ashow. 68 miles. 5.6 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.57 S&G.

Edwards quotes a record that barges were taken from Chester to Kenilworth in 1266 to launch an attack across the lake. This is not accepted here as evidence that the barges were taken up the Warwickshire Avon.

1196. (Stratford upon Avon’s) prime advantage was its position at the junction of these roads with the navigable Avon, then a part of the great waterway system of the Severn valley.

1199. Bretford was founded only a short way down the Foss Way but at the more advantageous situation where land and water routes meet.

1221. In Pathelawe Hundred, ‘Roger Dun fell from a boat so that he is drowned.’ Part of the Arrow and the Warwickshire Avon from the confluence with the Arrow to Bishops Hampton are in Barlichwaye Hundred.

1025 Ibid. page 499.
1221. Siwate of Alveston fell from a boat and was drowned.\textsuperscript{1027} Alveston is 3 km upstream of Stratford-upon-Avon.

1221. In Kynton Hundred H broke one boat of the abbot of Bordesley.\textsuperscript{1028}

1275. ‘Stephen Hanz of Cropthorne fell into the water and drowned as he was trying to cross the river Avon.’\textsuperscript{1029}

‘Richard Fisher of Eckington fell into the water and drowned as he was trying to cross the river Avon.’\textsuperscript{1030}

‘Simon Miller of Ryall was trying to cross the Avon in a boat when he fell into the water and drowned.’\textsuperscript{1031}

c. 1400. ‘The Avon carried Bredon’s grain to Tewkesbury.’\textsuperscript{1032}

1413-1422. At Kenilworth Castle. ‘By far the most conspicuous part of the remains, however, is a very substantial excavation, 100ft. wide and 270 ft. long, leading from the former edge of the mere and crossing the outer moat into the enclosure, which was evidently a canal or harbour allowing the Pleasance to be entered by boat.’\textsuperscript{1033}

15\textsuperscript{th} C. Rogers considered that the monastery accounts show that goods were taken by water from Tewkesbury and Evesham to Pershore.\textsuperscript{1034}

1636. Sir William Russel, Sheriff of Worcestershire, confiscated a boat sent to survey a portion of the river adjoining his estate.\textsuperscript{1035} This shows that the river could be used by boats before it was made navigable.

1641. John Taylor rowed upstream to Evesham and apparently could have rowed further but he wished to return to London.\textsuperscript{1036}

\textsuperscript{1027} Ibid. page 346.
\textsuperscript{1028} Ibid. page 361.
\textsuperscript{1030} Ibid. page 438.
\textsuperscript{1031} Ibid. page 452.
\textsuperscript{1035} Grahame Farr, ‘Severn Navigation and the Trow.’ \textit{Mariners’ Mirror} Vol. 32, Number 2, (1946), 66-95, 71.
Se 3  River Teme

Lower limit. River Severn.
A. Bringewood. 47 miles. 14 m$^3$.1. 1.8 Weirs.
   (3 miles upstream of Ludlow.)
B. Confl. River Onny. 49 miles.
RLU. Ludlow. 44 miles. 14 m$^3$.1. 1.8 Weirs.

See River Onny below.

Green has summarised the information available although as he states ‘Navigation on the River Teme is shrouded in mystery.’

In the 14th century stone was brought from Caen for the mill at Ashford Carbonel, three miles downstream of Ludlow, using water transport all the way. In the 15th century there were problems with Ludlow’s trade because there was not viable connection to the navigable Severn.

1275. ‘Richard le Hoppere fell out of a boat into the Teme and drowned.’
   ‘William Fisher of Ankerdine Hill was trying to cross the Teme in a boat; he fell in and drowned.’

17th C. There was a wharf at Bringewood Forge which is three miles upstream of Ludlow. It is at least possible that this wharf was in use at the end of the 16th century.

A late 18th C lithograph shows a trow on the river.

Se 4  River Onny

Lower limit. River Teme.
B. Eaton. 10 miles.

Cole considered that the name Eaton indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.

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1038 *Ibid.*.
1039 *Ibid*.
Se 5  Eaton Brook

Lower limit.  River Onny.
B.  Eaton.  5 miles.

Cole considered that the name Eaton indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.\(^\text{1045}\)

Se 6  River Salwarpe

Lower limit.  River Severn
Edwards.  Droitwich.  5 miles.
A.  Droitwich.  5 miles.  1.3 m\(^3\) s\(^{-1}\).  n/a.

