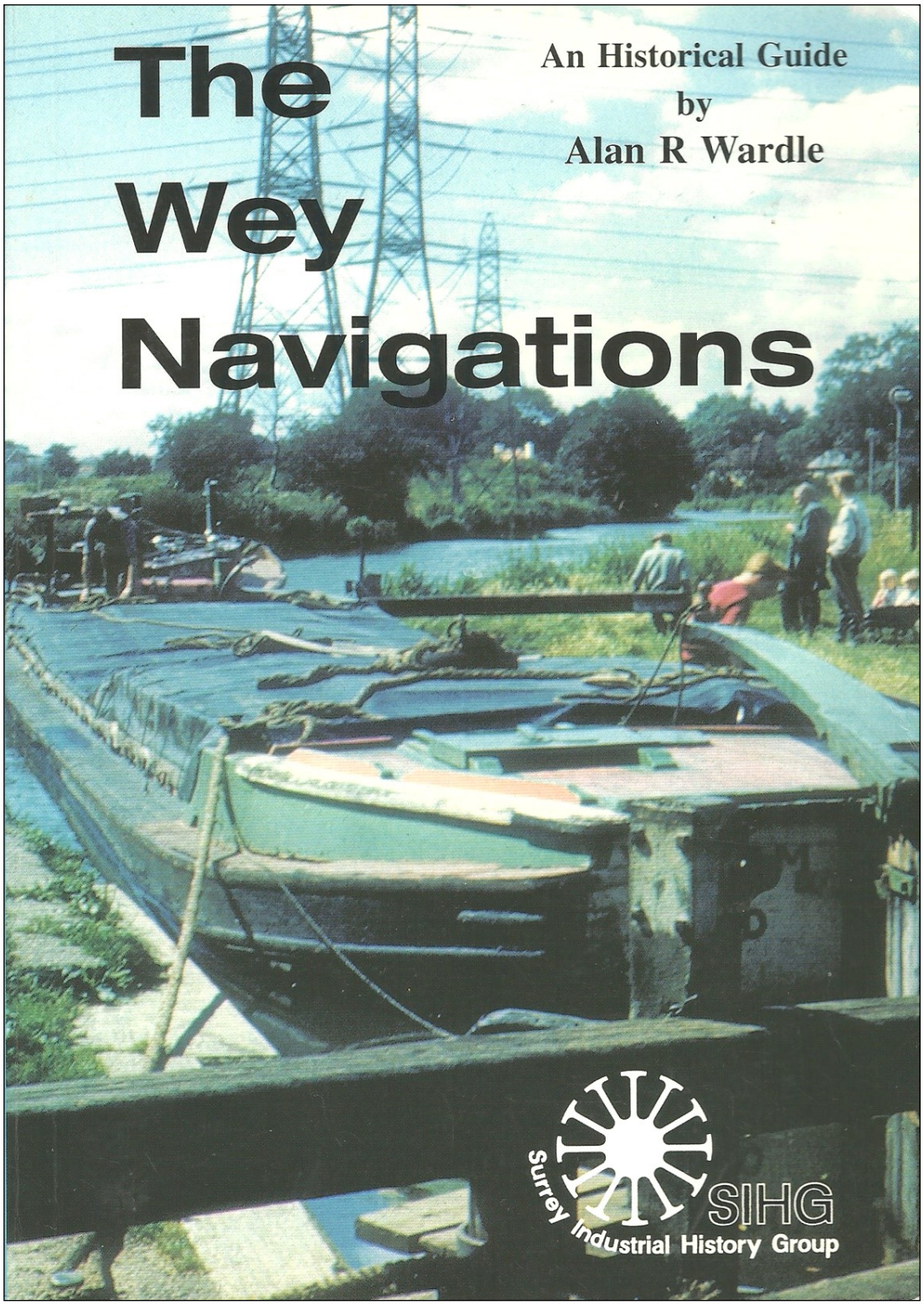
The Wey Navigations
An Historical Guide
by
Alan R Wardle
SIHG
Surrey Industrial History Group

This book is both a practical guide for visitors and a concise history of one of Britain's earliest man-made navigable waterways, a major milestone in improving communications that helped the country towards greater prosperity and emergence as a world power. What is visible today from the towpath is linked to happenings in the past involving many famous people and events. Unusually the guide maps too are historic, dating from the 19th century. They, along with older and more recent photographs, help to show how little has changed along its course since the first works of Sir Richard Weston of Sutton Place were completed in 1653.

Written by Alan Wardle and published by the Surrey Industrial History Group this profusely illustrated guide is a fitting record of the three and a half centuries of the waterway's existence.

Financially assisted by

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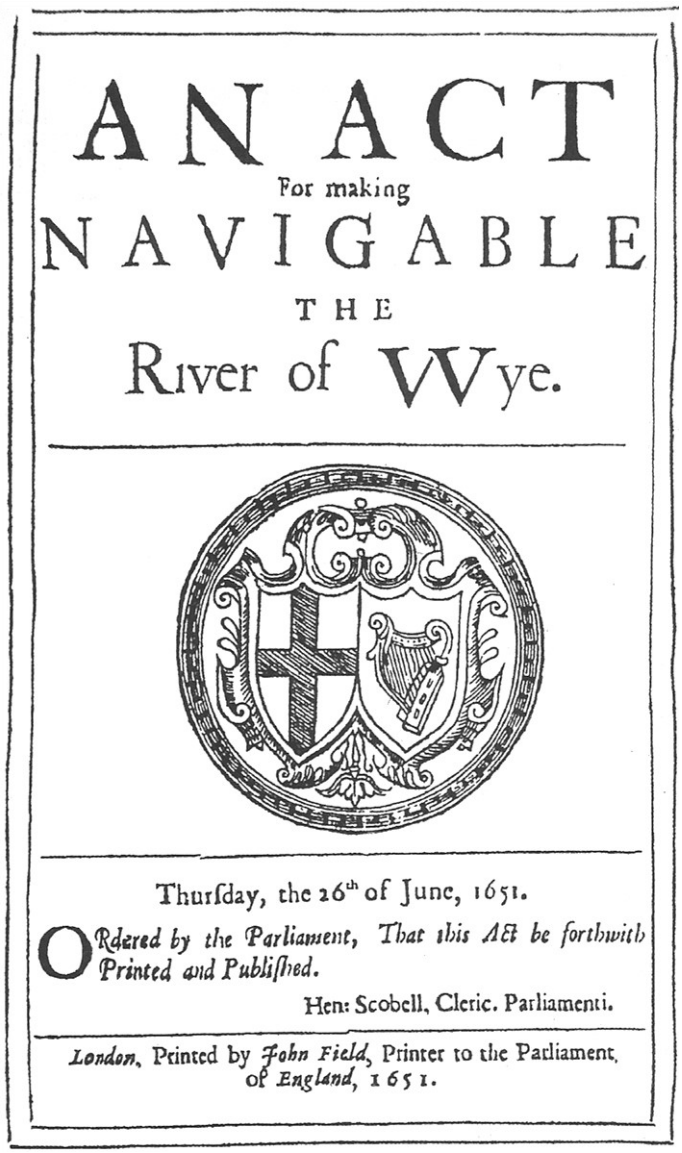
An Historical Guide

Alan R Wardle



AN ACT
For making
NAVIGABLE
THE
River of Wye.

Thurſday, the 26th of June, 1651.

Ordered by the Parliament, That this Act be forthwith Printed and Publiſhed.

Hen: Scobell, Cleric. Parliamenti.

London, Printed by John Field, Printer to the Parliament of England, 1651.

Published by the Surrey Industrial History Group

ISBN 0-9538122-2-7

The Surrey Industrial History Group is a Group of the Surrey Archaeological Society. It aims to study, record and where appropriate preserve the remains of the former industries of the county. It holds meetings, lectures, visits and social events and publishes a regular *Newsletter*.
SIHG, Surrey Archaeological Society, Hackhurst Lane, Abinger Hammer, Surrey RH5 6SE
Website: www.sihg.org.uk

Cover: Town Lock, Weybridge
Frontispiece: Act of Parliament 1651
Originally printed by J W Arrowsmith Ltd, Bristol

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MAPS

(Omitted in the online edition)

The maps are reproduced by permission of the Surrey History Service from the Jago maps of the Wey Navigation (Gi29/143/l-4) and the Perry map of the Godalming Navigation (Gl42/8/4).

In 1823 R H Jago produced maps of the Wey Navigation for its proprietors. The originals are on the scale of three chains to one inch. A chain is 22 yards (a cricket pitch) = 66 feet = 792 inches. Hence the scale is 1:792. Not only did it take four sheets to map the Thames to Guildford at this scale but they are large sheets, 36 x 81 inches, 47 x 85 inches, 87 x 64 inches and 55 x 81 inches. Much of each sheet is blank so what has been reproduced is the waterway itself in sections of roughly half-mile stretches with, usually, a little overlap. The scale of these reproduced sections is just over 14 inches to the mile, roughly 1:4450, which is about one sixth of the scale of the originals but five times larger than the Ordnance Survey Explorer maps. The latter are adequate for making comparisons between the Navigation and its surroundings now and what they were like nearly two hundred years ago.

John Perry surveyed the Godalming Navigation for its Commissioners in 1834. His map is at 100 feet to one inch (1:1200). It is on a single sheet 100 x 29¾ inches. This has also been reproduced in sections of roughly half a mile each with overlap. The scale of the reproduced sections of the Godalming Navigation map is again in the region of 14 inches to the mile, roughly 1:4450. Perry's map also carries enlarged plans of Stonebridge and Godalming wharves but these have not been reproduced.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to:
Tony Harmsworth for providing his photograph of Weybridge Town Lock for the cover.
Roy Drysdale for photographing the maps and preparing them and the other illustrations for the printer.
The Surrey History Service for permission to publish the maps of the Navigations and of the Manor of Ham Court (Fig. 1).
Guildford Museum for permission to publish the photograph of Parvis Wharf, Byfleet (Fig. 6).
The Syndics of Cambridge University Library by whose permission the copy of part of the map showing Pyrford Place 1620/30 (Fig. 7) is published).

To the following with whom I talked:
Sometime crew members of Wey Navigation barges: Ron Cook, Robert Goodrich, Ernie Grist, Dennis Habgood, P F (Ben) Haslett, Fred Legg, Roy Webb, John White and Steve White.
Members of the Wey maintenance family: Denis, Geoff, Peter and Stewart Grove.
Vince Locatelli, in charge of Navigation maintenance since 1966.
Donald Stevens of the family associated with the Navigations for 157 years.
Mrs A T (Bunty) Edwards of the barge-building family at Dapdune.

To present and past staff of the former Guildford Muniment Room and the present Surrey History Centre for their friendly help.

And especially to Shirley Corke who, as archivist-in-charge of Guildford Muniment Room, introduced me to the fascinating records of the Navigations and also kindly read a draft of this book.

Alan R Wardle
November 2002

Online Edition

This online edition of ***The Wey Navigations*** concentrates on the text of the book and has been optimized for printing. Each column holds one page of the original, with the page number displayed at the top. This allows the original index to be used. Page breaks have been adjusted to the nearest paragraph, and short pages have been merged. Chris Shepheard, recently retired as head of the Rural Life Centre, has kindly supplied an electronic copy of the main text. Contents, references and the index have been scanned anew.

No digital copies of the images or maps have been located. However, anyone wishing to examine the illustrations can view the printed book at any of eight Surrey Libraries, including the Surrey History Centre in Woking.

Many thanks are due to the relatives for the late Alan Wardle for encouraging the production of this edition.

Jan Spencer
Surrey Industrial History Group
September 2020

Foreword

When Alan Wardle first approached the Surrey Industrial History Group with the idea for this book, we were immediately taken with its novel approach as both a history of this significant waterway and also a practical guidebook for visitors to the heritage site. The timing, too, could not have been better with the 350th anniversary of its opening rapidly approaching. Thus it is very fitting that the volume should actually appear in the anniversary year.

However between that initial approach by the author and the book's final appearance in print much work has been carried out. Certainly not least among this is the research by the author, in both primary sources and the written record. Alan himself thanks and acknowledges his sources later in the book, but at this juncture SIHG would like to acknowledge the support it has received in bringing this important project to fruition.

While the Group has a long history of publishing guides to specific sites and the local authority areas of the county, it has never before tackled such a complex volume. Without the support of numerous organisations and individuals this book would not have appeared. They are all acknowledged elsewhere, but at this stage it is important to mention the financial support and encouragement provided by Guildford, Runnymede and Woking borough councils. The navigations pass through the areas of these councils, among others, and without this recognition of their shared heritage and willingness to support its recording, this project would not have gone ahead.

We hope the reader will gain much from a visit to the navigations using this volume as a guide, and that the work of Alan Wardle will help bring its history to life.

Gerry Moss,
Chairman, Surrey Industrial History Group
A Group of the Surrey Archaeological Society
Castle Arch, Guildford GUl 3SX
December 2002

Preface

This is a history of the Wey and Godalming Navigations based on what can be seen when boating or walking between Weybridge and Godalming. So it is also a guide.

There is a practical difficulty in creating a guidebook to a linear route. If it may be followed from either end, or visited at some point in between, a book which starts at one end and proceeds to the other will be the wrong way round for a lot of those who try to make use of it. It seemed sense for this book to follow the course of the Navigations so it starts at Weybridge and ends at Godalming. However, to make it possible to use when travelling in the opposite direction each feature or group of features is numbered and starts on a new page.

A comprehensive history of the Wey Navigations has yet to be written. Since their commercial operation spanned 316 years and left behind a substantial record, the would-be author is faced with a daunting task. What to include, what to omit? Settling for the more modest objective of a guide based on historical aspects of places along the route seemed a more manageable project.

The tour starts on page 8. For those who would like to know something about the background an outline account of the history of each waterway is given before the guide to its route. For those who would know more the list for Further Reading may help but the best and most reliable sources of information are, undoubtedly, the archives of the Wey Navigation, the Godalming Navigation and of William Stevens & Sons. References to these and other sources are given in Notes at the end of the text.

THE WEY NAVIGATION – AN OUTLINE HISTORY

The 17th Century

The Commonwealth Parliament passed an Act in 1651 authorising the construction of the Wey Navigation. The idea was that of Sir Richard Weston of Sutton Place near Guildford but he got others to promote the Act – the Borough of Guildford, James Pitson (then an officer in Cromwell s army) and Richard Scotcher. Making the river navigable from Guildford to the Thames was accomplished in two years but there were money troubles. Sir Richard died before the work was finished but by 1653 the weirs, locks and nearly ten miles of man-made channel were complete. The Navigation was in use and making a profit.

Timber from Surrey forests for the shipbuilding yards on the banks of the Thames was what brought the money in. Thirteen years later the demand for wood was greater still for re-building London after the Great Fire. Upstream cargoes were a bonus.

The end of the Commonwealth and restoration of the Monarchy brought problems. Royalist landowners returning to their estates found the land had been cut through in their absence. They protested that, under what was now regarded as 'a pretended Act', their property had been damaged. Other claims were made and ignored. Some direct action was taken with barge traffic halted as locks and weirs were damaged and banks breached.

Shares in the Navigation had changed hands. The interested parties wanted to get a new Act passed to put an end to the disputes but first they had to get the support of three major claimants. This they did by agreeing compensation out of future revenues.

The Borough of Guildford was to have a penny for every load or ton carried on the river. This was supposed to compensate the town for damage to its streets from the extra cart traffic generated and for its responsibility for the destitute bargemen and their families the Navigation would bring. In the event, the Navigation brought relief to the town whose prosperity was waning as its cloth trade declined. The Borough did not decline to take the money, however, which was known as the River Pence.

Lord Montague, Lord of the Manor of Ripley and Send, was to have two and a half pence for every ton, chaldron or load that passed through his land. This was known, not surprisingly, as the Two and a Half Pence.

Thomas Dalmahoy who owned the land on either side of the river between Woodbridge and Guildford (and hence that bit of the river, too) was to have four pence for every ton, chaldron or load carried on that stretch. This was known as the Groats.

The Wey Act of 1671 incorporated these agreements and specified that these monies were to be paid as 'first charges' that is out of the Navigation's income. They did not depend on the Navigation making a profit. The right to these charges changed hands down the years but they were still being calculated and paid as late as 1956 in the case of the Groats and to 1963 in the case of the other two.

As undisputed ownership of the Navigation had not been established, the new Act appointed six trustees in whom ownership of the property was vested. They were to receive the income, pay for repairs and running costs and distribute any profit among the shareholders. They were also to appoint replacements when any of their number died.

Before long all the shares came into the hands of two families – the Earls of Portmore, who lived at Weybridge, and the Langtons of Lincolnshire. They became known as The Proprietors although all they actually owned was the right to the profits. Soon, however, the trustees delegated most of their powers to the proprietors. Though the enterprise was sometimes referred to as 'The Wey Navigation Company', no record of the existence of such a company has been found.

Whether the trustees were at all active in Navigation affairs is not clear. There is nothing in the archives to show that they held meetings. As they were drawn from the 'nobility and gentry', any matters requiring their attention could perhaps be dealt with at the club. From time to time their numbers were reduced by death until only one or two were left and there was urgent need to recruit some more trustees. These unpaid posts were not easy to fill and after 1828 no more trustees were appointed. They still had their uses, however, and one who survived until 1846, Sir Richard Frederick, Bt, was called upon in that year to bring legal proceedings on behalf of the Navigation at Guildford Assizes.

The 18th Century

Few details are known of barges, crews and cargoes of the first 75 years of operation but the financial records of the Wey Navigation from 1725 onwards have survived (with three gaps totalling 16 years) and reveal much about the workings of this waterway.

The first barges would seem to have been small, carrying about 30 or 35 tons. Later, barges were built which could carry 85 or 90 tons on the Wey. A provision of the 1671 Act limited the use of the Navigation to the trustees and those licensed by them. Financial records were compiled quarterly and the earliest surviving of these Trustees Accounts show that from 1725, and for many years, the number of bargemasters was 14 or 15 for many years. New names appear as old ones drop out but there does seem to have been a determination to restrict the numbers, perhaps to ensure that those who chose to work on the river could expect to make a living. The opening of the Godalming Navigation in 1764 saw a modest increase in the number of bargemasters on the Wey.

The profitability of the Wey Navigation in the 18th century is shown by the Accounts in two typical years, summarised as follows:

Year	Receipts	Running Costs	Profit
1724/5	£2756	£1316	£1440
1749/50	£2846	£1380	£1466

Not many concerns, surely, can expect more than half the takings to be profit, to be shared equally by the two proprietors.

The 19th Century

The Navigation 'Diaries' from 1822 to 1969 survive. These are ledgers in which the journey of every barge is recorded with the date, name of the barge, name of its owner, the kind of goods carried, the quantity, and where loaded and unloaded. All this was entered in order to be able to charge the bargemaster with the correct toll (or riverage, as it was known on the Wey). Today these Diaries are valuable in providing us with quite a detailed picture of the trade on the river over nearly a century and a half.

The carriage of timber downstream declined as ships began to be built of iron but softwood upstream became increasingly important as the towns of Guildford and Godalming grew. Houses and industry called for fuel and so coal brought by ship from the north of England to London was transferred to barges in which it continued its journey up the Thames and the Wey. This was a major cargo for many years until the railway network was able to deliver direct from colliery to merchant.

The Wey met the challenge of the railways better than most waterways. This was, perhaps, mainly owing to its business structure. The Stevens family had come on the scene in 1812 when the first William Stevens was appointed lock keeper at Triggs Lock. There were three William Stevens of successive generations (referred to as William I, II and III) and Harry William Stevens, son of William III. After a few years William I moved to Thames Lock. This was the most important of the lock-keeping jobs requiring the keeping of records of every barge entering and leaving the Navigation. In 1823 he moved again, this time to Guildford as wharfinger. Similar records of barge movements were kept there and, a few years later William Stevens I was attending to much of the Navigation business 'on the ground' for the proprietors. It was at about this time that the Portmores and the Langtons began to lose interest in the Wey.

William II decided, in 1840, to build and operate a barge. From this evolved William Stevens & Sons, barge owners. In time they had some ten or 12 barges and a near monopoly of the carrying trade on the Wey.

