

Tales from the River Online talk 14 November 2024: Notes (see also slides)

[Before sharing slides, before recording starts]

0

Before we get started I'd like to get an idea about you

– put your hands up –

- who remembers swimming or playing in the rivers when you were children, or later?
- ...or did you go fishing
- boating
- walk by the river or do other activities?
- Were you involved in river related industries, trade or travel?
- ...in the Brecks or elsewhere?

Let us know your memories.

[Presentation – recording started]

1

Tales from the River project

Imogen Radford

One of 24 projects – heritage, conservation, outdoor activities and more –
about the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers (BFER for short)
supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund, 2020-2024

I will show images and talk

- about the project – what we've been gathering and what it tells us
- about the types of places for recreation and for trade, industry and travel
- then we will take a trip along each of the three main rivers and their tributaries and other waterways to illustrate what people did for fun and work

2

this map shows the rivers snaking across the Brecks

in a landscape that is forest, heath and farmland – the rivers matter

– long used for transport and moving heavy things – stones to Bury St Edmunds Abbey or
Thetford Priory, later flints, coal, corn, sugar beet

– often the reason why towns or villages grew up where they are

– now more for recreation and appreciation of wildlife

All of these are human connections with the rivers

3

this map shows the Brecks and the BFER project area – the wider area in dotted black line,
and the blue bits are mainly following the rivers

4

we've used these maps at all sorts of events

– gathering interesting information

– always a great talking point –

people share information about where they've been to do all sorts of activities

– swim, boat, walk, fish, ride horses, take photos, paddle, birdwatching, or just
contemplating, also about land they own

5

mapping the historic places for recreation, large proportion swimming, using spreadsheets and Google Maps – so far up to about 128

6

what we have been collecting:

Oral history, written input, responses from people at talks, guided walks and drop-in events and social media

This example was of great interest on social media

Three young women in 1947, Lakenheath Mill Pond (Lakenheath Heritage Group).
on Facebook Relatives speak of how much fun they were, though no detail collected.
(Jean Shinkins, Edna Turrington and Nellie Shinkins who was a Phillips)

An example from a recent oral history interview with a woman of 96 – she went paddling in the pings on Thompson Common when she was a little girl.

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Special donation to project:

1994 degree thesis, detailed study of swimming
in Thetford, including memories, research,
map of places along the river
and the river swimming baths.
(Copy in Thetford Library)

Map by Sarah Batstone

'The Historical Development of Bathing at Thetford, Norfolk: from Small Rural to Expanded Town', S.A.K. Batstone, 1994

Map redrawn by Ancient House Museum History Clubs – animation in the film

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The Ancient House Museum History Clubs used this
and oral history and other material to make film and exhibition
'A Fun History of Thetford's Rivers'

River Swimming Baths and bridge, Town Guide about 1960

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Tales from the Riverbank exhibition, in Watton sports and social centre
It has been shown in 12 venues, libraries and museums and other venues in the Brecks and beyond (can be seen online)

10

Gathering stories and photos of recreation

in/on/by rivers and other waters, and of trade/industry

This image shows some fishermen at Croxton Staunch – I'll say more about these structures shortly – often a popular place for recreation

Trade and industry is more fully covered by the Industrious Rivers project, whose extensive study will be coming out early in the New Year.

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Staunches

'Staunches' installed in the 18th century – at the height of navigation on the rivers - allowed a gate to be winched to control the water levels so a type of river barges called a lighters could pass through upstream or downstream. They varied in design, some had enormous wheels – four times the size of the largest cartwheel – that a man would turn by walking on them like a hamster wheel in a cage!

"In the river below each staunch is a deep pool or 'staunch hole', usually a favourite place for fishing and bathing." - W.G. Clarke *In Breckland Wilds* (1925)

'A Swim at the Staunch', 1900s (location unknown)

Brandon Staunch, 1978

as you can see, they are also a favourite place for climbing and jumping

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Places for recreation: ferries, bridges, fords, mills, staunches

The places that people went for travel – ferries, bridges, fords
navigation – staunches, locks
– or industry such as mills, quarries
– also places that they went and still go for leisure activities,
can get access, long history of going there.

Paddling in North Pickenham ford, 1934, now gone.