1378. Richard II granted the bailiffs of Droitwich the right to levy tolls on the river.\(^\text{1046}\)

Se 7  Worcestershire Stour

Lower limit.  River Severn.
A.  Kidderminster.  5 miles.  2.8 m\(^3\) s\(^{-1}\).  n/a.

Donkin states that ‘Buildwas had convenient access to the forest of Kinver along the Severn where it possessed a place “for loading and unloading boats”. Since Kinver is on the bank of the River Stour it seems more likely that the boats were on this river.’\(^\text{1047}\)

Paget-Tomlinson states that the Stour navigation was authorized by an Act of 1662 from the Severn to the Stourbridge collieries. … The section from Kidderminster to Stourbridge was completed in 1667. … Boats used this section, but lack of money prevented further improvement downstream, although the river was navigable down to the Severn.\(^\text{1048}\)

Se 8  Cound Brook

Lower limit.  River Severn.
B.  Cantlop.  3 miles.

Cole considers that the name Eaton Mascott, a place just downstream of Cantlop, indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.\(^\text{1049}\)

\(^{1045}\) Ibid. page 81.
Se 9  **River Tern**

Lower limit. River Severn.
B.  Oakley Park. 23 miles.  
(1 mile up stream of Market Drayton.)
RLU.  Stoke upon Tern. 15 miles. 1.3 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.6  S.

A logboat was found at Oakley Park.$^{1050}$

Cole considers that the name Eaton upon Tern indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.$^{1051}$

1256. A man was drowned having fallen from a boat into the River Tern.$^{1052}$

Se 10  **River Perry**

Lower limit. River Severn.
B.  Bagley. 9 miles.
RLU.  Wykey. 8 miles. 1.2 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.4  S.

Logboats have been found at Ellesmere and Bagley.$^{1053}$

Cole considered that the name Yeaton indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’. $^{1054}$

Se 11  **River Vyrnwy**

Lower limit. River Severn.
A.  Llanymynech. 8 miles.  (Border with Wales.)
RLU.  Llanymynech. 8 miles.

‘Llanymynech is on the navigable portion of the Vyrnwy.’$^{1055}$

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Se 12 **Herefordshire Wye**

Tidal limit:- Bigsweir Bridge.
- Edwards. Hereford. 54 miles.
- A. Hay-on-Wye. 83 miles. 42 m³ s⁻¹.
- RLU. Hay-on-Wye. 83 miles. 42 m³ s⁻¹.

There was a Roman quay at Kenchester 6 miles upstream of Hereford.¹⁰⁵⁶

‘During the last thirteen centuries Hereford is mentioned among abundant evidence of the growth of towns and trading centres along navigable rivers. … it is certain that forges at Bicknor, Lydbrook, Monmouth and Carey Mills must have used the river for transportation of their products downstream from the 13th century onwards.’¹⁰⁵⁷

¹²th and ¹³th C. Stone for the cathedral was taken from Howe Caple to Hereford by boat.¹⁰⁵⁸

1228, 1241, 1245. Wine was taken in barges to Munemuthe (Monmouth).¹⁰⁵⁹

1240. ‘The Magor Pill boat represents the type of craft engaged in such activities [trading from the Bristol channel ports], at a period when … the River Wye was navigable as far as Hereford.’¹⁰⁶⁰

1301. A commission was appointed to survey the river between Hereford and Monemuth ‘as it appears that ships and boats cannot pass as they were wont.’¹⁰⁶¹

1312. A weir was built at Gayeshom (Wyesham) ‘so that they cannot carry their victuals and merchandise by the said river to Monmouth and elsewhere in the march.’¹⁰⁶² Wyesham is downstream of Monmouth.

1315. ‘The people of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire complained that “the river Wye is the King’s highway where ships … were wont, from time without mind, to pass from Bristol up to Monmouth with all manner victuals and merchandise without disturbance, until Earl Gilbert of Gloucester raised a weir in his land of Trellech across the said river so that no ship, barge, boat, can pass there …”’¹⁰⁶³

¹⁰⁵⁹ Calendar of Liberate Rolls, 1226-40, 96; 1240-65, 65 and 317.
¹⁰⁶¹ Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1307-49, 48-49.
1331, 1334. Enquiries were made to determine if eight weirs between Chepstow and Monmouth had been raised and enhanced and to investigate if ‘certain openings which used to stand open in all the weirs … to the disturbance of men with boats and ships wishing to pass.’