When William I died and William II took his place he was running both the Navigation and a thriving barge business. His sons, William III and John, were the first members of the family to take an interest in acquiring a financial stake in the Navigation. They could see that, while the waterway might show little profit, or even make a loss, it was vital to their barge business that it should remain in working order. This required a small workforce of men with the particular skills needed to deal with regular maintenance such as dredging and emergency repairs (breached banks, fallen trees, damaged lock gates and other hazards of navigable waterways). There are times, however, when a Navigation does not fully occupy such a team and, towards the end of the century, the Stevens family began to take on other riparian work. The Godalming Navigation was an early client but almost anyone with property alongside the river was likely to call upon William. Stevens & Sons to do the sort of jobs that they were best placed to carry out.

The dual use of men, materials and equipment was meticulously accounted for. If William Stevens & Sons used the Navigation's maintenance craft on private work, Stevens paid for their hire. If the Navigation needed equipment which it did not have but the Stevens possessed it would hire it from them.

The 20th Century

As the railways grew and took trade away from the waterways the number of barge operators on the Wey declined. During the opening years of the century there were never more than ten and by the 1920s and 1930s the number was down to five. William Stevens & Sons were operating nine or ten barges, the others one or two each.

William III's son Harry, born in 1887, came into the business as a young man and understudied his father. By this time the family (William III and his brother John) had acquired almost complete financial control of the Navigation. The last of the trustees had died and, in order to establish their legal position, the two brothers successfully applied to the Chancery Court to appoint them to that office.

It was the Coxes Lock Milling Company which then kept the Navigation in business for nearly 70 years. There had been a mill at Coxes Lock from 1776. The first was an iron mill which was replaced with one to grind corn. Alongside this, in 1900-1, a large roller mill was built with an equally tall silo. The Stevens barges brought imported wheat to the mill from the London Docks, 80 or 90 tons at a time. These loads travelled only a mile or so up the Navigation so the income from tolls was small. But by this time receipts from rents, wayleaves, pleasure boating and other charges were contributing more to the expenses of the waterway than tolls. Even if the quarterly accounts of the Navigation should show a small loss – as they occasionally did – this would be made good by William III and his brother John. Their income as haulage contractors to Coxes Lock Mill must have been substantial.

When his father died in 1936 and his Uncle John in 1941 Harry Stevens ran the Navigation and the family business on his own. His brother Kenneth became a Trustee but played no part in the affairs of the river. Harry worked from the small office on Guildford Wharf where for many years he had the help of Bill Smart, a clerk whose immaculate handwriting adorns many pages of ledgers. Harry married late in life and had no family. At the age of 76 he offered the Wey Navigation to the National Trust who took it over in 1964. William Stevens & Sons continued to carry grain from the London Docks to Coxes Lock Mill for another five years, paying tolls to the National Trust. But in 1969 the barge business closed. Harry was nearly 82. He died some six months later.

WEY NAVIGATION GUIDE

1 The Pound

We start at Thames Lock, where power boats enter the Wey Navigation after leaving the Thames just below Shepperton Lock. As they proceed along the 130 yards or so of entrance channel boaters may like to look at the bank on their right (left if leaving the Navigation). This was long known as Harmsworth's Wharf and it had a stretch of railway line along it on which there was a crane to handle goods carried by barges. Harmsworths were a family of barge masters based on the Basingstoke Canal which they owned in its last years as a commercial concern. It is here that towpath walkers meet the boats.

Thames Lock is not the easiest of places to find from the 'outside world': The nearest public highway is Jessamy Road, off Thames Street, Weybridge. It is a good mile from Weybridge Station and half a mile from the public car park in the town. Jessamy Road is quite short and ends at a private bridge over the River Wey. Turning along Church Walk for a short distance there will be found, on the right, a public footpath which has its own bridge over the river. This leads to and ends at Thames Lock. Once there, don't go over the footbridge to the towpath yet but go through the small gate on your right and ahead to the single lock gate across the entrance channel.

The water you have passed is known as 'the Pound'. This was not an original feature of the Wey Navigation. It has been here only about 200 years whereas the Navigation is 350 years old. The land on the other side of the water from you was a long thin island in the Thames. It didn't extend very far to your left and where the big Weybridge Rowing Club shed now stands there was a gap – a part of the River Thames. Barges may have entered and left the Navigation through that gap or they may have passed between the island and the bank. The map of the Manor of Ham Court, drawn in 1732, shows how it appeared.[1]

Barge traffic on the Thames had had to contend with the competing interests of the millers who had weirs across the river. These could be passed only by means of 'flash locks' which had a removable section of weir through which a barge shot with the rush of water (downstream) or was dragged through against it

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(upstream). Either way it was hazardous and the miller lost a lot of water. Towards the end of the 18th century the Thames authorities began to build 'pound' locks, of the type we know today, which release only one chamber of water at a time. To enable these to work the river must be dammed so as to direct water into the lock. At Shepperton two new channels were cut and two large weirs and the lock were built in 1813. Another lock, at Sunbury, had been constructed a year earlier. An unfortunate consequence for the Wey Navigation of these and other improvements to the Thames at this time was a lowering of the level of the water in the stretch where barges entered and left the navigation. At Thames Lock, which had been built for a greater depth of water in the Thames, loaded barges now often found that they could not get over the cill (or threshold) into or out of the lock.

To solve this problem the gap between the island and the lock was closed. It was filled, possibly with material dredged from the channel between the island and the bank of the Thames. This would have made sure that barges could pass along the channel. Then a wooden dam with a single gate in it was installed where you see it today, making another pound lock between the old Thames Lock and the river. The channel between the bank and the island became the only way into and out of the Wey Navigation.

The construction of the new pound enabled boats to pass to or from the Wey Navigation in two steps instead of one. When the water in the Thames is too low for a vessel to pass over the lower cill of Thames Lock, the single stop gate to the pound is closed and water is passed through the lock by opening the paddles in the upper gates and leaving the lower gates (or at least the paddles in them) open. Water goes through to raise the level in both the lock and the pound. Craft entering the Navigation already in the pound float higher and can get over the cill into the lock. Craft leaving the Navigation move out into the pound and, with the lower gates of Thames Lock closed behind them, the paddle in the single pound gate is opened to lower the water in the pound to the level of that in the river. Then the gate can be opened to let these craft out.

The made-up land extension to the island became (by default?) Navigation property and had been let to the Weybridge Rowing Club long before the National Trust took over. The tenancy has been renewed so the area is open only to rowing club members.

2 Thames Lock, Cottage and Stables

This lock was formerly constructed of timber as all the Wey locks probably were. The standard arrangement would seem to have been a lock chamber mostly of a broad-legged Y-section with short timber piles making either side of the leg of the Y with sloping earth banks above. At each end were full-height vertical timbers, back-filled with earth to withstand the tremendous weight of water and to support the great lock gates.

Timber decays and the Wey locks were repaired often and rebuilt from time to time. Thames Lock was rebuilt in mass concrete in 1863 and this is believed to be an early instance of building in this material (except for, perhaps, the Romans). In the archives are notes made at the time about this work: 'The old Wood Lock taken out and restored with Concrete from the upper end to the high lower wing', and 'Cement delivered 250 casks £100 19s 0d, Gravel 665 tons @ 1/3 £41 13s 4d'.[2] Quite a job for the times especially as the concrete mixer had not yet been invented. The lock was drained in the winter of 1996/7 for maintenance and it was reported that the concrete walls were found to require little attention 130 years after they were built.

The present cottage was constructed for the National Trust in 1975, replacing one which is thought to have been built in 1765 and was said to be, after 200 years, damp and subsiding. There are references in the archives which suggest this date but nothing which positively confirms it. A photograph in the Navigation collection shows people outside the old lock cottage which looks much like the present one. There may have been an even earlier cottage here. The Navigation accounts for 1733 record the payment of £13 5s 5d 'for repairing the wharf house at Ham Haw' but it is not clear just where this was. The accounts at this time list the salaries of the man responsible for 'the whole river', the wharfingers at Guildford, at Dapdune and at Send Heath, the lock-keepers at Triggs, Pyrford and New Haw and, of course, the accountant. But there is no-one described as lock keeper or wharfinger for Thames Lock (which is at Ham Haw). This is curious for the site was a key one which all barges carrying goods between the Wey

and the Thames (and thus, usually, London) had to pass. This was where the records were made – who was carrying what to where, or from where, and what quantity. These records determined who had to pay and how much for use of the Wey Navigation. The first appearance of an employee with responsibility for the lower end of the Navigation comes in 1739 when a James Holloway is appointed for Coxes/ Weybridge and the following year for New Haw/ Coxes/Weybridge/Thames. Before he came the duties at Thames lock were perhaps attended to by the employee at New Haw which was, in those days, not only a lock but also a wharf. It is not clear whether, in the early days, all employees were provided with houses. Some may have had to find their own accommodation.

The stables, on the other side of the lock, much renovated in order to keep them standing, must look much as they did in the days when wind and muscles were all that was available to move barges. It was possible to sail along the Thames. Later, tugs towed half a dozen barges lashed together. Along the Wey, however, it was usual to have a horse (sometimes two). Bargemen slept on the boat. Horses, which might have to wait for barges to arrive, had to be housed.

In the stables the National Trust has mounted a small display to introduce visitors to the Wey Navigations.

3 Ham Haw Mill

Wherever a lock was built a head of water was created, so establishing a new site where water power was available. Thames Lock has a fall of some 8ft 6in (2.8m) and, within 40 years of its construction a mill had been built on the bank of the cut just above the lock. It was known as Ham Haw Mill, later as Ham Mills, and was occupied as follows:

1691-1726	Robert Douglas
1726-1730	Madame Douglas
1731-1758	J Hitchcock
1758-1764	Norton Champayne
1764-1774	John Champayne
1774-1776	John Tull
1776-1808	Jukes Coulson
1808-817	John Bunn

From 1817 to 1842 the mill was closed.

It had been first a paper mill and later a corn mill and an iron works. Little is known about the early occupiers or their activities. A weir and channel (to be met shortly) still bear Coulson's name. John Bunn was a London iron merchant who set up a works here and at Coxes Lock, which is also on the Wey Navigation. He is known chiefly for the trade tokens he issued when coinage was scarce. They bear his name and portray an industrial building. 'Bunn Pennies' and the even rarer shillings are much prized.

The arrival of Walter Flockton and his brother Thomas Medcalf Flockton in 1841, intent on building a new mill to extract oil from seed by crushing, was the start of a dispute between them and the proprietors of the Navigation which went on for several years. Letters and other documents of the time which have survived in the archives of the Navigation provide a lively picture of events.[3] Determined (not to say unscrupulous) businessmen, the Flocktons claimed rights over land and use of water. They defied a weak and distant Navigation management whose local man, doing his best to defend his employers' interests, suffered much abuse and harassment. The matter went to Guildford Assizes on 7 and 8 August 1846,[4] resulting in a Deed of Arrangement in 1849, but the dispute was still rumbling on in the 1880s and 90s.

Among the works carried out by the Flocktons was the installation of a second waterwheel to provide more power. This required another sluice to draw more water from the Navigation and they don't seem to have been too particular about asking for permission to do this. With two wheels in use all day and sometimes all night there was often not enough water left in the Navigation for the barges. When vessels grounded the bargemasters, crews and Navigation proprietors were not amused.

Oil extraction from linseed, cottonseed and rapeseed continued under various proprietors, Nias and Whittett among them, until the 1960s. The product – oil for floor covering (linoleum), for paint and for food, with the residue compressed into oil-cake for animal feed – is highly combustible. There have been at least two spectacular fires. On one occasion the river was said to be alight with burning oil on the surface. Following the last fire the buildings and plant gradually disintegrated and disappeared. Developers see the site as potentially a residential area. Anywhere near water seems much sought-after. But is covering the ground with houses and flats the most appropriate use for this unique site?

4 Ham Haw Cut and Three Weirs

In 1653 the land on the west side of the River Wey here was part of the Manor of Ham (or Hamm) Court. This belonged to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor and was, at that time, leased by them to Sir George Askew (or Ayscue). The promoters of the Wey Navigation wanted to make the last quarter mile (420m) stretch of artificial cut through this land to reach the Thames. This was Commonwealth England and Sir George does not seem to have been consulted, but the work went ahead.

At the Restoration of the Monarchy people who considered they had suffered loss or damage as a result of the construction of the Navigation were invited to put in claims for compensation. Sir George Askew was one of the 81 people who claimed, in his case for alleged flood damage to his land. Most if not all the claims were settled out of court and often it is not known what agreement was reached. Sir George put in for a lump sum but it rather looks as though he settled for an annual payment – a rent. When his lease expired the rent seems then to have been payable to the Dean and Canons of Windsor and later to others.

Weir 1

The large weir alongside the mill site is not an original feature of the Navigation. The flat Wey valley with only some 60-70 foot drop in level between Guildford and the Thames suffered frequently from flooding. In the 1920s some local people got together to try to reduce the frequency and severity of floods and work was carried out. In the 1930s public authorities took a hand and the River Wey Improvement Scheme (RWIS) was devised and executed. This weir was one of several major works completed along the river and its maintenance remains the responsibility of the successors of the Thames Conservancy and Surrey County Council (currently the Environment Agency). Day-to-day operation of its sluices has always been undertaken, for a fee, by the Navigation (now the National Trust) whose staff are on site.

Weir 2 Bulldogs

Before construction of the RWIS weir a narrow strip joined the mill area to the land beyond. The bridge over the weir replaced this.and gives access to what was known as Mannings Pool Mead. At the southern end of this is Bulldogs Weir (Great Bucks Wear on the Jago map of 1823), which belongs to the Navigation and was built across the natural course of the river in order to divert water down Ham Haw Cut. Opening and closing of the sluices here was part of the work of the lock-keeper at Thames Lock and he would walk from his cottage along the river bank on the non-towpath side to get there. (His right to do so was challenged by the Flocktons of Ham Mill). Bulldogs Weir was rebuilt in the 1850s and the ironwork bears the inscriptions 'C CHANDLER 1859' and 'LIEUT COL DE VISME 1857'. These were, respectively, the master carpenter and the manager of the Wey Navigation at the time. Access to Bulldogs Weir is restricted to Navigation staff. Some of the equipment is probably more recent than mid-19th century.

Weir 3 Coulson's Bay

Near the upstream end of Ham Haw Cut the towpath is carried on a bridge for some 70 feet. Underneath this are the sluices and weir known as Coulson's Bay. Surplus water flows out of the cut and into a long channel which leads out into the Thames. A precise date for this feature has not been found but construction constructed between 1776 and 1808 is probable since that is when Jukes Coulson had Ham Haw Mill.

5 The Wey at Weybridge – The Portmores

For nearly half a mile upstream of Bulldogs Weir the Navigation follows the course of the river. The Wey Navigation is not a canal, though sometimes referred to as such, but a river made navigable, partly by the cutting of artificial channels but also by the use, wherever possible, of stretches of the river. Artificial channels were costly to cut and to maintain and those who planned the route of the Wey Navigation in 1650 do seem to have known what they were doing.

At that time this stretch of the river – indeed, almost all of it – would have been quite rural. Between the river and the main road of the village of Weybridge the Duke of Norfolk bought land which he added to some already owned by his wife. There he built a large house. When he died in 1684 the estate was sold to the king, James II, who gave it to his mistress Catherine Sedley. In 1688 James was forced to abdicate (it is said he spent his last night in England in the house here) and was succeeded by William and Mary. One of the commanders in William's army, David Colyear, met Catherine and when they married in 1696 she gave him her house at Weybridge as a wedding present. Colyear was made a peer of Scotland in 1699 and an earl – the first Earl Portmore – in 1703. The Weybridge property then became known as the Portmore Estate, a name the area still bears.

When he was not abroad, fighting, Lord Portmore lived at Weybridge where part of the Wey Navigation ran alongside his estate. In 1723 a half share in the profits of the waterway came on the market and Lord Portmore bought it for £3000. The other half was already in the possession of a Lincolnshire gentleman, George Langton, of whom more later. It should be made clear that, though often referred to as the 'proprietors' of the Navigation, these two men did not actually own the property. The waterway, locks, weirs, wharves, buildings and other physical components were, and still are, in the hands of the trustees appointed under the Act of 1671, which was passed to resolve disputes as to ownership and rights. All that the proprietors owned was an entitlement to the profits of the enterprise. However, Lord Portmore's investment was soon paying handsome dividends.

In 1729, just before he died, the first earl added to his Weybridge estate by taking a lease of Ham Court Manor from the Dean and Chapter of St George's Chapel Windsor who owned it. This is the land on the other side of the Wey from the Portmore estate and some of it lies just beyond the ditch behind the towpath here.

Charles Colyear, the second earl, succeeded to the estate and the half share in the Navigation and held both from 1730 to 1785. When he died he was followed by his son, William Charles, third earl, from 1785 to 1822. But the next in line had upset his father who left him only the title. The property went to the third earl's nephew, James Dawkins, but there were family disputes over inheritance and money. In 1835 Thomas Charles Colyear, the fourth Earl Portmore, died without issue and the title became extinct. His wife, the last Lady Portmore, lived until 1844 but by then the Portmore family had lost interest in Weybridge and the river.[5]

In 1861 the land was sold and in 1887 roads were laid out and building plots offered for sale. Houses were built between 1888 and 1901 and what you see now from the river are the gardens of some of that late-Victorian development. One plot did not have a house. Not far from Bulldogs Weir a long building close to the river edge was constructed as a boat-house from which punts and skiffs could be hired. Butlers' Boat-house catered for that popular Victorian leisure activity, pleasure boating. It is still there but now converted to dwellings. All that now remains of the 18th and 19th century Portmore Estate is at the end of Portmore Park Road – two pillars which once marked the Thames Street entrance to the estate.

6 Weybridge Town Lock Area

The 'new' bridge with its associated wider and straighter road linking Weybridge and Addlestone was begun in 1939 but not completed until after World War II. Below it on the towpath side is an ultrasonic gauging station which registers the state of the river and relays the information to the water authority. The brick cabin on the downstream side of the bridge abutment houses the transmitter.

The older bridge with cast-iron arches dates from 1865. Plates on the spans bear the inscription 'Hennet, Spink and Else, Bridgewater' but this only identifies the firm which made the castings. Some of the engineering bricks are impressed with 'Joseph Hamblet, Oldbury, Birmingham, 1865' but this is probably the name of the brick maker. The bridge was designed by C H Howell, the County Surveyor. The Quarter Sessions records contain three letters of 1863 about its construction. From two of these it seems that the £4667 tender of Henry Bond, of 19 Great George Street, Westminster, was accepted.[6]

This bridge replaced an earlier one which was made of timber and had 13 arches. Before that there is said to have been a bridge 240 feet long but only wide enough for horses.

On the non-towpath side of the river, between the two bridges, is a 1990s residential development appropriately named 'The Wharf'. The site had been, for many years, the wharf and depot of the builders' merchants, Eastwoods. For a time barge-loads of bricks were brought up the Thames and off-loaded here. The records show, from 1900 to 1920 at least, Eastwoods & Co. had their own barges, Landrail and Surrey, bringing cargoes of up to 55 tons of bricks or 60 tons of cement.[7]

The cargoes most often carried on the Wey were timber, wheat and flour but at one time or another almost any commodity will have been transported, even aeroplanes. Between 30 June and 6 September 1920, 19 cargoes of aeroplanes totalling 165 tons were loaded 'at Weybridge' to go downstream. They were almost certainly surplus production from Brooklands where a number of firms had built aircraft during the World War I and may have been put on barges at Weybridge Town Lock or possibly, by arrangement

with Eastwoods, at their wharf. The following year, from 7 June to 19 July a further 18 cargoes of aeroplanes totalling 171½ tons were loaded here to go downstream. Where they went has not been established. They were carried on barges, some belonging to A J Harmsworth, who was based on the Basingstoke Canal, and some belonging to bargemaster E Smith.

On the towpath side between the two bridges there was, for many years, a boat-house. In about 1920 Mr Butler moved here from his site some 650 yards upstream on the opposite bank and later it became known as Penfolds Boat-house. Though skiffs and punts were no longer hired out, boats were still repaired and moored here into the 1980s. Riverside residences now occupy the site.