Photo from 1934, father and two uncles identified by interviewee

Now takes his children to popular fords and pools at Hilborough, Ickburgh, Northwold
Other fords still popular: Castle Acre, West Acre.

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We are now going to take a trip along each of the three main rivers and tributaries and other waterways, with selected examples of recreation and trade/industry

I'm using maps from the Environment Agency – the statutory Main river maps, highlighted with the key parts of the rivers.

I'll go from downstream up towards the source on each

River Lark

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The Pepperpot

This eight-sided building is the base of one of the original wind powered pumping engines - one of the few remaining examples.

A gang of Mildenhall Fen Drainage Board lighters in 1913 on the river Lark
(between Cross Bank and the Cock Inn. Also in Elijah Wells The Fens As I Saw Them 1976)

This is well downstream out of Isleham along Fen Bank – which originally had several houses, pubs and school – into the Fens. Originally marshes drained over several centuries, and water had to be continually pumped and the banks continually built up and maintained.

It was an important route from King's Lynn and the sea up the rivers to towns like Mildenhall and Bury St Edmunds on the Lark, Brandon and Thetford on the Little Ouse, and Stoke Ferry and Oxburgh Hythe on the Wissey. More about navigation and lighters shortly.

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Isleham Ferry, chapter heading illustration, autobiography of Charles Spurgeon 1897 who became a famous 19th-century preacher to crowds of 10,000 +.

Aged 15 walked 8 miles from Bury St Edmunds to be baptised in the river Lark 1850.

The Lark became known as the 'River Jordan' , crowds would watch

Extract describing his baptism:

... The wind blew down the river with a cutting blast, as my turn came to wade into the flood, but after I had walked a few steps, and noted the people on the ferry-boat, and in boats, and on either shore, I felt as if Heaven, and earth, and hell, might all gaze upon me...My timidity was washed away ; it floated down the river into the sea, and must have been devoured by the fishes, for I have never felt anything of the kind since. Baptism also loosed my tongue, and from that day it has never been quiet.

16

Baptism at Judes Ferry, West Row, 1914

river baptism stopped in the early 1970s, though there was one in 1982 American serviceman, And a swimmer got baptised at Brandon staunch in 2022.

now a popular riverside pub at the head of navigation for motorboats,
popular for swimming and jumping off the bridge

17

Gasworks, Gas Lock and Pen

The Lark was called the 'coal river' as so much coal was transported to Bury and the Mildenhall Gasworks – most towns would have a gasworks, burning coal to create gas for lighting and cooking. The name lives on in the 'Gas Pool', which remains a very popular place for swimming, and jumping.

Not sure what they are doing here – have a tin bath and a tin bucket – any ideas?

18

Looking downstream to Turf Lock with lighters, (On the left is Bridge Mill) photo from Ivan Cane

navigation in the rivers of the Brecks goes back a long way

Bury St Edmunds Abbey was rebuilt in around 1080 with Barnack stone carried up the river Lark from Peterborough. For centuries, this was the best way to carry heavy goods.

The river Lark was busy in the 17th and 18th and early 19th centuries.

In 1845 10,000 tons of goods and coal through Mildenhall to Bury on the 16-mile (26 km) navigation, stopping at villages and mills along the way.

Lighters are the type of river barge used on these rivers, With a shallow draught, they could navigate these relatively small rivers. As we saw earlier they would be joined together in a gang. Usually pulled by horses, occasionally by steam tugs

19

Workers at Mildenhall Turf lock around 1889

There was a valiant attempt to revive the navigation in the late 19th century.

Hundreds of navvies worked hard to dig, repair and build, including turning the staunch – a rather slow and laborious way of navigating – into a more efficient turf sided pound lock. Their labour over a cold winter was rewarded by a dinner of roast beef and plum pudding in 1890, paid for by public subscription.

But the coming of the railway led to a drastic drop in trade:

by the 1900s only a few lighters were operating to take flint and gravel from the quarry and coal and corn to Icklingham Mill. Trade had virtually dwindled to Mildenhall by the 1920s

Pleasure boats took parties up and down the river for longer, and local journalist William Howlett reported seeing 40 boats containing day trippers between Mildenhall and Temple Bridge on August Bank Holiday 1899.

Wamil White Stone

no one knows what this unprepossessing stone in the river is, though there was a double staunch here. But it is an iconic location in the memories of locals

“The fun days we used to have as kids spent by the river up Wamil at the White Stone, with a blowup tube from the garage and jam sandwiches and a bottle of squash.”