1528. Four mills in Hereford were destroyed with permission of Henry VIII. Moore considered that this must have been by persons ‘interested in the unobstructed navigation of the river past the city.’ The river would have been unobstructed from 1528 till after 1555.

1622. An unsuccessful attempt was made to remove the weir at Monmouth, which had been built in the reign of Mary Tudor just below the Wye Bridge, so that barges could sail upstream beyond it. The weir was 11 feet high on the foundation of loose stones and was said to be impassable to boats which had to be hauled ashore and then dragged by oxen a hundred yards upstream. The verdict of the commissioners was that the weir should be removed but the owner appealed and it was not until the 18th century that the weir was removed.

1662. ‘Provided also that it shall and may bee lawfull to and for any person or persons to use, occupy or imploy any boate, barge, Leighter or other vessel upon the said Rive of Wye for the carrying, transporting or conveying of any passengers, goods or any other things whatsoever, as freely to all intents and purposes as is or hath beene used or accustomed.’

Se 13 **River Monnow**

Lower limit. Herefordshire Wye.

A. Skenfrith. 10 miles. 6.0 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.9 P&R. B.

RLU. Pontrilas. 19 miles. 6.0 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 1.9 P&R. B.

c.1186-1193. A stone wharf and slipway were built at Skenfrith.

Se 14 **River Lugg**

Lower limit. Herefordshire Wye.

B. Leominster. 26 miles. 5.6 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.

RLU. Leominster. 26 miles. 5.6 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. 0.63 Canalised.

Cole considered that the name Eaton, to the south-east of Leominster, indicates that the settlement had to ‘keep the river open for navigation’.

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1064 Calendar of Close Rolls, 1330-33, 370-371.
Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1330-34, 201 & 572.
Calendar of Close Rolls, 1333-37, 304-305.
1068 (1662) 14 Charles II. c. 14, 11.
Rivers of the North West

NW 1  River Dee

Tidal limit. Chester.
A. Welsh border 12 miles.
RLU. Welsh Border. 12 miles.

Medieval period. ‘There were many fishing boats on the Dee both above and below Chester Bridge, and some of these may have been used for transport. There are, however, only scanty references to traffic on the river, and it is probable that the traffic was very little. … There was little occasion for traffic in the middle course of the Dee, and beyond an occasional quantity of timber sent down from Overton to Chester (even this may have been floated down), there is no certainty of any other goods having been borne along the river.’

‘Despite the difficulties posed to navigation on the upper reaches of the river once mills had been constructed at Chester, a short boat trip might have carried any surplus to the market.’

1304. ‘Timber was brought from Overton to Chester on Dee by water.’

1304. Licence fees were paid for one boat with ‘2 stalnettes’ and seven free boats.

1558. A statute provided that ‘no timber tree of Oak, Beech or Ash … growing within fourteen miles of the Sea, or of any Part of the Rivers of … Dee, … or any other River, Creek or Stream, by the which Carriage is commonly used by Boat or other Vessel to any Part of the Sea.’

1611. Speed shows boats on the river upstream of the weir at Chester.

NW 2  River Weaver

Tidal limit. Runcorn.
Edwards. Frodsham. 4 miles.
A. Frodsham. 4 miles. n/a.
B. Chorley. 50 miles. n/a.
RLU. Ashtree Farm. 36 mile. n/a
(3 miles upstream of Nantwich.)

1073 Accounts of the Chamberlains and other Officers of the County of Chester, 1301-1360. Editor R. Stewart-Brown. Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. 59, 1910, 42.
1074 Ibid. page 73-75.
1075 1558. 1 Elizabeth I. c. 15.
A logboat was found at Cholmondeley Castle.\textsuperscript{1077}

1280. ‘Frosham is properly on the Weaver rather than on the Mersey, but it is only three miles from the confluence. … Occasionally a small merchant vessel passed up the Mersey to Frodsham.’ In 1280 £10 was received from the tolls for ships.\textsuperscript{1078}