Barges proceeding upstream had to let go of the towrope here and get through the bridge and into Weybridge Town Lock under their own momentum or perhaps aided by poling by the crew. The horse (or horses – there were sometimes two) followed the towpath around in front of the boat-house, the towrope passing round the roller to enable some pull to be exerted until the barge was level with it. The horse(s) then used the bridge over the Bourne Stream and went across Addlestone Road to the lock-side. This is the lock shown on the cover of the book. The camera is looking up the Navigation, but where are the horses? The picture was taken in the very last years of William Stevens & Sons, bargemasters, when a small tug had replaced them.

This lock, rebuilt from time to time, is said to incorporate some Tudor bricks from the demolished Oatlands Palace. One report says these are in one or both cills. If so they will be visible only on those rare occasions when the lock is drained for some major maintenance work.

The tumbling bay at Weybridge Town Lock is somewhat unusual, being L-shaped. This allows for longer 'steps' and directs the tumbling water against itself to some extent, thus reducing the force of the overflow. From this lock to Walsham is more than five miles – the longest man-made section of the Wey Navigation.

7 Addlestone: Blackboy Bridge Area

The present Blackboy Bridge, made of concrete, replaced a brick bridge in 1956 in preparation for the extraction of gravel from the fields between the Navigation and the river. The gravel pit became a lake but has been backfilled and the land returned to agriculture. The towpath transfers to the other bank here.

Alongside the old bridge on the Addlestone Road side there was once a blacksmith's cottage – Abbis' Forge. This site later became an Esso petrol depot, then an oil distribution depot and is now offices.

In 1843 a Mr Thomas Liberty bought land upstream of the forge, on the same side of the Navigation, and started a sawmill. It was powered by water drawn from the Navigation and discharged into the Bourne Stream. The following year he was complaining of a shortage of water caused by the bargemen letting it through Weybridge Town Lock in order to get sufficient depth for themselves in the reach beyond, where the Flocktons were taking a great deal of water to work their mill. Later owners of Liberty's sawmill were Gridleys and Brewsters, familiar names in the timber business locally well into the 20th century. The area continued to be associated with woodworking when it became the site of the Airscrew works, making wooden propellers, and then of Weyroc who made chipboard. Now a rebuilt industrial/commercial trading estate, it has a variety of occupiers.

The Pelican public house is not shown on the Jago map of 1823 but had been licensed as a beer house some time before 1869. It was still licensed to sell only beer (for consumption on and off the premises) when a return was compiled in 1892.[8] The present 20th century building is fully licensed.

The iron bridge carries the Weybridge - Chertsey railway line which opened in 1848. Later the line was extended to Virginia Water where it connected with lines to Staines, Ascot, Wokingham and Reading.[9]

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8 Coxes Lock and Mill

The Mill

For the first 100 years or so of the Navigation's existence there was nothing here but the lock – no mill, no mill pond. It was not even listed in the records as a place where goods were loaded or unloaded. It is added to the list from 1776 when Alexander Raby, ironmaster,[10] was starting to build a mill here and the first loads recorded in the column headed 'Coxes' look like those of local bargemasters bringing building materials. Raby was then in partnership with Obadiah Rogers and as soon as the mill was in production the entries in the records for barge-loads at Coxes are all in the name of Raby and Rogers. Whether they had their own barge or barges, or whether they chartered barges from others and undertook to pay the tolls, is not revealed. Nor do the records show whether the quantities recorded in the 'Coxes' column are goods arriving or leaving, but they are, for those days, substantial amounts. Given at first in loads, which were probably approximately tons, and totalled quarterly, they began at an average of around 400 loads a quarter. This built up over the years and in 1800, when loads were recorded by weight, the quarterly average exceeded 1000 tons.

How much of this is raw materials arriving and how much is manufactured goods despatched? What, indeed, was Raby making and what was he using for the purpose? Of the Navigation ledgers which record details of barges, cargoes and voyages, the earliest to have survived dates from 1822. Raby had by then gone from the Wey. Towards the end of his years at Coxes there seems to have been some difficulty over his payment of tolls. William Alladay, then lock-keeper at Thames Lock, was required to keep special records and 'Alladay's Accounts of Raby's Riverage' for 1798 to 1804 have survived. For a few quarterly periods between 1800 and 1802 these show what goods were being carried and where they were going. Coals and iron were being brought to Coxes and hoops sent from there to London. If this was the pattern of Raby's activities throughout his time at Coxes (some 28 years) it would seem that he brought in iron – perhaps pig iron made elsewhere or possibly scrap iron. There is no evidence that smelting took place here. The iron would have been processed into the form of strip and then fashioned into hoops for barrels, which were used to store and

transport goods of many kinds. The value of the site for Raby lay in the water power by which the iron could be beaten and rolled. He certainly had a powered hammer for the noise made by 'Hackering Jack' upset Lord Portmore at his estate nearby. During much of Raby's time at Coxes Britain was at war in America and later with France, and there would have been a large demand for barrel hoops. In the year from July 1801 to June 1802, 547 tons of coal and 1944 tons of iron were brought to Coxes Mill, a total of 2491 tons. Hoops sent from Coxes in the same period amounted to 1498 tons.

The Mill Pond

Raby cut through the bank of the Navigation above Coxes Lock to extract water to power his mill. It is by no means certain that he had obtained, or even sought, permission to do so. At first the proprietors seemed hesitant about challenging him over this. Rather they welcomed the prospect of increased barge traffic and the tolls which the new mill would generate. Raby then went on to excavate the mill pond to provide a reserve of power for the works. The pond was on his land and the proprietors could not stop him digging it. They could have stopped him filling it from their Navigation but, again, did not want to lose income from the mill traffic.

Raby's mill had been in operation for six years before the proprietors came to an agreement with him about the supply of water. There is a document of 1782 in the archives but it is only a draft agreement, has many alterations, and is not signed.[11] It is almost certain, however, that some such formal agreement was made. The main provision is that Raby, paying one shilling a ton or chaldron on his goods carried between Thames Lock and the mill, agreed that if the amount due each year fell short of £130 he would pay that sum. Thus the proprietors were assured of a minimum income from the mill. Raby did have to find a few extra pounds in one or two years but it was not long before his business had grown so that his shilling a ton came to much more than £130 a year.

The River Wey from Weybridge to Godalming was surveyed for the proprietors by William Faden in 1782 and the plan he drew shows the mill pond.[12]

The water which drove Coxes Lock Mill had left the river at Walsham, and come more than four miles along the Navigation's artificial channel. One of the locks in that stretch, Pyrford, did not then have a tumbling bay or any other form of overflow channel. The lock-gate sluices would need to have been left partly open to let water through.

The mill pond was never a part of the Navigation in its commercial days but was acquired and added to its property by the National Trust in the 1990s to preserve it as a wildlife habitat.

By 1803 Raby had left Surrey to develop ironworks and coal mines in South Wales. Coxes was taken over by others including, for a time, John Bunn who had earlier operated at Ham Haw Mills. But by 1829 iron working at Coxes had stopped.[13]

The freeholder owner of the site, Daniel Lambert, then built a corn mill and converted part of it for silk production. That is thought to be the building seen today ('the old mill') nearest to the lock and now, as apartments, bearing Lambert's name. At the end of the century new owners took over and the tall Victorian roller mill was built, followed shortly after by the slightly higher silo. In the 1960s another silo was constructed, this time in concrete, over-topping both, but this was demolished in the 1980s when milling ceased and the site was redeveloped for residential use.

For more than 60 years William Stevens & Sons' barges supplied Coxes Lock Milling Co. Ltd with wheat, in 80/90 ton barge-loads from London Docks. Four or even six barges lashed together would be towed up the Thames by tug to Weybridge and then singly by horse to the mill. There the bulk cargo was transferred by suction to the silo. In the 1960s this was almost the only commercial traffic remaining on the Wey. On 3 and 4 July 1969 Perseverance and Speedwell were the last two Stevens' barges to unload at the mill. After that, except for a short while in the 1980s when powered barges were used, wheat came by road or rail.

A crew member on one of Stevens' barges recalled that bread was baked at the mill to check the quality of the flour and that the bargemen were able to buy these loaves for a penny each.

9 New Haw

Watercress Beds

Between Coxes and New Haw locks, where the Navigation bends first one way and then the other, there are traces of former watercress beds. The sluice which let water through under the towpath into them is still there. In the late 1940s the grower, Mr Hershey, was still to be seen and heard in the district as he pedalled his carrier bicycle with its basket of greenstuff and called out 'Morning gathered!' The enterprise closed when the water was declared unfit.

Addlestone Swimming Club

Not far away the waterway widens slightly and this, on the non- towpath side, was once the site of the local swimming club complete with a diving platform. Later it became the headquarters of the Addlestone Canoe Club.

'Old Loading Place'

Some hundred yards nearer to New Haw Lock, also on the non- towpath side, is an area marked on the Jago map of 1823 as 'Old Loading Place'. It is now the residential area of Bates Walk which gets its name from Bates Timber Yard which was previously here. Perhaps Mr Bates or one of his predecessors had his timber brought by barge.

New Haw Lock and Wharf

As explained at Thames Lock, most of the locks of the Wey Navigation were formerly turf sided. At either end were walls of timber, substantial enough to support massive lock gates which had to bear considerable pressure of water. But, between the gates, in the lock itself, it was sufficient if it didn't leak. The sides did not need to be vertical so earth banks were good enough. Half-height timber walls were usually built from end to end to keep barges in line with the gates but above these the sides were sloping earth. The conventional vertical-sided lock uses less water, which is an important consideration on most canals, but water economy had seldom to be

considered on the Wey. New Haw Lock was one of the last to exhibit a trace of this feature. Most of it had been rebuilt in concrete and with vertical walls but in the 1980s the towpath side of the lock still had a half-height wall of concrete with the top section just sloping earth. Now it, too, conforms to the standard pattern. Elimination of this ancient and unique feature is said to have been required in the interests of safety. When regular bargemen were the only users they knew what to expect. Now, when many users are new to the Wey (and sometimes new to boating too), they expect, when in a full lock, to be able to step off their craft on to firm ground.

From early days there was an 'official' wharf at New Haw, a place provided by the Navigation at which goods could be loaded, unloaded or stored. Barges would deliver to and collect from anywhere along the waterway but at the Navigation's wharves there was usually an employee responsible for the site. Here the wharf extended some way downstream from the bridge which carries Byfleet Road over the lock. Faden's Plan of the River Wey of 1782 shows a house on the wharf but not the present lock-house.[14] There seems to have been no lock-keeper at Thames Lock for the first 100 years or so of the Wey Navigation and the first employee at New Haw of whom we have a record, William Hammerton, may have looked after everything from New Haw Lock to the Thames. From 1734 to 1744 Sarah Hammerton, possibly his widow, was at New Haw but during her time a James Holloway was appointed for 'New Haw to the Thames'. From then on the records of barges and their loads are probably entered at Thames Lock. New Haw continued to have a lock-keeper but this was no longer a key position.

No trace of New Haw wharf remains and it may be that it lost its importance when the Basingstoke Canal opened in 1793. Goods could then be moved to and from places to the west by water instead of by road.

New Haw Reach

The straight stretch of waterway upstream from New Haw lock is notable in that it is not so much a cut as an embankment. When it was made in the early 1650s this must have been quite an ambitious undertaking with nothing but the weight of earth to hold the high bank together on the non-towpath side. Even today, when it is reinforced with steel piling, it is regarded as one of the danger spots of the Navigation. A breach here could have serious consequences for the residents of Common Lane which runs alongside.

The bank itself has been at the centre of controversy at least twice. When the National Trust took over in 1964 they found that many of the occupiers of adjacent properties had, for years, been using the bank to tip rubbish and light bonfires. The first Trust manager tried to bring some order to this chaos and had a set of photographs taken showing the shacks, tyres, bins, buckets and other rubbish littering the site. He ran into strong opposition which even sought the help of the local Member of Parliament. By the 1980s the situation was little better. The Trust's neighbours, licensed only to have access to the bank, were still using it as a dump or gardening on it. Eventually the Trust cleared the entire bank, forbade any further activity there and declared it a wildlife habitat.

The Basingstoke Canal

Between the M25 motorway bridge and the railway bridge built by the London and Southampton Railway in 1838 is the junction with the Basingstoke Canal. Neither bridge was here of course when the Basingstoke opened for business in 1793. Not itself a financial success, the Basingstoke did, for a time, add to the income of the Wey. By the 1930s commercial traffic consisted mainly of timber to Woking and coal to the gas works there. This had ended by 1949 and the canal was then put up for sale. Parts of it would have been filled in and built on, making recovery as a recreational waterway impossible. By this time, however, interest in preserving and re-instating waterways in Britain had gained support and volunteers began to restore stretches of the Basingstoke Canal. Eventually the canal was bought by the County Councils of Hampshire and Surrey who now control it. While it is navigable for miles up to the collapsed Greywell Tunnel the passage of boats is hampered by shortage of water. Use of the locks has to be pre-booked and boats are accompanied by a member of the canal staff to ensure that the locks are not leaking after use. A backpumping scheme, now under construction, should solve this problem. The Basingstoke Canal Headquarters at Mytchett, some 12 miles from the Wey (reached more quickly by bicycle along the towpath than by boat) has an exhibition devoted to the waterway.

The towpath bridge at the junction with the Wey Navigation fell into disrepair when commercial traffic ceased and it was removed. The present footbridge dates from 1996.

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10 Byfleet

Railway Bridge

The first bridge was built here in the 1830s when the London and Southampton Railway constructed the line. It carried two tracks of the line from Nine Elms to Woking, the first section to be opened. In 1884 two more tracks were added and the bridge widened to carry them. From below you can see the two stages of construction.

Dartnell Park

Between the railway bridge and Parvis Bridge on the non-towpath side lies Dartnell Park, developed from 1887 as a private residential estate. Big houses were built on large plots and a tennis club and boat-house provided to attract buyers. The boat-house, a handsome two-storey timber building, stood on the bank facing the present Byfleet Boat Club premises. It was similar in appearance to the Butler's Boat-house at Weybridge noted at page 18 with a balcony to the upper floor. The bank was cut into to provide moorings. Later the Byfleet boat-house was converted to a private dwelling and survived for a century or so until replaced in the 1990s in undistinguished brick. A few of the original Dartnell Park houses remain but several have been demolished to be replaced with small estates or more modest (but still expensive) dwellings.

Byfleet Boat-house

On the towpath side at Parvis Bridge is the building provided for the people of Byfleet village by Mr F C Stoop, the wealthy occupier of nearby West Hall. He paid for its construction to encourage healthy recreation. We know about this because, although the land on which it lies is not part of the Navigation, Mr Stoop had to negotiate for permission for boats to be carried across the towpath and for them to be hired out on the waterway. For a single payment of £50 he was also allowed to remove a 3-foot strip of the bank and moor boats there. It was, and still is, a condition that boats are made available for public hire here and little metal rowboats are a summer feature of the site. This is the headquarters of Byfleet Boat Club who hire out these boats.

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Parvis Wharf

A few wharves were established by the Navigation as part of the original enterprise but this was not one of them. It is thought that this site was first used as a loading place for Byfleet Mill, which is on the natural river at the far end of the village, about a mile away. The mill still stands, though no longer working. The miller would have found it convenient to have a store -house alongside the Navigation where a barge-load of grain could be kept safe and dry while waiting to be carted to the mill. Similarly flour would be carted from the mill and stored at the wharf awaiting a barge to take it to customers – perhaps in London. The part -brick, part-timber building at the wharf is the survivor of a pair which once stood here. This one was known locally as 'the grist mill', which seemed odd since there is no fall of water here to provide power. It remained a mystery until queried in 1993 with Howard Cook, a long-standing resident of Byfleet, and with Parish Councillor Mr D P Bright. There were memories of passing the wharf on the way to and from school in the 1930s and hearing some kind of engine running. So was some kind of animal feed being ground? A visit to Woking Library and inspection of the local directories did, indeed, confirm that in 1931/2 the premises were occupied by Surrey Grist Mills Ltd, millers. To find out if they had been there earlier would entail inspection of the Chertsey directories as Byfleet was part of Chertsey District before 1931.

It is the left-hand building which survives, an upper storey in timber having been added since the photograph in figure 6 was taken. The buttresses are still in place and between two of them there is a join in the brickwork still to be seen. Towards the left of the end wall, facing the waterway, there is a vertical light-coloured marking (a repair or re-pointing?) which also shows in the picture.

Details of cargoes carried on the Navigation from 1828 to 1969 are in the archives. Sometimes they throw light on activities which have probably not been recorded elsewhere. From Parvis Wharf during World War I many barge-loads of sectional buildings were sent downstream by Tarrants, builders of much of Victorian and Edwardian Byfleet and Weybridge. In wartime they were producing large numbers of huts, presumably for the Forces. When the war was over a different cargo went downstream for a while – aeroplanes. Were they the last of the Martinsydes, built in quantity locally and now going for scrap?

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West Hall

The large house, now offices, and its grounds adjoining the Navigation's west bank (West Lodge on the 1823 Jago map) was the home of F C Stoop at the beginning of the 20th century. He was regarded as an unofficial Lord of the Manor who used to open the grounds for annual village celebrations and paid for the building of Byfleet village hall.

Murray's Bridge

This is marked 'Twigs Bridge' on the 1823 map. A drive from West Hall crossed the Navigation by this private bridge, providing a short route by foot, on horseback or by carriage to Byfleet parish church. It was use of this track by carriages that altered plans for the M25 motorway. These proposed a footbridge crossing the motorway here but local historian Howard Cook challenged this and produced evidence that it had been a carriageway. The bridge, as built, is wide enough for one (horse-drawn or horse-less) carriage.

The Navigation towpath is commonly regarded as a public footpath but very little of it actually is. The public have access to most of it only by permission of the National Trust and this is conditional on compliance with the Trust's Byelaws. But the stretch of towpath between Murray's Bridge and Dodd's Bridge (the next one upstream) is, curiously, a public bridleway. This must surely have arisen from its use by riders from West Hall – residents and perhaps staff. Horses are allowed elsewhere on the Wey towpath only if towing a barge. One might think those days are over, but not quite; horse-drawn boat trips operate from Godalming Wharf in the summer months.

Dodd's Bridge

This is the 'Harriss's Bridge' of the Jago map. Here was once another entrance to the West Hall grounds. The bridleway crosses the bridge and leads to West Byfleet half a mile away.

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11 Pyrford 1

Pyrford Marina

The Wey Navigations were not created for recreational boating. They were strictly commercial ventures – transport systems for the carriage of goods and, at one time and to a minor extent, passengers.

The first known record of the use of the Wey for pleasure boating appears in that Navigation's Accounts for 1750: 'Received for a skiff going up the river 2s 6d.' It is not until 1757 that it happens again: 'For a pleasure boat going up the river 5s 0d.' (Perhaps this was a larger craft – or went twice as far.) In the Accounts from 1749 to 1810 there are numerous items of receipt of small amounts of money from two or three men for 'boats'. Almost all of these turned out to be 'fish boats'. These are thought to have been boats used to collect the catch from eel traps along the river. When the records state 'John Fenn, 13 fish boats £1 12s 6d' this means not that he had 13 boats, but that he made 13 trips.

Pleasure boat entries in the Accounts appear with some regularity but in a very small way from 1811 when there are two entries: 'Mr. Maltravers 1 boat 2s 6d' and 'Some gentlemen ditto 2s 6d'. This is not yet commercial boat-hire but 'gentlemen', perhaps living by the Thames, having their own boat and curious to explore into deepest Surrey. In the summer of 1831 James Matthews, then in charge at Thames Lock, took £1 10s for 'six pleasure boats passing Thames Lock'. In the spring of that year he had paid in 15s 0d for 'one Pleasure Boat and One Sailing Boat' – wind power as well as muscle power was sometimes used.

Many traces of pleasure boating activity in the past are to be found along the Wey. Rowing boats and the like can still be hired from boat-houses at Byfleet, Guildford and Farncombe. There were once at least six more establishments of this kind on the river but pleasure boating is now mainly in powered craft, either privately owned or hired from commercial boat -houses.

Here at Pyrford the Marina is a late 20th century addition and was constructed as a private enterprise, not by the National Trust. It opened in 1984 and enables more craft to use the Navigation without having further lengths of it lined with moored boats

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Pyrford Bridge

The road bridge here carries the public highway. When the Navigation was made the promoters had to provide a bridge over it wherever they had cut through a right of way. These bridges were usually of timber and no wider, both over and under, than they had to be. They could pass a cart over and a barge under. All of them except this one have been replaced with wider, stronger structures built, sometimes with a small contribution from the Navigation, by the Highway Authority and taken over by them. Pyrford was the last highway bridge to remain the responsibility of the Navigation and its weight restriction, narrow deck and awkward approaches bring demands for its rebuilding. At the time of writing these have not been satisfied.

The Anchor Inn

There has been a public house here at least since 1728 when it was in the occupation of Benjamin Ward. The present building dates from 1934 and the conservatory was added in 1991.[15]

Pyrford Lock

There was no by-pass channel alongside this lock when the National Trust took over and making it was one of the first major construction jobs the Trust did. When Coxes Lock Mill, down-stream, was water-powered it would have been necessary to keep the gate paddles partly open to let water through to replace that used by the mill.

12 Pyrford 2

Pigeon House Bridge

About 600 yards from Pyrford Lock along the Navigation towards Guildford is a footbridge known as Pigeon House Bridge. How it got its name is uncertain but it could be that it is connected with the mansion built here in the late 16th century. Many country houses at that time had dovecotes or pigeon houses producing food for the household and also, from the birds' droppings, saltpetre an essential ingredient of gunpowder.

Pyrford Wharf

A few yards from Pigeon House Bridge towards Guildford was once, on the towpath side, Pyrford Wharf. There is little trace of it now but the Jago map of 1823 shows the name and also a black square to indicate some sort of building there. A building appears also on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1870, 1896 and 1914 but not on the 1934 and subsequent maps. In January 2000 National Trust staff uncovered some foundations on the site. Later the descendants of the family which once lived there contacted the trust and produced a photograph of the cottage as it was in 1908. The Navigation records show that in 1728/9 William Skeet was paid to look after Pyrford Wharf, Walsham and Wilford Bridge (the latter thought to be what is now known as Dodd's Bridge). Pyrford had a succession of wharfingers until 1775 – Robert Skeet, James Briggs and William Dudman. Then Dudman moved to Walsham and possibly attended to Pyrford from there, but Pyrford never had a wharfinger of its own again. It continued as a wharf, however.

Among the bargemen using this wharf regularly was John Spong who had the romantically-named barge Rose in June. In September 1830 it brought 37 tons of coal and 2 tons of corn to Pyrford and later the same month timber and corn totalling 12" tons. Coal was Spong's main business and over the years he unloaded considerable quantities of it at Pyrford, which is something of a mystery. Where did it go? A cart track leads from the Wharf to Ockham Mill where the public road to Ripley begins. This is still a very rural area and must then have been quieter still. Was some of this coal destined for Lord King at Ockham Place, a mile and a half away? Was some for the keepers of the Admiralty semaphore station on Chatley Heath?

Pyrford Place

Edward, Earl of Lincoln, had been Lord High Admiral of England to Queen Elizabeth I. In about 1580, she granted him the Manor of Pyrford and he built a house there. William Camden in 1586 refers to 'the mansion lately standing there' as having been built by the Earl.[16]

The earliest known map of the area is one thought to date from about 1620.[17] Buildings are depicted on it, not as plans, but as small and somewhat crude drawings. Where the modern Pyrford Place stands, and where its Victorian predecessor stood, this map shows what seem to be two small dwellings close together. This may be intended to represent the Earl of Lincoln's house, perhaps as extended and/or rebuilt by Sir John Wolley.

The Earl of Lincoln died in 1584 and the manor came into the hands of Wolley, who was Latin Secretary to Queen Elizabeth. He was Dean of Carlisle, a Privy Counsellor, and he had married a daughter of Sir George More of Loseley near Guildford.

John Aubrey (1626-97), writing of his visit to Pyrford in about 1683, records that the house standing there was 'mostly built by Sir John Wolley.[18] A stone gatehouse is thought to have been one of the additions Sir John made. His initials are shown on a painting of this building by John Hassell in 1830, when it was probably the only part of the house still standing.

Sir Francis Wolley succeeded his father as Lord of the Manor in 1595. In 1602 John Donne, the poet, and Ann More, daughter of Sir George More of Loseley, were married 'privately', that is without the consent of the bride's father who was so incensed he had John Donne put in prison. Though soon released, Donne was at first 'unable to recover his wife'. He was received at Pyrford Place by Sir Francis Wolley who brought about a reconciliation between Sir George and the couple, even extracting a marriage portion for Ann from her father.

After the death of Sir Francis Wolley in 1610 the house was occupied by Sir Arthur Mainwaring and then by three generations of the Parkhurst family. In 1677 Denzil Onslow acquired it. Four years later he was visited there by John Evelyn, the diarist, and from him we get a description of the property at that time – 'the house of timber but commodious' – and of the self-sufficient estate with its decoy providing birds for the table.[19]

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According to the Victoria County History of Surrey the house was pulled down in the mid-1800s when the estate came into the possession of Lord Onslow. The small black rectangle on plot 192 on the Jago map may be the stone gatehouse – all that was then left of the original mansion.

The Pyrford Place of the second half of the 19th century and most of the 20th is to be found on Ordnance Survey maps. The 1870 edition shows a modest building about 40 feet square. Over the years extensions to the north, east and south produced, by 1914, a straggling Victorian/Edwardian pile. By the 1980s, this had been divided into nine apartments.

When this property came to be sold in 1989 the auctioneers, disclaiming all responsibility for any misrepresentations, described the mansion as 'a house dating from the 17th century'. Whether anything remained of the earlier builds is very doubtful. Had there been anything worth preserving it would surely have been protected. The developers who bought the property promptly demolished the house and erected the present apartment block.

The 1823 Jago map has Pyrford Place boldly but misleadingly inscribed below a group of buildings which are arranged roughly in a square. These are surrounded by a water feature designated as a moat on the earliest Ordnance Survey maps. Parts of the moat have since been filled in and some of the farm buildings have been converted to residential use.[20]

The Garden House

At the south east corner of the Pyrford Place estate and on the bank of the Navigation is a small brick structure known as the Garden House or more often as the Summer House.

This is a listed building in a style of the period around 1600 and was probably there in the days of Sir Francis Wolley. It was restored in the 1990s and bears a plaque on the wall facing the waterway. This reads:

JOHN DONNE
POET AND
DEAN OF ST PAUL'S
LIVED HERE
1600 - 1604
WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

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This is somewhat at variance with the information received by the author of this guide. It seems more likely that Donne would have been accommodated by Sir Francis Wolley in the manor house, certainly after the first of his 12 children arrived. Perhaps the plaque means that he lived in the manor of which the Garden House is a part.[21]

13 Walsham

Walsham Weir

Of all the places along the Wey this is probably the one which demonstrates most clearly the distinction between a navigation and a canal. The water thundering through Walsham Flood Gates insists that this is not simply a placid, man-made waterway.

Construction of a barrier across the river here was needed to direct water into the 5-mile artificial channel leading to Weybridge. It had to ensure that there would always be sufficient depth of water in that channel for barges to be able to travel along it. The natural river between Walsham and Weybridge has stretches too shallow to support anything as big as a barge. Its meandering course would, in any case, have been tedious and difficult to navigate so it made sense to by-pass it.

The original weir of 1650 at Walsham was not as wide as the present one and was probably entirely of timber. In 1884 it was rebuilt in concrete and iron and bears the name of Jesse Stone who was master carpenter and foreman of the Navigation at that time. Then, in the 1930s, as part of the River Wey Improvement Scheme, the weir was widened and more sluices added. Ransomes & Rapier supplied the ironwork.

This may be as good a place as any to offer a small dissertation on one aspect of Navigation terminology. Along the waterway are several structures, in addition to the locks, which direct water to where it is wanted or away from where it is too abundant. These structures may be called weirs, sluices, bays, tumbling bays, gates or floodgates and there seems to be no clear rule for choosing one term or another.

A weir may be simply a barrier across a river or stream. When built to feed a mill on the bank it may be not straight across, but at an angle. Surplus water simply runs over the weir. On the Wey Navigation the term weir may mean (a) a structure which diverts water from the natural river into an artificial channel (as here and at Bulldogs Weir and Old Bucks Weir) or (b) a structure which discharges surplus water from an artificial channel back into the natural river (as at Weybridge Town Lock). Where the overflow leads to a channel with steps which the water descends (presumably to break its force) this is often called a tumbling bay. Both these structures usually incorporate some means of adjusting the flow. The simplest form has the water flowing over the weir, the height of which can be altered by the addition or removal of planks across the top. Others have gaps in them into which are fitted paddles (known on the Wey as sluices or gates) which can be drawn up to allow water to pass through under them. Some of these are referred to as 'flood gates' (Walsham and Unstead) and one, at Shalford, as the 'Riff-Raffs'.

Harry Stevens, who handed over the Wey Navigation to the National Trust in 1964, had kept a Journal recording all the repairs and other work carried out since about 1900. He refers to the structure at Walsham as the weir, the part without sluices as the tumbling bay and the part with sluices as Walsham Flood Gates. Mention here of Worsfold Gates will only confuse matters: see section 17.

The horse bridge across Walsham Weir is also a public footpath leading east to Ripley. In the other direction the public footpath crosses the Navigation by the footbridge and continues up a track to Warren Lane. No public road reaches Walsham.

Walsham Lock

The lock at Walsham is one of two known as flood locks. In normal conditions the gates at each end of the lock are left open. Only when the water level in the river is exceptionally high are they closed in order to prevent too much entering the artificial channel and damaging the banks. In these conditions, with the weir sluices fully open the weir has to take all the flow. Few craft nowadays venture out when the river is in flood but, in the days of commercial use, barges and bargemen were not to be delayed. Moving a barge from river to cut or vice versa in flood time was

possible by using Walsham Lock like any other – opening the gates at one end, getting the barge into the lock, closing the gates behind, adjusting the level in the lock to equal the level ahead (it might only be an inch or so) and opening the other gates to proceed. This admitted only a small amount of water to the cut.

Walsham Lock retains the kind of sluice gear which is believed to have been used on the Wey from its earliest days. A board secured to the paddle extends up to and beyond the top of the lock gate. It has a series of holes in it and, by means of pegs through these and a crowbar type of lever, the paddle could be slowly raised. In doing this the bargeman sat astride the top beam of the lock gate and, whilst this may have been safe enough for someone accustomed to it, the days of pleasure boating by novices brought different thinking. This lock and the one at Worsfold Gates, being rarely used, have kept the old-style gear where all the rest have been converted to the safer rack-and-pinion with detachable windlass.

At the point of land upstream of the lock, where the artificial channel diverges from the river, there was once a post with a vertical roller attached to it. This guided the towrope and enabled the horse to pull the barge in the right direction to keep it clear of the weir. When the river is flowing swiftly craft are strongly drawn towards the weir and great care is needed when navigating here in such conditions. At least one pleasure boat has gone through these sluices and been badly damaged.

Lock-keepers and Lock Cottage

Not much is known about how the Wey Navigation was managed and maintained in the early years. However, the financial accounts from 1725 onwards have survived (with a few gaps) and they are a mine of information. They show, for example, that in 1725 there were only seven regular employees 'on the books'. These were John Cole, the accountant, Henry Newbury, the master carpenter, and wharfingers at Guildford, Dapdune (then outside the Borough boundary), Send Heath, Walsham and New Haw. There would have been labourers, probably included in the master carpenter's expenses, but there were no employees then described as lock-keepers.

William Skeet is recorded as wharfinger in 1725, sometimes at Walsham, sometimes at 'Pirford' and sometimes at both. Perhaps men appointed to places along the Navigation may have been responsible as wharfingers for supervising the loading, unloading and storage of goods and also for controlling water levels, inspecting the banks and other duties which would later be allocated to lock-keepers. Robert Skeet replaced William (his father?) in 1752 and was still there 20 years later. The financial accounts do not always specify where employees were based and it is some years before any are described as lock keepers.

The present house at Walsham dates from 1896 but there was one here in 1775 and maybe even earlier, possibly from 1653 when the Navigation opened for business. It seems unlikely, however, that with a wharf at nearby 'Pirford' there was also a wharf here.

River Bathing

Towards the end of the 19th century swimming became a popular activity and the use of the river for this purpose begins to be recorded in the Navigation archives. A boys' school in Ripley established a 'bathing station' on the river between Walsham and Newark. The site can still be identified on large scale OS maps as a rectangle of '0.33 acres' and on the ground by trees and traces of a hedge. The proprietor of this school advertised this facility in the school's brochure, with a photograph, and from 1911 to 1926 Mr T S Goodman paid the Navigation 2s 6d a year for permission to have a bathing stage there.

The effluent from at least 11 waste treatment plants (sewage works) discharges into the river. That from Ripley emerges not far upstream of this former bathing place and was at one time quite offensive.

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14 Newark

The Abbey Stream and other Watercourses

This area is a tangle of streams, ditches and drains. Going upstream the first to appear, on the non-towpath side, is the Abbey Stream, a part of the natural river which has meandered to the north of Newark Priory and collected the Bourne stream on its way. A little nearer to Newark Cut another watercourse joins, also from the non-towpath side. This appears to be a natural stream and is shown on the 1823 Jago map but has man-made water control features at its upper end (as does the Abbey Stream).

On the towpath side the path crosses by a horse bridge yet another watercourse, the tail race from Newark Mill.

Newark Priory

This 13th century Priory (not Abbey, in spite of the stream's name) was an establishment of Austin Canons. It was dissolved in 1538. The ruins are on private land.

Newark Lock

In the short stretch of artificial channel which by-passes the meanders of the natural river is Newark Lock. Originally of timber it has been rebuilt in concrete, bit by bit, over the last century or so. Here the towpath changes sides yet again so the bridge over the end of the lock had to be stout enough for the horse to cross.

Newark Mill

For artists and photographers this was probably the most visited site on the Navigation. The large, white-painted timber building was everyone's notion of what a watermill should look like. It had ceased to grind corn but it was a sad day in 1966 when it caught fire and burnt to the ground.

Newark was one of the three mills already established on the Wey below Guildford before the river was made navigable. The others were Stoke and Woking. The owners claimed preferential rights to the use of the water.

Barges needed the water held back (penned up) to give enough depth for their craft but millers did not want any restriction on the amount of water available to turn their wheels. Almost two centuries of dispute were settled by the Millers' Agreement of 1832 under which payments by the Navigation to the three mills ensured that barges were not delayed. In later years the mills depended upon the Navigation to bring much of the corn they ground but they still took payment for not impeding river traffic.

Mills established later, Bowers, Coxes Lock and Black Boy sawmill, were in a very different situation. The fall of water at these sites had been created by the making of the locks and the water drawn by the mills came from the Navigation. They had to pay for their power.

Newark Bridge

Up to 1906 the responsibility for the bridge here rested with the Navigation. In that year the bridge was taken over by Guildford Rural District Council to whom the Navigation paid £25 to be relieved of all further liability for it.

About 100 yards north of this bridge on the road towards Pyrford Church the waterway on the right contains the remains of an eel trap, once a common feature on the Wey. Nearby, on the other side of the road is a plaque commemorating the work carried out by the River Wey Floods Prevention Association in the 1920s and the River Wey Improvement Scheme in the 1930s.

Ockham Mill Stream

The towpath changes sides yet again at Newark Bridge and, a few yards upstream, the path crosses a culvert. This is the beginning of the narrow channel, over a mile long, which took water from the Wey to Ockham Mill.

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15 Papercourt

Upstream of Newark

From Newark Bridge to Papercourt Lock the Navigation appears to be natural river. However, along this stretch can be seen, on the non-towpath side, traces of a channel now silted up. This was once part of the course of the river and is one of a number of loops which are reminders of works carried out in the 1930s. The bend was cut through under the River Wey Improvement Scheme (RWIS) to help the flow in times of flood. The present route for a hundred yards or so here is, therefore, man-made. It hardly looks it.

Nor is it very obvious that the waterway is man-made for 200 yards or so downstream of Papercourt Lock. At that point the natural river returns to the Navigation having made a huge meander from Worsfold Gates skirting Old Woking. On its way the river has gathered treated effluent from the Woking sewage works, diluted with the flow from Broadmead Cut. The river and cut merge just before rejoining the Navigation.

Broadmead Cut

A wide and mostly straight artificial channel, the Broadmead Cut brings water some 1" miles from above Woking Mill. This major part of the RWIS provided a third route to drain the flat valley bottom. The twisting river and the straight Navigation could not, themselves, prevent serious flooding. Broadmead Cut can be seen following close below the towpath for much of the way between Papercourt and Send.

Until the coming of the railway Old Woking was Woking. It had a royal palace (of which little remains) and a mill long pre-dating the Navigation. The mill, rebuilt more than once, has ground corn and made paper. It was converted to Unwin's Printing Works in 1896.

There is some history of printing in Woking. In 1837 John B Bensley of Andover established a printing business near St Peter's Church but sold out in 1843 to Joseph Billing of London. The introduction to the Penguin edition of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall by Anne Bronte reveals that the first edition of the book, published by T C Newby in 1848, was printed here by Billing. It is just possible that the paper was brought and the printed books despatched by barge. However, the railway had come to 'Woking Common' ten years earlier so was probably entrusted with the carriage.

Later Billing moved the business to Guildford with a large works beside the Navigation. The firm specialised in printing bibles and missionary literature, including foreign language editions.

Papercourt Lock

Papercourt Lock was originally closer to the lock cottage. It was rebuilt in its present position and the tumbling bay made where the lock had been before. It is not known when or why this was done. The bridges over the tail of the lock and Broadmead Cut, wide enough to take farm vehicles, carry public footpaths between Ripley and Old Woking.

Papercourt Lock Cottage

Harry Stevens' Journal records: 'The old lock cottage was pulled down and a new cottage built on the higher ground near the towing path in 1922. The work was commenced the first week in August and the Lock-keeper moved in during the last week in October. During the time of rebuilding the Lock-keeper (Alfred Wye) and his wife and family lived on board the barge "Hope", which was moored just below the Bridge'.[22] leave for now There is a story, not confirmed, that when the site of the new cottage had been pegged out Alfred was not satisfied. Overnight he moved the pegs, no-one noticed, and the house was built where he wanted it. As a result he was henceforth able to see if anything was approaching along the Navigation without his having to go out of doors.

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16 Send Heath

Trunks

The Wey Navigation has 'trunks' of three kinds, though they are all culverts or pipes.

Where a man-made cut crossed an already existing ditch or field drain some way had to be found to make sure that the earlier feature continued to function. One way was to put the ditch in a pipe, usually of wood, under the Navigation (see Section 20: Drainage Trunk).

After the Wey Navigation had been made many landowners along the route complained that their fields were, in consequence, much wetter than they had been before. This may well have been so because, unlike nearly all canals, which are lined with puddled clay to stop water leaking away, the Wey was not lined. There was always plenty of water from the river. However, this did not deter the landowners along the Navigation from taking supplies from the cuts to water their fields when it suited them. They did this by putting a sluice gate in the bank or a pipe through it. These were known as flowing trunks and they gave rise to a fair amount of dispute.

The third type of trunk is one installed by the Navigation for its own purposes. It is a pipe or culvert, again often of wood, extending from the middle of the artificial cut below the bottom to the side and through the raised bank. It is closed with a plug like a bath and serves a similar purpose. When a reach has to be drained for maintenance or repair work these plugs can be removed and the water discharged into the ditch at the bottom of the bank.

There are, or were, three such trunks in the stretch between Papercourt and Worsfold Gates. Harry Stevens' Journal records their positions more precisely but this information is not given here for fear that someone might try to investigate and drain the cut. Such an enterprise is unlikely to succeed for the plugs are probably well hidden under mud and would be difficult to withdraw without first lowering the water level by closing Worsfold Gates and opening the sluices at Papercourt. This would probably be noticed and queried. The trunks were used for the final stage of draining and left open to ensure that any water which then got in by mischance drained away.

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Tanyard Bridge

Some 600 yards up the cut from Papercourt the Navigation is crossed by Tanyard Bridge. This carries the Ripley to Woking bridleway. There was once a tannery where there are now industrial buildings.