1309. ‘The Lord of the manor of Frodesham has the navigation (navigium aque) from the bridge of Wevere to Squartesclure so that nobody ought to unload goods there without satisfying the lord. Irish ships with corn had been coming and unloading without giving satisfaction.’\textsuperscript{1079}

1324. Frodsham was included in a list of ports from which ships capable of carrying 40 tuns were ordered to be prepared for the King’s service.\textsuperscript{1080}

\textbf{NW 3 River Mersey}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Tidal limit. & Warrington. \\
Edwards. & See River Irwell. \\
A. & Warburton. \\
& 3 miles. \\
& 8 miles. \\
& 36 m$^3$ s$^{-1}$. \\
& < 10 m.
\end{tabular}

Eleven logboats have been found at Warrington of which at least two were above the tidal limit. Logboats have also been found at Irlam and Barton, on the Western boundary of Salford.\textsuperscript{1081}

1364. Stone, lime and other things for building a bridge at Warburton were taken there by boat.\textsuperscript{1082}

1367. On the petition of John Danyel, Knight, showing that he has three boats often loaded with … goods, passing on the water of Merse between Lacheford and Weryngton.\textsuperscript{1083}

1476. A weir on the river was widened to allow the passage of eight-oared boats with 8 ft. oars.\textsuperscript{1084} Most weirs are on the non-tidal part of the river.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1079} Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, 1307-49, 15.
\textsuperscript{1080} Calendar of Close Rolls, 1323-27, 183.
\textsuperscript{1082} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1361-64, 518.
\textsuperscript{1083} Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1364-67, 379.
\end{footnotes}
NW 4  River Irwell

Lower limit. River Mersey.
Edwards. Barton. 3 miles.
B. Barton Moss. 3 miles. 18 m³s⁻¹. < 20 m.

A logboat has been found at Barton Moss in silty sand.

c1543. ‘Irwel is not navigable but in sum places for vadys and rokkes. [Vadys, i.e., fords.]’

NW4A River Bollin

Lower limit. Warrington.
A. Warrington. 1 mile.

1367. The Patent Rolls include a reference to ‘The boats often loaded with victuals, timber and stone for the construction of the bridge between Weyngton and Lacheford.’ There is no reason to assume that these boats were only used downstream of the bridge.

NW 5  River Ribble

Tidal limit. Preston.
B. Ribchester. 10 miles. 33 m³s⁻¹.
RLU. Settle. 45 miles. 7 m³s⁻¹. 1.7 P&R. C.

An old British canoe was discovered at Settle. There were several ferries between Settle and Ribchester. A logboat was found in the bed of the river at Ribchester. At Anchor Hill near to the Roman fort at Ribchester there have been discoveries of ‘anchors and great quantities of iron pins of all sizes for ships or barges.’

1476. A weir was opened up to allow the passage of eight-oared boats with 8 ft. oars. Most weirs are on the non-tidal part of the river.

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1088 Ibid. pages 125, 127, 133, 155.
**Cockerham Marsh**

‘The documentary source at Cockersand … suggests that the Abbey should be considered from a coastal perspective and access to it was over the marsh and, presumably, by boat. This appears to be a recurring theme through the lowland archaeology of Lancashire.’\(^{1092}\)

**River Douglas.**

It has been suggested that during the Roman period goods were transferred from water to land transport at Wigan.\(^{1093}\)

**NW 6 River Lune**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit:</th>
<th>Lancaster.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards:</td>
<td>Kirkby Lonsdale. 17 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Kirkby Lonsdale. 17 miles. 19 m(^3)(-1). 1.6 P&amp;R.B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLU.</td>
<td>Sedbergh. 28 miles. 17 m(^3)(-1). 3.6 P&amp;R.B.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Roman inscription found at Halton-on-Lune mentions a ‘numerus barcariorum’ (unit of bargemen).\(^{1094}\)

1365. The vicar of Kirkeby in Lonesdale was granted pontage on all goods passing by or under the bridge between the priory of Horneby and Gratrehals.\(^{1095}\) Jervoise considered this to be the bridge in Kirkby Lonsdale.\(^{1096}\)

The collection of reeds is mentioned from Lytham Moss in the sixteenth century.\(^{1097}\)

**NW 7 River Condor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tidal limit:</th>
<th>Condor Green.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Galgate. 2 miles. n/a.</td>
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</table>

Cole considered that the name Hubberstsy is derived from ‘a landing place’.\(^{1098}\) Hubberstsy used to be near Galgate.