High Bridge

The footpath between Send and Old Woking crosses the Navigation by this unusual (and awkward) footbridge. On the Send side the footpath emerges into Wharf Lane.

Send (Heath) Wharf

From High Bridge for about 200 yards along the non-towpath side towards Guildford was one of the earliest of the Navigation's wharves. It extended back perhaps some 50 or 60 yards from the waterway and it was known variously as Send or Send Heath Wharf. The earliest surviving Navigation accounts, which are for 1724/58, show John Massey as wharfinger at Send Heath. He is paid £7 a year from 1724 and then £20 a year from 1729 to 1737.

Later the wharf transferred to a site on the other side of the Navigation, 300 or 400 yards nearer to Worsfold Gates, where it is now and is known as Cartbridge Wharf.

For almost 200 years Send was the nearest place on the Wey Navigation with a public road connecting it to Woking and other places. It was thus a place of some importance, serving a large area. After the railway came in 1838 and established a station on Woking Heath (close to the Basingstoke Canal built a few years before) Send ceased to have a wharfinger.

Cartbridge

There has probably been a bridge here since the Navigation began and it was the responsibility of the proprietors until 1914 when Guildford Rural District Council took it over and rebuilt and widened it, 'the Proprietors contributing £50 to be relieved of all liability'.23 This widening could be seen in the brickwork but another major widening and re-alignment of the late 1990s may have obscured this. A stone in the wall on the west side bears the date 1759, perhaps from the first rebuilding in brick.

The new bridge has a path under it, despite the towpath changing sides, and this enables walkers to cross the road safely when oncoming traffic is obscured by a bend.

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17 Worsfold Gates

Worsfold Lock

The gates of this lock, like those at Walsham, are closed only when the river is in flood, when too much water and too high a level in the cut would be a hazard. As at Walsham the old-style paddle gear survives. Only the very experienced should be navigating in flood conditions (and then only if they must) so there ought to be no risk of mishap with this primitive gear. (See Section 13: Walsham Lock).

Workshops

Alongside the lock is the workshop area which has been the hub of the Navigation's maintenance operations for 100 years and possibly for more than two centuries. Before then it seems that this work was carried out from Guildford and was, at times contracted out to a craftsman who was prepared to keep the Navigation in repair for a fixed annual sum.

The timber building at the side of the towpath is probably the oldest building on the site. It has been suggested that it could have been constructed as a shelter for the men employed in the digging of the Navigation in the 1650s but evidence for this has yet to be produced. Extensive restoration of the building in the 1980s, when it seemed in danger of collapsing, won an award. The timber frame and tiled roof got the attention they needed but some would have preferred less drastic changes to glazing and a rather less wholesale re-cladding.

The brick-walled slate-roofed building alongside the lock is said to date from the 1800s but no firm date for its construction has been determined.

The brick building with a corrugated asbestos roof towards the back of the workyard was built by the National Trust in 1977 for the making of lock gates. It replaced a dilapidated wooden one which had covered a sawpit. Regulations now require wood-working premises to have dust-extracting plant, too expensive for the infrequent use here to warrant. The Trust no longer makes its own lock gates.

The House

There is a story that the upper part of the house was originally a barn at Spooner's Nursery in Send. It is said it was brought here, elevated, and the ground floor built to support it. The building is one room thick. It may have replaced an earlier house but in this one lived, from 1885, master carpenter Walter Grove and his wife. Here they raised a family of eight boys and five girls. When the father died his son Norman took over as master carpenter and maintenance foreman and he retired in 1966. Many of Norman's brothers, uncles, sons and nephews worked on the Wey Navigation in various capacities. Collectively the Grove family spent more than 350 years in service on the river.[24]

Above Worsfold Lock, the non-navigable part of the natural river goes north towards Old Woking. Woking mill stands astride it, across the flow which once drove turbines, first installed in the 1880s for paper making and later for printing. Turbines are no longer used but the water still gushes forth from arches at the front of the building.[25]

Between Worsfold Gates and the mill are the large RWIS sluice gates of the 1930s which admit surplus water to the long, wide Broadmead Cut.

Portmore Bridge

A few yards south of Worsfold Gates lock at the side of the towpath are the remains of an abutment of a horse bridge which once crossed the river here, taking the towpath to the opposite bank. It was known as Portmore Bridge (and sometimes, apparently, as Pures bridge) and was removed in the 1930s. More about this in the next section.

The Boat-house

The timber building just beyond the site of Portmore Bridge where the towpath has a concrete 'apron' was Grove's Boat-house. Walter Grove, the master carpenter living at Worsfold Gates, started hiring out pleasure craft – punts, skiffs and canoes – around 1900. In 1906 he was paying the Navigation £2 10s a year rent for a boat-house at Worsfold Gates. His son Ewart, then aged seven, helped out with this enterprise when not at school. On returning from service in World War I Ewart took over the running of this business from his father, then in his sixties. From 1929 onwards, in addition to the boat-house rent, the Navigation charged in the region of £7 10s a year for permission to hire out pleasure boats. Ewart

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built a bungalow close by where he lived with his wife and son. It has now gone and in its place is now the house called, confusingly, 'The Boat House'. After Walter died in 1930 Ewart continued to make a living from hiring out boats until he retired in 1965. The business then closed.

18 Between Worsfold Gates and Triggs

Change of Course

This stretch of the Navigation has every appearance of being entirely natural river – wide and flowing. But part of it is man-made and not yet a century old. Indeed most of the towpath between Worsfold and Triggs dates from the 1930s.

Before the River Wey Improvement Scheme was implemented barges had to negotiate at least four sharp bends here. These are still clearly visible on a good modern map and, less clearly, on the ground. At that time the towpath was not where it is today but mostly on the other side of the river and was reached originally by fords (see the Jago map). Later a horse bridge, Portmore Bridge, was built at Worsfold and another, Chamberlands Bridge, some 400 or 500 yards upstream bringing the towpath back again. In the days of the fords the horses either waded across, through water deep enough to support a laden barge, or were perhaps sometimes put on a barge which was 'poled' across. (For similar problems see Section 21: Bowers – Horse bridges).

The cuts through the bends here are just two of the many works of the RWIS straightening the river on both the navigable and non-navigable stretches to enable the water to get away more quickly after heavy rain. Here, uniquely, this involved making a new towpath. Though the authorities had to acquire land for this on the right bank (your right when facing down river) it was simpler, and probably cheaper to do this. Portmore and Chamberlands Bridges were no longer needed and were removed, though the Portmore one did not go, it is said, until 1939.

Cutting through loops in the navigable river has left a nice legal question. Who owns the bed of the river and the towpath alongside it where vessels no longer pass? There is no evidence that they were acquired by the RWIS authorities or taken in exchange for the new straighter stretches which replaced them. So, silted up as they are, and not much use to anyone, they remain part of the Wey Navigation. (The bit of land isolated between the old channel and the new is not Navigation property). The real estate of the Wey Navigation was, by an Act of 1671, vested in trustees. The proprietors of the Navigation owned only the right to the profits from it. When the National Trust took over in 1964 they became the trustees responsible for 'the soil of the said river from Guildford to the Thames' – and for ensuring that it remained a Navigation in perpetuity as directed by the Act. It seems, therefore, that the Trust 'owns' these old watercourses and cannot legally dispose of them and that no-one else can acquire them. Which old watercourses are shown as Trust property on maps often appears inconsistent.

For example, on the Ordnance Survey Explorer map no.145, these two stretches of old watercourse are not shown as included within the boundaries of National Trust property (nor is the site near Newark Bridge). Strangely, in two similar situations nearer Guildford (Shagland Roll and Leggs Island) old watercourses are included within NT boundaries (so also are the bits of land there between the old and new channels, which is incorrect). It is understood that the Ordnance Survey obtain information on NT boundaries from the trust. The same map shows none of the Godalming Navigation as an NT property though it has been in the care of the trust since 1968.

In the stretch of 'new' towpath between Worsfold and Triggs is a length made of concrete with a steel handrail. This is a bridge where a field drain meets the river and is known as 'Seven Arches' although it has seven spans, not true arches. When the meadows up to and beyond Send Church are flooded this provides an overflow route. In 1934 during the first floods after completion of the RWIS works in this area the maintenance foreman, Norman Grove, living at Worsfold Gates, wrote to his employer to say what a great improvement the work had made. He sent photographs he had taken to show what he meant.

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19 Triggs

Wharf

A horse bridge carries the towpath over the natural river at Triggs Lock. In the early days there was a wharf of some sort here, possibly below the lock on the far side. The river is somewhat wider there and the track leads to Runtleywood Farm and the road to Sutton Green. On an occasion when the water level had been lowered some traces of piling along the bank here could be seen. There is no mention in the archives of any warehouse or store building so perhaps it was no more than a place for barges to load or unload.

In the Navigation Accounts for 1724/58, £1 15s is paid to John Andrews for one quarter's work at Triggs in 1730.[26] The next mention of the site is in 1746 when William Wisdom is paid £3 10s a quarter for looking after both Triggs and Bowers and this continues to 1758. Then there is a 6-year gap in the surviving records but William Wisdom is still there when they resume in 1764.[27] After another gap of three months he appears again but in the second quarter of 1768 the salary, still £3 10s, is paid to 'the executors of William Wisdom'.[28]

From this date on it is often difficult to be sure where the regular and salaried staff were stationed (the Accounts do not always specify) or whether they are wharfingers, lock-keepers or both. William Wisdom seems to have been replaced, briefly, by James Briggs and then by William Radnall from 1770 to 1785. Radnall may have been followed by Jesse Payne, James Briggs and James Williams. What there is good evidence for is that this was where the involvement of the Stevens family began. William Stevens I came here as lock-keeper in 1812 at a salary of £10 a quarter.[29]

Lock

Formerly of timber with turf sides, Triggs lock was rebuilt in concrete by stages. The tumbling bay alongside is a National Trust addition. Water reaches Triggs along the mile-and-a-half long channel from Broadoak where weirs divide the river flow. The sluice gates there – one a part of the Navigation, the other a RWIS addition of the 1930s – will regulate, to some extent, the amount of water coming down the cut. But the 'fine tuning' was formerly done at the lock using a battery of three sluices in each of the lower gates to pass any surplus. This unusual array is still to be seen but only two of the sluices, one in each gate, now work. The tumbling bay has replaced this old arrangement.

The Lock House

This isolated dwelling has attracted the attention of artists and photographers but, strangely, has not been given statutory protection. Other cottages of a similar age along the Navigation are Listed Buildings but not this one. No public road reaches here and perhaps this accounts for it having been missed. There is little doubt that it was built in 1769 when the following items appear in the Accounts:[30]

4 Feb. Wm Harris for bricks and lime £35 19s 6d

15 July Wm Harris for bricks for building bridges etc £72 14s 1d

It seems probable that one or other of these deliveries went to Triggs for there are also entries for the following:

15 July Benj. Reading building Triggs House etc £10 18s 3d

13 Nov. Peters, Glazier, for Triggs House £1 14s 1d

The two-room single storey extension at the rear was added in 1916.[31] It was never enjoyed by William Grove who was lock-keeper at Triggs from 1856, raised a family of nine children in this little cottage, and lived here until his death in 1915 at the age of 90. He did, however, have a blacksmith's forge – a shed in the garden or, possibly, the lean-to now standing against the north wall. He had served an apprenticeship as a blacksmith and during his long service made and repaired most if not all the Navigation's ironwork.

20 Between Triggs and Bowers

Send Reach

The view to the east from the towpath between Triggs and Broadoak is over the flood plain. Here, in five places, bends in the natural river were straightened in the 1930s as can be seen on maps marked with District boundaries. These follow the old course of the river.

Wareham's Bridge

A public footpath crosses here, westwards to Wareham's Farm and Sutton Green, south-eastwards towards Send Church. The path to the church can be very wet especially half way to the river where it crosses a field drain. Gum boots are recommended. Send Church is a long way from Send village. In the churchyard is the grave of the Navigation's master carpenter Walter Grove, his wife and three of their children.

Send Church Bridge

Presumably so named because the church is nearby. There is, however no path or river crossing between here and the church. This bridge just transfers the towpath to the other side of the cut. The track southwards from this bridge is a private one.

Sutton Place

The fields beyond the fence at the back of the towpath between Send Church Bridge and Broadoak are part of the Sutton Place estate. From the Navigation the house itself is largely hidden, half a mile away behind trees. Built between 1523 and 1525 by Sir Richard Weston it is intimately connected with the history of the Wey Navigation. A century later it was a grandson of the builder, another Sir Richard, who was the driving force behind the project to make the river navigable from Guildford to the Thames. As a Royalist in the days of the Commonwealth he had to enlist the help of others but it was from his idea and largely with his money that success was achieved.The Mansion, regarded as a fine example of Tudor architecture, was occupied by the Duke of Sutherland in the 1960s when the National Trust acquired the Navigation. Then it was bought by oil magnate Paul Getty and has since had another American owner. At the beginning of the 21st century it is in the hands of the Sutton Place Foundation.

Drainage Trunk

About half way between Send Church Bridge and the drive to Sutton Place is a trunk which takes water from the ditch at the back of the towpath and conveys it under the waterway into a drain on the other side. This crosses the field to the river. From the towpath the water can be heard dropping from the ditch into the culvert.

Pippers Point

This is the name given, on the 1823 Jago map, to the right-angle bend where the cut meets and then runs alongside the carriage drive to Sutton Place. Here another trunk takes a field drain under the drive and under the Navigation.

Broadoak Bridge

The right-angle bend here is the junction of cut and natural river. The Navigation builders made a weir to divert water into the cut and this, no doubt rebuilt a number of times, is the one to be seen here. However, there is a second weir, beyond but out of sight. This was made in the 1930s as part of the River Wey Improvement Scheme, and a separate channel was dug leading to it.

The sharp turn and the strong pull of the water going over the Navigation weir required special measures to help barges negotiate this bend. To guide the tow rope a pulley anchored in a concrete block and a vertical roller were installed at the corner and further rollers at the bridge. Some of these items are still in place in 2002 and have been conserved by the National Trust.

Broadoak Bridge is not Navigation property. It is now two bridges in line, one crossing the Navigation and the other the channel to the RWIS weir.

Cooper's Meadow

This is the name now given to the land between Broadoak and Bowers on the towpath side. Until recent years the towpath was unfenced here but then the current owner saw fit to plant trees, changing the nature of the landscape.

This is an area of some historical significance. Sir Richard Weston's interest in water engineering began with attempts to grow heavier and better crops on his land. It had been found that earlier and better grass could be got by flooding meadows in winter. This kept the soil, if not warm, at least less cold. Frost did not penetrate so deeply so the thaw and growth came sooner. A longer growing season brought better results. Sir Richard experimented and cut his 'flowing river' from the Wey at Stoke and through his estate. From this he could flood his riverside meadows. The line of this channel is still evident on the modern map.[32]

In recent years the gardens and grounds of Sutton Place have been open to the public one day each year in aid of charity. They are well worth visiting and part of the channel dug for Sir Richard in 1619, though now dry, can still be seen.

Just upstream of Broadoak Bridge is a penstock – a sluice gate in the bank. Could this have been for draining the water from the flooded Cooper's Meadow back into the river when winter frosts were over?

21 Bowers

Horse Bridges

Barge horses once crossed the river here, below Bowers Lock, by wading or swimming. There was no bridge for them. The Jago map marks a ford. There is a story that the barge-owners protested to the Navigation authorities that the immersion of their horses, hot and sweaty from towing barges, imperilled the health of the animals. A horse bridge was built but all that can be seen of it now, to the east of the lock and below the water line, are the remains of the brick abutments.

There is an entry in Harry Stevens' Journal, dated 1923, but this refers to a horse bridge at Bowers 'over backwater', presumably where the present bridge stands. It records the concrete abutments being put in and mentions that this bridge had been built (the date is not given) 'to replace the punt previously used to ferry the horses across'. The modern steel bridge is principally to enable towpath walkers to cross. The one horse known to have tried it disapproved. The metal-mesh decking and the springy structure made the animal reluctant to cross. The occasion, in 1989, was the 25th anniversary of the National Trust's acquisition of the Wey Navigation, celebrated with a journey by horse-drawn barge from Godalming to the Thames. It took four days and the 'cargo', changed each day, consisted of dignitaries and others from the area being traversed.

Bowers Cut, Lock and Mill

This short length of man-made waterway --- less than 600 yards ---cut three or four times that distance from the journey by boat between Guildford and Weybridge. In by-passing a great loop of meandering river it also created a head of water which could be used to power a mill. Old Bucks Weir across the river at the southern end directs water into the cut. The mill will almost certainly have had control arrangements to by-pass any water which was surplus to its requirements so the Navigation did not have to provide a tumbling bay or 3-sluice lock gates here.

There was a mill at Bowers that made paper. Then corn was ground and later linseed was crushed. Milling ceased in 1910 and, in 1927, the water channel to the mill was filled in. The building was demolished in 1945. The Duke of Sutherland, then at Sutton Place, built a laundry on the site to serve the mansion and it is this building which has now been named Bowers Mill. 'Duke s Laundry' as an address evidently lacked appeal. The neighbouring Bowers Mill House is, however, believed to be where the miller lived.

The structure at the side of the towpath just above the lock and known by various names, including Bowers Lock Weir, was constructed under the River Wey Improvement Scheme of the 1930s. The Stevens Journal records (p.156) that in 1927 the bridge over the 'thorough' to the mill was in a very bad state and the duke is said to have ordered it to be filled in. It would seem that only a few years later the RWIS opened it again, perhaps widened the channel and installed the flood gates now in place there.

Not far upstream of the lock is a large and old tree growing in the towpath, hollow but at the time of writing, still alive. Countless barge-horses must have brushed past it. Now it is walkers and cyclists to whom it presents a hazard.

Bridges

A little further upstream is the modern Clay Lane Bridge, made of concrete and rattling as vehicles cross it. This replacement for the nearby Bowers Bridge – iron and single track – appeared in the 1980s when the road works, officially the Burpham/Ladymead Extension (but known to some as the Guildford By-pass By-pass), were undertaken and became the new A3.

Bowers Bridge, sometimes called Old Burpham Bridge, wide enough for one vehicle only, had been one of the hazards of the road between Burpham and Jacobs Well. (The other was its liability to flood). When Clay Lane Bridge replaced it and the road was re-aligned the old bridge led nowhere, as it does now. The County Council remained responsible but the National Trust took it over. Not everyone agreed about its historic value. It dates from 1934, having been built by the County Council under the River Wey Improvement Scheme. The first bridges here, built by the Navigation, were entirely of timber, just wide enough to pass a cart above and a barge below.

22 Slyfield and Stoke

Riverside Park

Most of the land between the towpath and the A3 road along here is Guildford's Riverside Park. When the Borough Council created this leisure area it bridged the ditch and made a route for pedestrians between the Park and the towpath.

There is no 'right of entry' on to National Trust property and even when, as with the Navigation, the public is invited to visit there are only certain recognised access points. Except in a few places the towpath is not a public footpath. Use of it is conditional on compliance with the Trust's Byelaws. For example, the riding of motor cycles on the towpath is prohibited. The Bye-laws ban any activity which interferes with the enjoyment of the property by others.

Shagdon Roll

Some 600 yards upstream of Old Bucks Weir the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 145 shows the National Trust boundary encompassing a loop of the river which was once the course of the Navigation. It was known as Shagdon Roll and was cut through in the 1930s as part of the River Wey Improvement Scheme The short new channel became the course of the Navigation here but the old river bed and the towpath beside it were not surrendered. They remain part of the Navigation. The piece of land between the present Navigation channel and the former towpath was not transferred to the Navigation or, it appears, to anyone else, so it probably belongs to the County Council but it is doubtful if that is known at County Hall.

Water Treatment

A short distance downstream of Stoke Lock can be seen the outfall from Guildford's sewage works. Without dwelling on the subject it is perhaps not unreasonable to record that the River Wey carries to the Thames not only the rain which falls on West Surrey but also, after treatment, almost all the liquid waste from that area.

Stoke Lock and Cut

Just above the lock leading off to the north behind the lock cottage is a short channel. This is thought to be part of Sir Richard Weston's 'flowing river' dug in 1616--20 to flood his meadows. It certainly heads in the right direction but for a mile or so beyond all trace of it has disappeared. For years Guildford's rubbish was tipped here and there was a cattle market. Waste is still collected here and an industrial estate now occupies much of the site. It has been suggested that Stoke Cut from Stoke Bridge to the lock may have been the first stretch of 'flowing river' widened and deepened in the early 1650s to carry barges.

Stoke Lock is often said to have been built at the same time as the 'flowing river'. This may be so but, unless at that time substantial barges were already navigating the natural river here, nothing so expensive as a pound lock would have been needed. A dam or weir would have sufficed to divert water into Sir Richard's channel. A few removable paddles in this would make the structure into a flash lock enabling vessels to pass, albeit with some difficulty. This was the commonest type of lock at the time.

Stoke Lock Cottage

The present house was built in 1882.[33] There seems to have been an earlier cottage but no details of this have been found.

Stoke Mill

There were both corn and paper mills here before the river was made navigable but the present building dates from 1879. When it was a flour mill most if not all the corn arrived by barge and it was one of the Navigation's best customers. Tolls were based on tonnage and distance. Imported grain came from the London Docks up the Thames to Weybridge, then had to travel nearly the whole length of the Wey Navigation. It paid a high toll rate.

The mill had another link with the Stevens family. In the 1880s the miller's name was Bowyer. John Stevens (one of the sons of William Stevens & Sons, bargemasters) married, in 1881, Mary Frances Bowyer, the miller's daughter.

Since milling ceased here in 1957 the building has had a variety of uses including paint manufacture. It was re-furbished as offices for the Crown Prosecution Service but has now become the home of the local newspaper, the Surrey Advertiser.

Stoke Bridges

There are two bridges at Stoke. The road from Guildford to Woking first crosses the natural river leading to the mill and this bridge has long been a public responsibility. The road then crosses what was, in 1619, Sir Richard Weston's flowing river and, from 1653, the Wey Navigation. This bridge had to be provided by Sir Richard and subsequently maintained by the Navigation. Surrey County Council is now responsible for both these bridges. From the road it is not obvious that there are two, or indeed that there is even one.

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23 Bellfields and Woodbridge

Waterside Centre

Just upstream from the Rowbarge is a canoeists' headquarters where young people are taught to handle these craft. There is, inevitably, from time to time, some conflict among users of the Navigation. Interests clash. Most owners of powered craft – cabin cruisers and narrow boats – accept that on most inland waterways they must limit their speed to 4 knots for safety and to avoid damaging the banks. Part of the fun of canoeing is to see how fast you can go but the same speed limit applies though wash from a canoe is unlikely do much harm. However, the powerboat user, keeping to his sedate 4 knots is not amused when overtaken by a canoe (sometimes on the wrong side).

There are other conflicts of interest on the waterway. Boaters and anglers can t both use the same piece of water at the same time. Walkers and cyclists, competing for the use of a narrow towpath, are at risk – one or the other, or both – of ending up in the water. The National Trust has the tricky job of reconciling these divergent interests and, on the whole, succeeds.

Leggs Island

Adjoining the Waterside Centre is Leggs Island. This was created when the course of the river was altered under the River Wey Improvement Scheme of the 1930s with the making of a short straight cut. As mentioned elsewhere, only the 'new' cut and the old river bed and towpath belong to the Navigation. Who owns the rest of the island is uncertain, but you have to cross Navigation property to reach it.

Arthur Legg worked on the Wey barges of William Stevens & Sons from about 1901 to 1956 so he would have been a boy or a young man when he started. There was also a George Legg on these barges for a time. Fred Legg, Arthur's son, started in 1937 as mate to his father and was later a barge captain himself. In 1968 he was in charge of the barge Reliance which was being towed up the Thames with others, all fully laden with wheat from London Docks. Passing under Cannon Street railway bridge Reliance struck one of the piers, was holed and sank. Fred managed to get on to one of the other barges. Reliance was refloated and her cargo is said to have been made into dog biscuits. The vessel was disposed of but, more than

twenty years later, was recovered, brought back to Guildford and restored. She is now on display at Dapdune Wharf. Fred Legg gave up the river life (it would have given him up a year later when the Stevens' business closed down) and spent the rest of his working life in the employ of Guildford Borough Council.

Ladymead Farm

The area south of the river here was once a farm but for the last half-century has been little used except for grazing, often by the horses of gypsies. The river here runs roughly east-west but turns through 90 degrees to approach the centre of Guildford. This right-angle bend was once some 200 yards further upstream. The river has been moved twice. In 1838 the railway from London (Nine Elms) to Southampton reached Woking and in 1845 a branch was built to Guildford. The route for the last three miles into Guildford was to follow a straight north-south line but when this came to be laid it was found to run too close to the Wey. Rather than move the line away from the river it was decided to move the river away from the railway.

The course of the river then became that shown on the Ordnance Survey Explorer map (sheet 145, 1998 edition) bordered by purple lines to indicate that it is National Trust property. There has now been a further change made in the 1980s, as part of the A3 Ladymead - Burpham Diversion (the Guildford By-pass By-pass). This straight cut to the east of the earlier one is shown on the Explorer map not bordered in purple, although it does belong to the Trust. This second alteration to the river here was to enable the new road to run under the railway and cross over the river.

Woodbridge

No doubt originally a wooden bridge, and certainly a brick one later, the old bridges here were adequate for horse and cart. When traction engines and motor lorries appeared many bridges were replaced by county councils. This one was rebuilt by Surrey County Council in 1912/13. The proprietors of the Navigation would make a small contribution towards the cost on condition that they were spared all future responsibility. By this time waterways seldom had enough money to do the work themselves. The bridge which now carries traffic in the Portsmouth was built as part of the original Guildford By-pass in the 1930s. When this was dualled a second bridge was constructed to carry the traffic heading towards London.

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24 Woodbridge to Guildford Wharf

The Groats

When the Wey Navigation was being made, in 1653, the land on both sides of the river between Woodbridge and Guildford was owned by Thomas Dalmahoy. These were the years of the Commonwealth when the country was without a king. Royalist supporters were abroad, or at least keeping a low profile. Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 there were disputes about the Navigation. Its ownership was contested and there were claims for compensation for damage to land along the route said to have resulted from its construction. The Act of Parliament which had authorised the Navigation was now held to be invalid. As it had been passed by the Commonwealth Parliament and had not received royal assent it was regarded as a 'Pretended Act'.

Attempts to get a new Act through Parliament to regularise the situation were blocked by those trying to establish their rights – or seeking some advantage. Three of the interested parties withdrew their objections to a new Act, on certain conditions. The Navigation having little or no ready cash, they settled for payment out of future tolls. The agreement with Thomas Dalmahoy was that he and his successors should receive, in perpetuity, four pence for every ton or load carried on the stretch of river which ran through his property. This and other agreements were incorporated in a new Wey Navigation Act passed in 1671.

The Groats and the two other payments agreed at this time (the River Pence and the Two-and-a-Half-Pence) were a first charge on the receipts of the Navigation. They had to be paid before any profits were distributed. This made for quite complicated book-keeping and calculation at a time when ready-reckoner books were all the help available. The Groats could amount to more than £350 in a year. The last payment was nine shillings and sixpence in 1958.

Woodbridge Meadows

The towpath changes sides at Woodbridge and the grassed area upstream is known as Woodbridge Meadows. Now owned by Guildford Borough Council and maintained as a public open space, it is a welcome green oasis in an area of industry and commerce. The timber yard, for many years trading as Ingram Perkins, once had nearly all its supplies brought from the London Docks by barge. On the same bank but nearer to the town (just downstream of the railway bridge) stood Guildford Borough's last power station,[34] which was officially opened in May. The concrete walls of the cooling-water intake can still be seen – a reminder of the days when many local authorities generated electricity. The coal to raise steam to drive the plant may well have come by water.

The railway bridge is the site of another alteration to the course of the river. Comparison between this stretch on the 1823 Jago map and on current Ordnance Survey maps shows that a right-angle bend which the river once made here has now gone. The change dates from 1884 when the railway from Surbiton to Guildford via Cobham was constructed. It seems that the brick arch was not built over the river but to the west of it (possibly for ease of construction) and then a new channel cut through to divert the river under the arch. The Navigation would presumably have had no objection to the straightening of the river but there was some concern that silting up might result. William Stevens III was, by then, well on the way to acquiring control of the Wey Navigation and it is his name which appears on the agreement negotiated with the London & South Western Railway Company. For £50 he agreed to the diversion of the river on condition that the company dredged out any consequent silting.

Dapdune Wharf

From its earliest days the Navigation rented its wharves at both Guildford and at Dapdune (which was then outside the town, in the parish of Stoke). While the Town Wharf handled a wide variety of goods, Dapdune dealt primarily with timber and gunpowder.

Timber needed a lot of space. Shipbuilding – both naval and trading ships – required vast amounts of wood and the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666 increased the demand still further. Trunks and branches of trees from the countryside around and beyond Guildford would be hauled along the poor roads of those times only during the dry summer months. Timber then arrived faster than it could be despatched so storage space was needed. At times the Navigation had to rent extra land for this purpose.

Guildford did not want gunpowder (from Chilworth, 3 miles to the southeast) carted through the town or stored overnight at the Town Wharf. Before the river was made navigable beyond Guildford, carts skirting north of the town brought gunpowder to Dapdune to be loaded onto barges there.

A glimpse of the Wey Navigation in the 1720s is provided by a notebook kept by Thomas Coram, the philanthropist who established the London Foundling Hospital. His business was in shipping and briefly in gunpowder at Chilworth. He had a barge built for this trade and his journeys between London and Dapdune in 1729 were sometimes by water.[35]

The long timber shed at the water's edge at Dapdune is where, from 1910, barges for William Stevens & Sons were assembled and from which they were then launched sideways. Up to 1910 barges built elsewhere had been used. The large shed, end-on to the river was where the timbers for barges were marked out and cut. Next to this is the Carbide Store, specially built in 1916 to house safely this chemical which, on contact with water, produces acetylene gas. Now it is known mainly for its use with oxygen for welding but acetylene was once widely used for lighting and heating in homes not served by town gas networks.

One of the two cottages was built in 1894 to house the Edwards family as an inducement to them to move from Wiltshire where the father was employed as a barge builder. They came to repair the Stevens' barges and were later to build new ones for them. The other cottage is much older, is a listed building but much modified (after listing) the door moved from front to end and dormer windows inserted.

Between these two cottages, behind the double doors, is the paint store where the barge builders mixed and kept their paint. It is said this was once used as a gunpowder store.

At the Guildford end of the wharf is a creek where barges needing repairs below the waterline were taken to be hauled out of the water sideways by means of the two capstans which are still in place. Beyond this is the open-sided shed where other work on barges, including painting, could be done in all weathers.

The house on the wharf, Dapdune Lea, was built by the Stevens family in 1894 for Mary Jane, youngest sister of William Stevens II and a spinster. Brother John also came to live here with his sister, after his wife died. He was a great cricketer and is said to have added the balcony over the front porch to give himself a grandstand view of the matches at the ground beyond. This was Mary's home for many years and is now the Navigation offices.

Dapdune Wharf Heritage Centre, displaying something of the story of the Wey Navigations, has been open to the public three days a week during the summer months since 1996.

Between the Wharves

The river between Dapdune Wharf and Guildford Wharf has long been bordered with industrial and commercial buildings – timber yards, bus depots, furniture depositories and also, in the past, a printing firm and the town gas works. This is where Guildford, it has been said, 'turned its back on its river'.

Onslow Bridge has a plaque (to be seen from the roadway) commemorating its opening in 1882 by Lady Onslow. Before that date the Town Bridge had been the only crossing for vehicles between Woodbridge and Shalford. Lord Onslow paid for the bridge to be built in order, so it is said, to encourage the development of the town to the west of the river **where he owned land.**

Guildford Wharf

So we come at last to the terminus of the Wey Navigation. Also known as the Meal Wharf, the site was rented, not owned, by the Navigation. The Stevens family bought it in 1873.[36] On its river frontage was the treadwheel crane (not a treadmill as it is sometimes described).39 The story goes that, on occasions, customers in The Bear public house in Friary Street, opposite the wharf gate, were recruited to walk back and forth in the wooden drum to work the crane. The wharf was demolished in 1968, together with other riverside property, to make way

for a new circulatory system – roads. The crane was dismantled and stored while the road works were carried out and then it was re-erected within a yard or two of its former position. It is a Scheduled Monument and is also a listed building. Its date is unknown but cranes such as this were used from the Middle Ages onwards.[37]

This, then, is where Guildford Wharf was from 1653 to 1968. The site had a frontage to the river of about 120 feet and extended back about 230 feet to Friary Street, then the main east-west road through Guildford and now a pedestrian precinct. The wharf cottage fronting on to Friary Street had gates alongside wide enough for carts carrying goods to and from the wharf. There were several buildings on the wharf, notably the meal-house and there were pens for bulky goods such as coal which could be stored in the open. No trace of the wharf is to be seen. It all lies beneath buildings, concrete and tarmac.

Guildford Wharf was at the heart of the Wey Navigation. There were 'Navigation Trustees' in their country houses and mansions. There were 'the Proprietors' – for a century and a half the Earls of Portmore and the Langton family. The former lived in Weybridge and London, the latter in Lincolnshire and London. They had attorneys and lawyers to look after their interests but they, too, were based in the capital.

Out in Surrey, where the action was, there had to be someone responsible for the day-to-day practical affairs of the enterprise. This person is variously called the Accountant, Agent, Manager, Receiver of the Profits (which then meant the tolls, i.e. the income) or Wharfinger. By whatever title known and whatever the precise duties (no job description has been found) he was the proprietors' man on the spot and usually based in Guildford.

The first of the Stevens family to be associated with the Navigation, William Stevens I, began as a lock-keeper at Triggs in 1812, moved to Thames Lock in 1820 and became wharfinger at Guildford in 1823. He was soon more than just a wharfinger. In 1840 his son, William Stevens II, began to run barges and later founded William Stevens & Sons, barge owners. The Navigation and the barge business were both run from the tiny office on Guildford Wharf.

In 1964 Harry Stevens, then nearly 77 years old, handed over the Wey Navigation to the National Trust. He continued, however, to run his barge business which by then was almost exclusively engaged in bringing wheat from the London Docks to Coxes Lock Mill. He shared the office on Guildford wharf with the Trust' Navigation manager. This proved a less than satisfactory arrangement. In 1968 the river overflowed its banks and the wharf was flooded. Harry and the manager had to move to Dapdune Lea where the offices have been ever since. Some of the records were damaged by water and some may have been lost. A few years later Guildford Wharf disappeared under new developments.

The wharf marked the limit of the navigable river from 1653 until 1760 when the Godalming Navigation was constructed. The towpath – on the far side from the wharf – never did quite reach as far. It ended about 50 yards short of the wharf. There were probably buildings on that ;-['bank which prevented its continuing further. In the 19th century a brewery occupied the site down to the water's edge and there may well have been a brewery there in 1653.

Horses could tow barges upstream to within one or two hundred yards of the wharf. With enough momentum, and not too strong a current running, a barge might then drift the rest of the way. Perhaps a pole was use to push the last few yards. Meanwhile the horses (usually two) were led away from the river up a path known as Napoleon's Passage. This led to the Napoleon public house in Farnham Road. Turning left, the horses would proceed to Lower High Street, across Town Bridge, and left into Friary Street to their stables on the wharf.

THE GODALMING NAVIGATION – AN OUTLINE HISTORY

The 18th Century

The Wey Navigation pre-dates the 'canal age'. The Godalming Navigation is a part of it.

The Godalming Navigation was an extension of the Wey Navigation only in the sense that it made it possible to navigate a further four miles upstream. It was not an extension of the Wey Navigation business but an entirely separate concern.

Noting the advantages brought to Guildford by water transport, some local gentry and others obtained an enabling Act in 1760, raised funds, and made the four miles up to Godalming navigable. Run by Commissioners (not all of whom had subscribed to the project) it opened in 1764 and was not, at first, a financial success. The promised dividends of 5% were paid irregularly.

The 19th Century

Then, in 1816, the Wey & Arun Junction canal opened, connecting Stonebridge on the Godalming Navigation with the navigable part of the River Arun in Sussex. This through route from London to the South Coast brought more traffic and the Godalming Navigation was able to pay dividends for most of the next 20 years. Then railways took the trade and in 1868 the Wey & Arun closed. For the next 40 years the Godalming paid no dividends at all, commercial traffic being almost non-existent.

The 20th Century

The last 60 years of the Navigation under the Commissioners saw some income from pleasure boating but more from renting out part of Stonebridge Wharf and almost all of Godalming Wharf. At last they were able to pay the 5% dividend regularly – with hardly a barge in sight.

The National Trust having taken the Wey Navigation into its care, the Godalming's Commissioners saw some merit in transferring their Navigation too. In 1967 the Borough of Guildford obtained an Act of Parliament which, among other matters, empowered it to take the Navigation from the Commissioners and pass it over to the Trust. The formalities took place in 1968.

Much of what follows has been gleaned from the Godalming Navigation archives held at the Surrey History Centre. In the records which have survived financial particulars and details of voyages and cargoes feature less than they do in the Wey archives. The minutes of the meetings of the Commissioners, however, are complete. From 1760 to 1968 they present a good general picture and some fascinating glimpses of particular matters. Both archives are available to anyone who wishes to see them.

GODALMING NAVIGATION GUIDE

25 Guildford Town

The First Few Yards

A barge has arrived at Guildford Wharf from London and has discharged part of its load. The remainder of the cargo is for Godalming. How does the vessel manage to get away from the wharf? The Wey Navigation towpath ended some way back and the Godalming one starts, where the horses are waiting, upstream beyond Town Bridge.

The barge could, perhaps, be 'poled' up to and through the bridge but with difficulty if it is still heavily laden or the current is strong. Barge crews solved the problem by taking a line with a piece of wood tied to one end to a point upstream of the bridge. The current carried this end down to the wharf, the towrope was attached, hauled upstream and hitched to the waiting horses. The journey continued.

High Street Shop

At the bottom of Guildford High Street the last shop on the right before the Town Bridge was, for many years, a business much concerned with the river. The earliest known occupier of 82 High Street is James Apark junior who, in 1839, was selling fishing tackle, hiring out boats and making ginger beer. This is revealed in his advertisement in the Guildford Almanack Directory for that year. In 1850 his business had extended to the sale of cigars and the stuffing of birds and animals.

Mr T Denty took over in 1866 and he was followed in 1878 by Mr Henry Martin who also ran another shop. This was beyond the bridge and was listed as a confectioner's, pastrycook's, baker's and grocer's. It seems that these goods could be obtained at either shop and Martin not only hired out boats but also bought, repaired and sold them. In 1899 Harry How set up a rival boat-hire business a little way downstream by the newly-built Onslow Bridge. A couple of years later Henry Martin ceased trading and Harry How took over his High Street premises, operating from both sites. One of his advertisements shows quite extensive premises and offers the steam launch Medusa for hire.

In 1914 C F Leroy replaced Harry How at both High Street and at Onslow Bridge (Bridge Street). Boating from the centre of Guildford seems to have ended about 1922 but was developing a short distance upstream where the Leroy name is still to be seen.

Town Bridge

The first major obstacle to the creation of the Godalming Navigation was the medieval bridge, still intact in 1760. Its arches were too small and the river too shallow to allow large barges to pass through.

There was also, on the upstream side of the bridge, a ford giving an alternative crossing for horse-drawn carts. Dredge this to let barges pass upstream and you no longer have a ford. Consequently, vehicle traffic over the bridge is reduced to single line working.

The Commissioners somehow enlarged the centre arch, widened the carriageway of the bridge and dredged the river (including, presumably, the ford).

Above the bridge, where the department store now stands, was John Moon's timber yard. In 1900 the river flooded, timber floated out of the yard and piled up against the bridge. The pressure of the flood-water was so great that the bridge was badly damaged. The Commissioners were called upon to repair it but they did not have anywhere near sufficient funds. Eventually the County Council paid for the work (the Commissioners contributing £250) and took responsibility for the bridge thereafter. This cast iron bridge served until 1985 when it was replaced with a steel and concrete structure. Some parts of the earlier bridge were re-used so that it appears much the same. Currently for pedestrian use only, Town Bridge is now, perhaps, just a symbol of Guildford.