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\(^{1095}\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1364-67, 129.


NW 8  **River Wenning**

Lower limit. River Lune.
B. Wennington. 3 miles. 4.5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.

A logboat was found at Wennington Hall.\textsuperscript{1099}

NW 9  **River Kent**

Tidal limit. Leasgill.
A. 2 miles above Kendal. 7 miles. 8.8 m$^3$s$^{-1}$. Rocky downstream.
B. Kentmere. 17 miles. n/a

1320. A log boat was found in Kentmere which dated from A.D. 1320 ± 130 yr.\textsuperscript{1100}

c1543. ‘Kent river is of a good deapthe, not wel to be occupied with botes for rowllying stones and other moles. … A ii myles abowt Kendale they cum to one good bottom, and so to Kentdale towne.’\textsuperscript{1101}

NW 10  **River Duddon**

Tidal limit. Flookburgh.
A. Cartmel. 2 miles. 5 m$^3$s$^{-1}$.< 10m.

1323. Cartmel was included in a list of English ports at which customs duty was collected.\textsuperscript{1102}

NW 11  **River Annas**

Tidal limit. 1 mile downstream from Annaside.
B. Old Hyton. 2 miles. < 10m.
(1 mile upstream from Annaside.)

Phythian-Adams considered that the name ‘Old Hyton’ indicates that this location was used as a landing place for goods brought inland during the early medieval period.\textsuperscript{1103}


\textsuperscript{1101} *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543. Volume Five* Editor Lucy Toulmin Smith., Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press. 1964, 46.

\textsuperscript{1102} Calendar of Close Rolls, 1323-27, 147-148.

NW 12  **Cumberland Derwent**

Tidal limit.  Workington.
Edwards.  Cockermouth.  9 miles.
A.  Cockermouth.  9 miles.  22 m³ s⁻¹.  2.5  P&R, B&C.

1323. Workington and Cockermouth were instructed to prepare ships capable of carrying 40 tuns of wine and upwards.¹¹⁰⁴

1394. An inquisition was informed that the lord of Cockermouth had the liberty ‘of every ship coming within the precinct of the manor they have had an anchorage-due called ‘yeveltol’, and no ship may unload there without leave of the lord or his ministers.’¹¹⁰⁵ The manor included the Derwent and Frewater ‘from the sea to the head of those waters’.

1724. Defoe reported that the River Derwent was navigable to Cockermouth.¹¹⁰⁶

NW 13  **River Marron**

Lower limit.  River Derwent.
B.  Branthwaite.  4 miles.  0.9 m³ s⁻¹.

A logboat was found at Branthwaite.¹¹⁰⁷

NW 14  **River Waver**

Tidal limit.  1 mile downstream of Abbey Town.
Edwards.  Holm Cultram.  1 mile.
A.  Abbey Town.  1 mile.  n/a.

1322. A safe conduct was granted to a ship of Holm sailing to the south of the realm.¹¹⁰⁸ Abbey Town was previously called Holm Cultram.

NW 15  **River Eden**

Tidal limit.  1 mile downstream of Beaumont.
Edwards.  Carlisle.  3 miles.
A.  Wetheral.  13 miles.  52 m³ s⁻¹.  0.62  C&G.
RLU.  Kirkby Stephen.  61 miles.  2.5 m³ s⁻¹.  3.1  Modified.

¹³  C.  ‘It has been noted that barges were able to reach the city [of Carlisle] during the thirteenth century.’¹¹⁰⁹

¹¹⁰⁴ Calendar of Close Rolls, 1323-27, 183-184.
1373. Two boats were destroyed at Beaumont.1110

14th C. For the building of Carlisle Cathedral good stone was available ‘instead of (probably) the inferior Wetheral stone from the Eden valley, preferred because it entailed no more than a five-mile river journey.’1111

NW 16 River Esk

Tidal limit. A74 road bridge.
B. Netherby. 5 miles. 26 m³s⁻¹.

‘In the case of the River Esk, … Roman vessels seem to have travelled several miles upriver … to the fort at Netherby. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, antiquaries remarked upon the relics of a port which had existed by Netherby’s Roman buildings.’1112

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1110 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1370-74, 311.