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26 Millmead and Millbrook

Millmead is the road leading from the Town Bridge to the car park similarly named on the west bank of the river. On a small strip of grass are Alice, her sister and the White Rabbit in bronze, a reminder that the creator of Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, spent much of his time at his house in Guildford.

Millbrook – a road and a car park – are both creations of the 1960s, part of a scheme to relieve traffic congestion in Guildford. It is now difficult to imagine all Horsham traffic using the narrow Quarry Street, but it once had little choice. Few people can recall when the nearest one could get to the west side of the river here was down Mill Lane and along the footpath over the tail of Town Lock, or, at the far end of Quarry Street, by a passage which led through a row of cottages to Leroy's boat-house.

The Town Mill

A mill is recorded on this particular site from 1295 at least. Parts of the present building date from 1770 and other parts from 1827 and 1852. Corn milling and cloth fulling have been carried out here and from the early 18th century the mill also pumped water to a reservoir to supply the town. It is now a studio theatre.

The Iron Foundry

The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre was built on the site formerly occupied by the Guildford Iron Foundry. This had been set up in 1794 by E Filmer and a partner and made a wide range of iron castings. As Filmer & Mason from 1854 the works produced, among other items, cast-iron grave markers. Many of these are still to be seen in cemeteries and churchyards in Surrey and elsewhere. Those nearest to the Wey and Godalming Navigations are those in the cemetery at Godalming (Nightingale Road/ Deanery Road) and the churchyard at Pyrford. Others in West Surrey can be found at Bramley cemetery and churchyards at Thursley, Shackleford, Shamley Green, Merrow and Compton. Busbridge churchyard has seven Filmer & Mason markers. There were several changes of name and occupancy at the foundry over the years. The buildings were demolished in 1941.

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Millmead Cut and Lock

The ancient leat which supplied the Town Mill, and the tumbling bay to divert surplus water, were already there when work began on making the Godalming Navigation. A lock with a short channel at each end of it was all that was needed here The barge horses once had their own horse bridge at the northern end of the cut crossing the backwater to Millmead.[38]

Millmead Lock is the start of the Wey South Path which follows the course of the Godalming Navigation, the Wey & Arun Canal and the Arun Navigation to Amberley in Sussex.

The Tumbling Bay

This feature predates the Godalming Navigation, being part of the system for feeding water power to the Town Mill. Its turbulent overflow provides a local 'white-water' training area for canoeists.

Clay Pipes

Nearby, on the opposite bank to the tumbling bay, clay tobacco pipes were once made. Pieces and some complete pipes have been recovered in the course of dredging and bank works. Guildford was one of the centres of manufacture of these items and at least one consignment of china clay appears in the records of cargoes from the Thames, destined for 'above Guildford', which could mean here.

Pleasure Boating

Hiring out boats began, at this part of the river, from the Jolly Farmer Inn. At the end of the 19th century the pub, then a plain, grey building, was the next place upstream from Town Bridge with suitable access to the river. The earliest known boating business here was run by the brothers Charles and Alfred Leroy. Born in Belgium they took over as licensees of the Jolly Farmer in 1893 and put up the first of their boat-houses between the river and the pub. Sharing the site at that time was The Guildford Swimming and Life-Saving Society.

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In 1903 Alfred left to set up on his own in the boat-hire business up-river at Farncombe, now Farncombe Boat-house. Then, in 1912, Allen's Boat-house and Tea Rooms was established a few yards downstream of the Jolly Farmer with an elegant, two-storey building. Charles Leroy quickly responded with a similar building alongside – Leroy's Boat-house and Tea Gardens. Both buildings are still to be seen at the water's edge but are now private houses.

In 1913 the Jolly Farmer was re-built in a more welcoming style. It has changed little since then. Charles Leroy disappears from the scene during the World War I and Mrs Leroy is the licensee for one year only, in 1919. Then there is a new publican at the Jolly Farmer – Mr W K Crane – and the boat business becomes Leroys Ltd. This company had occupied Harry How's old site near Onslow Bridge since 1915 (and continued to do so up to 1942). This may have been just the company office or a place to store boats. Who owned Leroys Ltd has not been ascertained but it may have been Mr Crane with the business managed by Mr P J Cordery, who had also been a publican and involved with boating.

In World War II the Allen business closed down. In 1943 the Leroy business was bought by Captain Charlie Hirst who then ran it for nearly 20 years. He had a 30-passenger launch built, named it Pilgrim, and ran regular river trips. The vessel was almost silent, being electrically propelled and powered by a set of rechargeable batteries.

At the end of the war Mr Cordery bought the moribund Allen business for his sons returning from the armed forces. This operated for a few years from a site a little upstream from the original boat-house but in 1961 the business closed when the land was acquired by Guildford Corporation and became part of Millbrook car park.

In 1961 Captain Hirst retired, selling out to Leslie and Marion Smailes. They re-located Leroys downstream from the Jolly Farmer landing stage to the site where Guildford Boat-house now stands. Indeed it was in their time that the present boat-house, with living accommodation above, was built. They retired in 1974 and the business was transferred to the Chase and Hall families. The former run it today. Rowing boats are still to be hired by the hour today but it is powered narrow boats, by the week, a trip boat and a restaurant boat which keep the business 'afloat'. The trip boat is named Harry Stevens in memory of the

man who spent a lifetime looking after the waterway. The restaurant boat, Alfred Leroy, is less aptly named as, although the Leroy name was synonymous with boating in Guildford for nearly 80 years, Alfred has not been a part of that scene for almost a century.

27 Guildford Meads

Footbridge

Between the footbridge across the tail of Millmead Lock and the ferry at St Catherine's there was, until 1909, no way across the river (except by boat or by swimming). A Mr Angell put forward the idea of making a footbridge across, just upstream of the Jolly Farmer Inn. He and his friends raised funds, built a handsome oak bridge, and presented it to the town. It provided another way to reach the towpath which was then, as now, a popular place for a stroll. Mr. Angell's bridge has gone, replaced in 1933 by a concrete one. Thankfully this is of slim design but perhaps not quite so appropriate to the setting as the old bridge.[39]

Towrope Roller

At the right-angle bend in the river here is one of the posts supporting a vertical roller needed to guide the towrope so that the pull of the horses continued to be exerted in the desired direction.

Davis' Wharf and Guildford Rowing Club

On the bank opposite this roller was once Davis' Wharf where barges were loaded with chalk from the Great Quarry behind it. Now the site is occupied by Guildford Rowing Club's boat-house. A closer view from Shalford Road reveals two lengths of wall built mainly of chalk but with brick along the top and at the ends. These look as if they were part of the boundary of the wharf.

The Rowing Club was formed in about 1880 and engages in serious rowing mostly on the fairly wide and straight stretch upstream from its boat-house. In its early years the club was one of the major social organisations in the town. There is, at the Surrey History Centre, a scrapbook containing memorabilia of annual general meetings, dinners and dances as well as programmes of races and sports.[40]

River Wey Improvement Scheme Sluice

About 60 yards upstream a sluice, set in the towpath, discharges from the Navigation into a backwater. This structure was installed as part of the River Wey Improvement Scheme (RWIS) of the 1930s to provide, in time of flood, an extra route for surplus water when the Millmead tumbling bay could not pass enough.

There is another watercourse here – a hidden one. The land on the other side of the river is low lying and is drained by a ditch leading to a tunnel or trunk under the river at this point. This discharges into the backwater on the right a few yards below the sluice.

Penstocks

The towpath upstream from Mr Angell's bridge is a public footpath for about 300 yards when it turns away from the river and leads to Flower Walk and the Portsmouth Road. Some 20 yards upstream of this point there is a 'penstock' in the bank opposite. There is another about 150 yards further on. In the past these were opened in the winter when frost was expected. The land beyond was thus flooded to make a vast skating rink. Guildford Corporation discontinued the practice some years ago anxious, so it is said, to avoid being held responsible for any possible accident or injury.

Ferry and Footbridge

Three hundred yards or so upstream of the second penstock Ferry Lane, which is just a path at its river end, leads off to the Portsmouth Road. On the far side of the river is a path to Shalford Road. These two paths, part of the so-called 'Pilgrims' Way', were linked by a ferry. When this ceased to operate many years ago anyone wishing to follow this route was obliged to make the long diversion from here into Guildford and out again. In 1983 Surrey County Council erected the footbridge nearby which has now restored the link and takes the North Downs Way long-distance footpath across the river.

St Catherine's

Immediately upstream of the footbridge is the sandy slope sometimes said to be the site of the 'golden ford' which probably gave Guildford its name. On the top of this hill are the ruins of the 14th century St Catherine's Chapel, not visible from the towpath but requiring a walk up Ferry Lane or a backward glance from further up the Navigation.

28 St Catherine's Cut

Osier Bed

Between St Catherine's Hill and the northern end of St Catherine's Cut the natural river makes a very tight turn – almost 180 degrees – requiring a tow-rope roller halfway round the bend. The swampy land bounded by this bend was formerly an osier bed supplying the raw material for the once-thriving trade of basket-making.

Backwater

Some 60 yards upstream of the roller, St Catherine's Cut begins. The natural river, here not part of the Navigation, nevertheless has an important function to perform. Not far along it the Tillingbourne enters, bringing water from as far away as Leith Hill. Further on once stood Shalford House, once the home of the Godwin-Austen family. The house has been demolished and in its place is an extraction plant was built, taking vast quantities of water from the river for the public supply. There are many meanders of the natural river here by-passed when St Catherine's Cut was made by the Godalming Navigation Commissioners.

St Catherine's Lock

St Catherine's Cut, about 700 yards long and almost straight, made a much shorter and deeper channel for barges. The lock, half way along, was originally constructed of timber but was rebuilt in concrete in 1909.[41] The fall of water through this lock is small – about 3 feet – and initially there was no provision to by-pass surplus water. The sluice, the channel around the lock and the cart bridge over it are alterations made under the RWIS programme.

St Catherine's Lock Cottage and the Riff-Raffs

St Catherine's is the only one of their four locks for which the Commissioners of the Godalming Navigation provided a lock-keeper and a cottage. The cottage is some 100 yards from the lock at the Godalming end of the cut, presumably because control of the water level which was done there was the more important duty. An earlier cottage,44 which had been built of timber in 1813,[42] was, in 1908, found to be defective and not worth repairing.[43] Tenders for construction of a replacement were sought, the lowest – £239 – was accepted, and this is the cottage standing today. The nearest road is quite some way off.

The 'Riff-Raffs', the curious name for this area and for the regulating or flood gates here (two more names for sluices) has been said to originate from the derogatory description applied to people who once lived in the vicinity. Being part of the original scheme, the Riff-Raffs are the property and responsibility of the Navigation. The structure has been repaired or rebuilt from time to time. A major reconstruction was undertaken in 1968 just after the National Trust took over. Funds being scarce at that time, help was sought from and given by the Army.

Railways

The railway a few yards to the west of the Navigation at the Guildford end of St Catherine's Cut is the main London to Portsmouth line. This stretch from Guildford to Godalming was opened by the London and South Western Railway in 1849.[44] Just over a mile south of Guildford Station and not 200 yards west of St Catherine's is Shalford Junction. From there to Shalford Station was the last section of the Reading, Guildford & Reigate Company's line to be opened, once the LSWR line was completed, also in 1849. The embankment can be seen curving towards the river. Crossing the Wey by the bridge just south of the Riff-Raffs, trains head for Shalford, Chilworth, Gomshall, Dorking, Betchworth, Reigate and Redhill. The Commissioners' Minutes for 30 August 1848 record their agreement to accept £250 from this railway company to allow the building of a bridge over the Navigation.[45] The original bridge was built of wood.

Just upstream of this bridge is a gantry carrying a high -pressure water main. A little further on there are embankments which approach the river on either side but with no bridge connecting them. These embankments were part of a plan by the South Eastern Railway which, in 1852, had taken over the Redhill, Guildford and Reading line, to make a route from London to Portsmouth via Redhill, Shalford and Godalming.[46] The Shalford–Godalming section was never completed and no permanent way was ever laid on the embankments but there was once a bridge. The Navigation Commissioners received £150 compensation when this, which they called 'the Portsmouth Railway Viaduct', was completed in 1859. A stump of a substantial piece of squared timber can be found embedded in the towpath and may have been part of it.

The embankment to the west together with a length of the defunct Guildford to Horsham line, acquired by the National Trust in the 1980s, forms 'The Railway Line Walk'. This provides a wildlife habitat and an interesting alternative route for the towpath walker. It will be met again at the other end, near the Gun's Mouth in section 30.

Pillbox

In 1940, during World War II, this part of the Wey was to have been one of the lines of defence in the event of invasion. A pillbox, part of this line, stands on the embankment at the top of the steps to the Railway Line Walk.

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29 Broadford and Stonebridge

Island

The Ordnance Survey map shows, just upstream of 'the railway that never was', what appears to be a small island alongside the Navigation. The Navigation here, though it looks like a natural river is, for about 100 yards, a man-made cut. The Commissioners bought a small piece of land through which to make a new channel and eliminate two sharp bends. They then sold off the part they did not need – the 'island'. What use it was to anyone is hard to imagine and who now owns the old river bed – now just a swamp – is uncertain.

Broadford

When the Godalming Navigation was made this was, indeed, a ford. The story of the transition from ford to bridge is told in 34 entries in the minutes of the Commissioners over 129 years.

It begins with them calling for an estimate for a bridge in 1764, the year the Navigation opened, but nothing happened. Two years later a local landowner, Richard Sparkes, complained about the difficulty of passing through the ford. Presumably it had been dredged to a depth which let barges through. After Sparkes had complained eight times the commissioners told him that the road in question was not a common highway and so they were not obliged to do anything. However, as they wanted to be good neighbours, 'if Mr Sparkes would give timely notice' they would lower the water.

They did some work at the ford, making it safe. Just what this was is not clear but when it was finished Mr Sparkes came to see what they had done, approved of it and 'gave the men a shilling for drink'. Two years later he said the water was too deep and three years after that he was complaining again.

Eighteen years then went by without Broadford once appearing in the minutes of the meetings of the Commissioners. Then, in 1792, there was a call for a bridge and eventually, in 1806, the Commissioners accepted that one was needed and agreed to share the cost (with whom was not stated).

So at last a bridge was built. It cannot have been a very substantial structure for in 1809 it was closed for repairs. It then lasted until 1888 when a new one was needed. There was now a County Council and William Stevens (the second of the three Williams), who was by then the manager for the Commissioners, wrote to the County Clerk describing the bridge as being 'in a ruinous condition'. Notices on the bridge declared it 'unsafe for carriages'. The County wanted a contribution of £50 from the Commissioners. The Commissioners wanted an assurance that their liability would be at an end. The bridge, finished in 1893, is the one in use today, carrying the A248.

Stonebridge Wharf

In 1763 the Commissioners negotiated with Mr Robert Austen (then a name of considerable note in the district) to rent land upstream of Broadford for a wharf. He agreed to let them have some at 20s per annum an acre, payable half-yearly, for 999 years. The minute recording this does not state the area leased and it was not until 1776 that 'the field at Stonebridge' was measured and found to contain '4 acres 2 quarters 13 rods'. The following year the wharfinger at Stonebridge said that the adjoining field, also owned by the Austens, was needed for additional wharf space but it does not seem to have been acquired. Forty years later, in 1829, when a question about rents arose, the Commissioners were paying £4 0s 6d a year for Stonebridge, which is consistent with an area of over 4" acres.

The bridge from which the wharf takes its name, no longer of stone, is not across the Wey but carries the Horsham Road over a tributary stream. This stream and the Wey & Arun Canal join the Wey at the site known as the Gun's Mouth.

The minutes for 17 November 1925 state:

> The manager [William Stevens III] reported that in 1921 he was authorised by the Commissioners to offer £25 to the Trustees of the Godwin-Austen Estate to purchase the freehold of Stonebridge Wharf. The Trustees now intimated that they would accept this offer. It was agreed to purchase.[47]

They got a bargain. In 1929 part of the wharf was leased to Vulcanised Fibre Ltd, for 21 years at £50 per annum. This firm made a wide range of items from chemically treated paper. The most famous of these were overload fuel tanks for Spitfires. These enabled the machines to stay airborne longer and were jettisoned when empty. Thousands of them were made.[48] The works, known as Broadford Mills, closed down in 1983 and the National Trust promptly sold the site to developers for £430,000. Not everyone thinks the conspicuous business park which replaced the low factory buildings (albeit with chimney) appropriate to this rural location. The Trust negotiated the provision of some landscaping, but a few trees, many already dead, will not make these buildings merge into their setting.

In establishing a wharf here the Godalming Navigation no doubt had in mind the gunpowder traffic between the works at Chilworth, not three miles away, and its magazine on the Thames below London, at Barking Creek. Loading at Stonebridge would be more convenient and safer than carrying by road around Guildford to Dapdune Wharf as required hitherto.

A wharfinger was employed here and a gunpowder store (on staddle stones to 'keep the powder dry') was erected. This, much restored, still stands. The cottage (or pair of cottages – the building has been divided and then made into one dwelling again a number of times) is the one provided for the wharfinger by the Commissioners. It is not certain when the cottage was built. The Commissioners had a committee looking into the matter and the layout of the wharf in 1763 but there is also a proposal and an estimate for building a house and store at Stonebridge in 1790.

There is another pair of cottages facing the track from the Horsham Road but these are not part of the wharf and not National Trust property. How they come to be here has not been discovered. They are beyond the bounds of the original Stonebridge Wharf but they do adjoin the field bordering the Gun's Mouth. This field was at one time rented by the Wey & Arun Canal company as its wharf so they may well have been erected for that enterprise. This field is now National Trust property, having been purchased in 1983.

Stonebridge Wharf had a structure, shown in at least one much-published photograph, and usually described as a treadwheel or treadmill crane. It does, indeed, look much like the treadwheel crane at Guildford Wharf, but closer examination of the picture raises some doubts. The wheel at Guildford is some 16 feet in diameter. It could hardly be much less for men to walk in. A treadwheel at Stonebridge would surely be partly visible beyond the boarded side of the building.

The minutes of the meetings of the Commissioners perhaps throw a little more light on the matter.[49] On 14 April 1819 it was reported that Mr Stovold of Petworth wanted a crane erected at Stonebridge, so there was no crane at that date. On 12 October 1825 a crane at Stonebridge was again proposed. The minutes for 27 July 1831 record that timber for a crane at Stonebridge was ready and the ironwork was awaited. No date for the assembly or first use of the crane has been found but it must have been some time between 1831 and 1838. The next reference to it is in the minutes for 7 March 1838 when Messrs Wilkins complained that their barge had been sunk at Stonebridge 'by breaking of the barge chain'.

Treadwheel cranes of timber and rope were technology of the 17th century and earlier. By the 1830s iron was in more common use and it may well be that the Stonebridge crane's ironwork was some form of geared winch and a chain instead of rope. Using this a man might be able to load and unload goods on his own – an advantage at this rural site where casual labour to walk a treadwheel might have been hard to come by.

From 1816 Stonebridge was important, being at the junction of the Godalming Navigation and the Wey & Arun Canal. Records had to be kept of the movement of barges, whether calling or just passing, what they were carrying and where they were going, all for the purpose of charging tolls. After 1871, when the Wey & Arun closed, it cannot have seen much business apart from the gunpowder traffic and that came to an end in 1922. The minutes give the impression that, in later years, the wharfinger was more a farmer than a Navigation employee.

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30 The Gun's Mouth

Wey & Arun Junction Canal

From the Gun's Mouth, the Wey South long-distance footpath, which has followed the Navigation from Guildford, continues along the route of the Wey & Arun Canal.

Constructed in 1813/15, this waterway aimed to provide a safe route between London and the south coast. P A L Vine's London's Lost Route to the Sea tells its story in detail. For a time the Wey & Arun had their own wharf here on the land between their waterway and the public footpath. This area was bought by the National Trust in the 1980s and the unauthorised caravans and sheds on it were removed. At about the same time the Trust bought the two meadows on the Peasmarsh side of the Navigation to preserve some, at least, of its rural nature.

Disused Railway

A short distance upstream of the Gun's Mouth are embankments and brick abutments for a bridge showing where a railway once crossed the river. The Horsham & Guildford District Railway Company was formed in 1840 and built a line which ran through Bramley and Wonersh, Cranleigh, Baynards and Christ's Hospital, where it joined a line to Horsham. It was part of the London & South Coast Railway by the time it opened in 1865 and part of the Southern Railway when it was closed a century later.[50]

When the railway land came up for sale the National Trust bought the stretch between the river and the main London-to-Portsmouth line to the west (now part of the Railway Line Walk – see Section 28, Railways) and the stretch eastwards from the river to the Horsham Road.

It is now possible, starting from the towpath here, to walk along the western stretch which then meets with the never-used route which leads back to the Navigation at the Riff-Raffs.

When first acquired, the Trust drew attention to this new feature at this point. Bearing the words 'Railway Walk', one of their cast aluminium signs was erected. Although bolted to the post with countersunk nuts, within weeks someone had used a spanner to remove the sign. It was replaced and this time the countersunk holes were also plugged. Not long elapsed before both sign and post had gone. Another replacement has been erected.

Tales from men who crewed the barges in the days when the Navigations were commercial transport systems include one in which this Guildford–Horsham railway crossing features. The barges had cabins with coal burning stoves for warmth and for cooking. Trains on this line heading for Guildford would often have to stop on the bridge here waiting for a signal allowing them to proceed on to the busy London–Portsmouth line. It is said that barges would moor under the bridge and, when a train halted, the men would call up to the engine crew. Usually some of the railway company's coal would be tossed down.

Pillbox

About 40 yards upstream of the disused railway and lying a little way back from the towpath is a World War II pillbox. It is often difficult to see, especially when the trees are in leaf. It is slightly above eye level, about 20 yards from the water's edge at map reference SU 6645 4640. It is not on National Trust land.

31 Unstead Cut

Unstead (Unsted) Mill

At the northern end of the man-made Unstead Cut, behind the towpath and parallel with it, is a narrow channel now largely silted up. This was once part of the tail-race from Unstead Mill ('Unsted' seems to have been the original spelling, acquiring the 'a' sometime between 1831 and 1850) and water flowed along it and under a horse bridge in the towpath to return to the river. This horse bridge has now gone. A short way up the cut a second horse bridge in the towpath remains. This crosses another exit from the mill tailrace. At this point another World War II pillbox can be seen in the grounds of Unstead Lodge, the house beyond the tailrace. Above Unstead lock it may be possible to see where the water was drawn from the Navigation and went under the towpath to supply the mill with power.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Commissioners for 23 August 1831 record the following:[51]

> Messrs Holland, occupiers of the newly erected Mill called Unsted Mill, having made a cut for conducting a supply of water to and from the said mill and having erected two horsebridges over the same and also sluices adjoining the Lock there to take off the waste water
>
> Resolved: That permission be given for such bridges to remain on condition that the owners of the said Mill do keep the same in repair and pay a nominal acknowledgement of one shilling per annum.

This seems like an early example of retrospective planning permission – do it first and ask later.

The 'sluice adjoining the Lock' is still there, immediately above the lock on the non-towpath side. It lets some water back into the river and is used for 'fine-tuning' the level in the cut above the lock.

Unstead Mill had a variety of occupants. It ground corn until 1906 when the site became British Flock Mills, then Wey Wool Co. and then Surrey Chairs Ltd. A press report of 1928 is accompanied by three photographs of a fire at Unstead Flock Mills.[52] Mr Louis Major, proprietor, and Harris & Co., Loss Adjusters of Moorgate, attended. This may have been Mr Leopold Harris who was in that line of business about that time and was known for his prompt (some said over-prompt) attendance at major conflagrations.

At the end of the 19th century and for the first part of the 20th century the occupiers of this site, in addition to their main business, collected tolls on behalf of the Godalming Navigation from rowing boats, skiffs and punts passing Unstead Lock. This was the heyday of this kind of boating and the financial records show large numbers using the river in the summer months.[53] It was evidently worth somebody's while to be there on Sundays and the Navigation was happy to pay a commission of 50% on all tolls collected.

Unstead Lock

Until recent times this lock revealed its original brickwork. In the 1990s this disappeared behind concrete during repairs, which produced some criticism. Subsequent maintenance work elsewhere has been done so that the original appearance is better preserved, though at higher cost.

Lower Trunleyheath Farm

Some years ago the National Trust bought land bordering the Navigation to the east from the Gun's Mouth as far as Unstead Bridge. They then leased it to a farmer at Lower Trunleyheath specialising in rare breeds of animals.

Unstead Bridge

There are two Unstead Bridges. One is of stone, built in the 13th century by the monks of Waverley Abbey. It crossed the Wey but the river has since been diverted (to help preserve the bridge). So now, 300 yards east of the Navigation along Tilthams Corner Road are two bridges, one after the other. The further one is the medieval bridge.

The bridge which takes Tilthams Corner Road over the Navigation is also known as Unstead Bridge and is so named on a map of the Wey and Godalming Navigations drawn by William Faden in 1782.[54] When they were building the Navigation the Commissioners were obliged to make a bridge wherever they cut a channel through an existing road. This was one of them and there was a second one at Catteshall. An agreement for the building of Unstead Lock and Unstead Bridge was made at the Commissioners' meeting in March 1762.[55]

In 1898 the bridge was declared unsafe and in September 1899 the Commissioners offered the Highways Authority £100 towards its rebuilding, provided this freed them from any future liability for it. The deal would seem to have been done and the present bridge is presumably the rebuild of that date.

Pillbox and Towpath

About 40 yards up the Navigation from Unstead Bridge, not far back from the towpath, is a circular pillbox of World War II. The National Trust owns the open land on this side of the Navigation from Unstead Bridge up to Tilthams House so this is another pillbox in its care.

The towpath here – from the bridge to the upstream end of the cut – is one of the few stretches which is also a public footpath.

Unstead Sluices

Unstead Cut extends some 200 yards south of Unstead Bridge. The weir and sluices were made across the river to direct water into the channel. Part of the present structure dates from the 1760s (though no doubt repaired and rebuilt from time to time) but part is the work of the River Wey Improvement Scheme of the 1930s. Responsibility for maintenance is shared between the National Trust and the Environment Agency.

32 Trowers and Catteshall

Colonels Ground

At Unstead Sluices the public footpath leaves the towpath to continue across the field to the main road. This land is a National Trust acquisition and is known as Colonels Ground – the origin of this name has yet to be discovered. About half way along the path is yet another circular pillbox from World War II. Under the path is a sewer with, at intervals, brick structures supporting inspection covers above ground level. This pipeline leads from the Farncombe/Godalming area and extends under the Navigation near Unstead Sluices to the treatment works beyond. Much of Colonels Ground has, in the past, had brick rubble and other rubbish dumped on it.

Trower's Bridge

Between Colonels Ground and Trower's Bridge the houses and the Manor Inn have grounds which extend almost down to the river, making for a somewhat narrow towpath.

Trower's Bridge was built in 1789, not by the Navigation, but by a Mr Perry by whose name it was then known. There had been a ford here (referred to in the records as Wisdom's Scour) and presumably dredging the river for barges had made fording difficult. The Commissioners agreed to the construction of a bridge which would be part of the driveway to Unstead Park on the hill to the east on condition that they would have use of it for the purposes of the Navigation. They agreed to pay half the costs of its maintenance. The long-drawn-out saga of a similar problem at Broadford was in the middle of its run at this time (see Section 29).

Within a year Thomas Payne, then the Navigation's agent, was reporting that the ditches at the site of the new bridge were stopped up. The Commissioners were told that it was 'absolutely necessary to make Arches over the Ditches in order that the water may have its usual free course'.[56]

These are believed to have been the ditches at the back of the towpath and possibly also on the non-towpath side which had been blocked by the approaches to the bridge. There is thought to have been another problem when the bridge was first made. It was just wide enough for a barge to pass through but made no provision for the water it displaced. Later, side arches were made so that, as a barge went ahead, water could flow back through them to behind the vessel.

The bridge was subsequently known as Captain Bertie's Bridge, Captain Pierrepont's Bridge and then Trower's Bridge. Trower was proprietor of Farley Wood Estates/Unstead Wood (now Unstead Park) in 1815. When, in that year the bridge was reported as being in a state of decay he paid his half of the repair costs.[57]

The track from the main road, over the bridge and beyond is a public footpath but a private road.

Hell Ditch

This stream which flows along one side of the area known as the Lammas Lands (see page 101) discharges into the Navigation (here the natural river) just above Trower's Bridge. A horse bridge in the towpath crosses it.

Catteshall

With moored boats, some two abreast, along the 250 yards downstream of Catteshall Bridge it is not always evident that this stretch of the Navigation is man-made and that the old river runs parallel just behind the boats and buildings. The long narrow strip of land between the two watercourses is Navigation property and is leased by the National Trust to Farncombe Boat-house.

There was nothing here when Alfred Leroy came in 1905 to set up on his own in the pleasure-boating business. He had left his brother Charles to continue to run the Jolly Farmer at Guildford and the boat-hire business there on his own.

Alfred was not the first, however, in this line of business in the Godalming area. The Surrey Advertiser for 3 June 1895 has, on the front page under the heading 'Godalming' the following announcement:

> BOATING – The attraction of boating has now been added to the pleasures of the town, a few gentlemen having combined to purchase boats for hire. Six boats arrived from Reading on Wednesday night, and on the following day were patronised by several persons. The new recreation is likely to become exceedingly popular.

Just where this earlier operation was based is not known.

At Farncombe, Alfred Leroy's business was housed in a single shed but the Commissioners later allowed him to build a house on the site. They drove what might be thought a hard bargain. They granted him a 30-year lease on the land on condition that, at the end of that period, the building became their property. The house is still there.

For over 40 years Alfred Leroy made a living by providing craft for his customers to propel. This continued to be part of the business of his successors – Cavell, then Ford and then Pearce. In 1970, when John Hall took over, power boats were beginning to appear and now dominate the scene here as elsewhere on the Navigations. But at Farncombe Boathouse this family firm continues to serve all boaters.

Backwater and the Thirty Foot

The course of the river has been much altered here at various times. Behind the boat-house buildings it is mostly old river but, when Catteshall Mill was water-powered, the wheel originally discharged into a pond and this led to the river which then ran alongside Catteshall Lane, making a right-hand turn behind Riverside House. Under the River Wey Improvement Scheme of the 1930s a new channel, known as the Thirty Foot (its width), was made from upstream of the mill. This is the channel which now brings water under the bridge behind Riverside House. The old route for water emerging from the mill was replaced with a channel which joins the backwater a little further downstream. In spite of all these changes to improve the flow of water (or perhaps because of them) there are still problems with sand settling in this backwater.

Catteshall Mill

This is probably the site of one of the three Godalming mills recorded in the Domesday Book.The grinding of corn, the fulling of woollen cloth, the manufacture of leather and of paper have all been done here. Paper has been made here by the Sweetapples, the Spicers and A E Reed.

From 1869 the papermaking machinery was driven by a notable water turbine, as well as by steam engines. The turbine was a Fourneyron-type machine which was of continental design but manufactured in Belfast. It is thought to have been one of the biggest of its type ever built. The site was later occupied by Blackburn's engineering works and then by various works units. When a derelict part of the mill was being demolished in 1981 the turbine was removed. It was stored while a Trust searched for a site to re-erect it as an exhibit. In 2002 plans are advanced for its removal to a new museum of engineering at Ironbridge.

Catteshall Mill has been the subject of detailed study.[58]

Catteshall Bridge

As at Unstead, the Commissioners had to build a bridge here because the Navigation cut through a public road . We do not know what sort of structures they provided. The bridges may have been entirely of timber, considered quite adequate for minor roads at the time.

By 1903 the Commissioners were anxious to have the Godalming Borough Council take over this bridge. After some haggling as to how much the Navigation should pay towards the cost of re- building the bridge and for being relieved of all further liability for it, the sum of £150 was agreed. The Commissioners insisted on a 16-foot width of waterway through the bridge (Wey barges were commonly almost 14 feet wide) and a headway of 7 feet 11 inches. The Borough Council took it over in 1905.[59]

Catteshall Lock

Locks have a hard life. In the days of commercial navigation they had to withstand the buffeting of 50 tons or more of barge and sometimes mistreatment by bargemen. Now locks have to contend with amateur boaters, some of them with little or no experience.

Maintenance and repairs of locks go on all the time but eventually a major rebuild is called for. Catteshall's turn came in the late 1990s. On the Wey and the Godalming Navigations locks had been rebuilt over the centuries using such materials and techniques as were thought appropriate at the time. Most of the locks of the Wey Navigation, originally of timber and turf, were rebuilt, first in the same way, then some in brick and stone (Coxes, Town Lock, Weybridge and possibly Stoke) and finally in mass concrete. The Godalming Navigation had used brick from the start (except at St Catherines which was of timber).

When the National Trust took over the current practice was followed. Concrete was used for major jobs and, where a lock was already mainly or entirely of that material, it was acceptable. Then came Unstead, a brick-walled lock badly in need of attention. Concrete was employed and the brickwork disappeared. Had new bricks been used or even the old ones re-used, there would have been some change in appearance, but much less, and there was some criticism of the Trust for unsympathetic restoration.

Catteshall was the next lock to be rebuilt and was done with more consideration for the finished appearance. Apparently replacement Bargate stone, local to Godalming, could not be obtained in the sizes needed so Portland stone was used with brick.

The Landings

Upstream of Catteshall Lock, between the non-towpath bank and the old river, is an area which was formerly just grass and willows. Part of it is shown on old maps as Lammas Lands. In recent times it has acquired housing and 'The Landings' name.

Lammas Lands

From Trower's Bridge to Godalming Wharf the Navigation is bordered, on the towpath side, by an area known as Lammas Lands, previously mentioned in connection with Hell Ditch.

Plans of 1758/9 showing the route of the intended Navigation mark these areas as Alms House Common Meadow (The Wyatt Almshouses are just to the north) and Catteshall Common Meadow.[60] An 1834 plan of the Navigation, drawn for the Commissioners, labels the latter Godalming Common Meadow.[61]

The particulars for an auction sale in 1983 uses the term Lammas Land and describes 'this ancient and curious land holding' as:

> 'A class of common land held in severalty (individual parts) between Lady Day – 25th March and Lammas Day – 1st August, but for the rest of the year ... commonable to those who own the severalty right...'

The particulars included a copy of part of the tithe map showing the extraordinary subdivision of the area marked out by stones. Chris Currie, an archaeologist who made a detailed survey for the National Trust in 1996, reported that only three of these stones remained.[62]

The name Lammas Lands is derived from the tradition that forbade farmers to graze their cattle on the meadows from spring until after the July crop of hay had been cut.

33 Godalming

Waterway

From the southern end of Catteshall Cut to Godalming Wharf appears to be the natural river Wey, and so it is except for one short stretch. If the last 150 yards to the wharf looks, on the map, unnaturally straight for a river (and especially for the Wey) that is because it is un-natural. The river in 1760, flowing past the site destined to become Godalming Wharf, made a tight 180 degree loop to the left followed by an equally tight 180 degree loop to the right and then a 90 degree turn to the left to head towards Catteshall. In creating the Navigation this horseshoe bend was cut through and, though filled in, the old course of the river is still evident on maps where it is marked as a curved line of marshy ground. The right angle of the waterway at the wharf (by the barn) was probably man-made to provide just that extra width needed to turn a 70 foot barge for its return journey.

Godalming Wharf

The Commissioners acquired more than ten acres for their principal wharf and in the early days they may all have been needed. In 1764, when barges were first able to reach Godalming, shipbuilding still required vast quantities of timber. Now forests in furthest Surrey, in Sussex and Hampshire could supply shipbuilders along the Thames providing that the felled trees could be got to Godalming. But roads were still poor and road haulage was mostly a job for the summer months. This meant that the wharf had to be a large area so as to store enough timber to keep the barges supplied throughout the winter.

But roads began to improve, railways arrived, and iron began to replace wood for ships. Much of Godalming Wharf was then let for grazing. Commerce on the Navigation changed. Where hardwood downstream had been a major cargo, now softwood, bricks and slates for building together with coal for homes and the gas-works were more important. This was all upstream traffic needing little wharf space.

In 1836 a company was formed 'for lighting the town of Godalming by gas' and the Commissioners agreed to sell part of the wharf for the erection of a gas works. This was at the 'top' of the wharf, the land between Wharf Street and Catteshall Lane, where the

police station now stands. Coal from which the gas was made must have come, initially at least, by barge and no doubt the Commissioners were keen to have this traffic. The gas works expanded from time to time, the company buying more of the wharf in 1859, 1869 and 1874.

From 1875 Godalming Borough (the town was then a Municipal Corporation) began to take an interest in the wharf, leasing some land there for 24 years at two shillings a year. In 1893 the Borough Surveyor wanted to buy land there for a public abattoir but the Commissioners turned down this proposal. Four years later Navigation activity must have been minimal for the Corporation was applying for a long lease of the whole wharf. The Commissioners were evidently considering selling some or all of the site and sought Counsel's opinion on the matter. They were advised that the Act gave them no power to sell. However, they agreed to lease a large part of the wharf to the Borough for 21 years. In 1930 they consulted Counsel again and were advised that they should not grant a lease for a longer period than 40 years. Godalming got a new lease which was nearing its end when the National Trust took over in 1968.

By this time the wharf had long carried a major road and was home to several commercial concerns and other establishments. In the mid-1980s the Trust sold all but a small part of Godalming Wharf. Some was bought by businesses already established there, some by Surrey County Council and Waverley (as it now was) Borough Council and some by those with development in mind. This brought more than £2 million to the Trust, some of which was used to buy parcels of land alongside the Navigations to preserve the rural aspect where that was possible. At the wharf, however, we now have roads, traffic lights, stores and car parks. Only a narrow strip of riverside land and a barn remain as the terminus of the Godalming Navigation.

The wharf extended along the river from the barn to a point just short of the bridge. The towpath, on the opposite bank, finished where the river made its sharp right turn. Here there was a swing bridge to enable the barge horses to get between the towpath and the wharf. When the bridge fell into disrepair and was demolished an extension of the towpath to the road bridge had to be made for the horses to reach their stables. This stretch of path is probably the last piece of land the Commissioners acquired.

NOTES

Abbreviations:
SHC: Surrey History Centre, Woking
SIHG: Surrey Industrial History Group
SyAC: *Surrey Archaeological Collections*

1 SHC: 180/2a Mannor of Ham Court 1732. See also SHC: 176/22/5 Ham Court Estate, 18th century plan.
2 SHC: Gl29/111/1 & 6.
3 SHC: Gl29/93-l02 & 109 (1839-1915).
4 SHC: Gl37/1211 Memorandum Book, William Stevens I.
5 Lansdell, A, ed., *The Portmore Story* (Elmbridge Borough Council, 1975).
6 SHC: QS 517/3.
7 SHC: Gl29/3/8 Guildford Up Diary 6 June 1910; SHC: Gl29/3/9 Guildford Up Diary l and 4 June 1900.
8 SHC: QS 55110/22 Return of Fully Licensed and Beer Houses, 1892.
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20 Such sites are of Saxon, Norman or Medieval origin and are moated farmsteads or settlements. The one at Pyrford is on private property but at South Park Farm, Grayswood, a site managed by the Surrey Archaeological Society has been provided with an information board and opened to visitors. *Victoria County History,* vol.4, pp.399-400; Turner, D J, 'Moated Sites in Surrey: a Provisional List', *SyAC,* vol.71 (1977), 89-94.
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23 Harry Stevens' Journal, p.43.
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25 Crocker, A, 'Water turbines in Surrey', SyAC vol.88 (2001), 133-160.

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26 SHC: G129/7/l.
27 SHC: G129/7/2.
28 SHC: G129/7/3a.
29 SHC: G129/7/6a.
30 SHC: G129/7/l.
31 Harry Stevens' Journal (note 23), p.89.
32 Nash, M, 'Early Schemes to make the Wey Navigable, 1618-1651', *SyAC,* vol. 66 (1969), pp.33-40.
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34 Guildford Institute Scrapbook D, pp.471/5: Opening of new power station, Woodbridge Road. Press cutting 30 May 1928.
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38 SHC: Gl42/112 Godalming Navigation Minute Book p.70, 17 Oct. l827 & 29 Oct. l828.
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