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In the Gas Pool and Pen people would swim or jump off the sluice – even on their BMXs – and one remembered *“jumping in fully clothed after a session at the Ship”*.

One group of lads would borrow the River Board’s weed cutting punt and go up to Barton Mills and back.

Some went fishing *“for the elusive grayling”*, looking under rocks for bullheads or gudgeon, and catching eels that Snushalls fish shop would buy. The bream were said to be *“as big as dustbin lids by the cricket meadow”*.

In the 1970s, an event called Larking in the Lark included raft building and racing, swimming, tug-of-war and a bonfire.

This is an image of Parkers Mill, rebuilt in 1908

and the Ship Inn (now rebuilt as a private house further back from the road), 1960s

In the 1920s and 30s the mill generated electricity for part of the town. In the 1930s it provided a radio relay service, sending programmes by wire to speakers in subscribers' homes.

Milling stopped in the late 1970s, now converted to flats.

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Boat houses, between Barton Mills and Mildenhall

sometimes for delivery of goods to a large house by river, sometimes just for pleasure boats

22

Icklingham Mill

Several water mills are recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 on the Lark and its tributaries, and some were still operating into the early 20th century.

Icklingham Mill ground corn and animal feed, trapped eels in an eel sluice, and traded coal at its wharf. Known as Marston's for a century and now as Heygates, it has been rebuilt twice, extended, modernised, converted to a roller mill running on electricity, and still produces flour.

23

Temple Bridge

ancient river crossing point, name comes from the medieval Christian Order of Knights Templar who had a temple and lands nearby and collected money from local mills.

Vehicles crossed the river here until 2002 when the 1912 bridge became unsafe. It was later replaced by a bridgeway over the weir just downstream.

"Many a summer spent down Temple Bridge, I vividly remember my mum saying I wasn't to go down the weir and of course I didn't listen and had to come home in my new white denim shorts covered in green algae. I got in so much trouble!"

"I remember a night or two taking a rubber dinghy down the weir in the dark while camping."

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Icklingham Farthing Bridge/3 Bridges

location of an old staunch then lock

"I plunged in a delightful deep pool beside an old hump-backed bridge above the mill at Icklingham." Roger Deakin, *Waterlog*, 1999

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Soldiers at Duck Sluice, Fornham, August 1915

Walton Burrell collection, in Suffolk Archives, photographer fascinated by the soldiers stationed at Fornham Hall in the First World War, fascinating collection showing their exuberance while relaxing in a hot summer

26

Showing the structure – creates a waterfall to play in and a deep pool

One of our interviewees grew up in the 1950s on the new Mildenhall Road estate in Bury St Edmunds, and the nearby river was a magnet for all the children. The staunch boards were still there, so there was a long stretch of 6 to 8 feet deep water ideal for swimming

"we always used to call it the 'Cold' rivers, when we were kids, but of course it was the 'Coal' rivers"

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St Saviours Wharf, head of the navigation in 1890

St Edmundsbury Chronicle website screenshot

Opening ceremony following a massive effort to revive navigation up to Bury. But it never regained the earlier heights of trade in the 18th and early 19th century, and soon dwindled.

This location is now Tesco's car park, the river a shadow of its former self.

The St Edmundsbury Chronicle website tells the river's long and varied history: navigation until this ceased in the early 20th century; leisure; and restoration as a chalk river.

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Lakenheath Lode, Little Ouse and Thet, Blackbourn – Map

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Lakenheath Lode

The Lode was an important navigation channel from the Little Ouse to Lakenheath and Eriswell. There were two Quays or Hythes. These waterways *"...were the highways to Ely and the villages and towns of the Fens before railways and lorries came into general use."* By the 1930s navigation no longer came as far as the village, but the Lode was still maintained until the late 1940s.

Building the Cut Off Channel – it sliced through land, paths and existing waterways along its length, including the Lakenheath Lodes, which had outlived their usefulness both as drainage channels and a transport system.

The fens were drained over several centuries, but there was still flooding, including in the late 1930s. After delays caused by the Second World War, the major 1947 floods gave impetus to construction of three flood relief schemes beginning in 1954, finished by 1964.

The Willows and the Lode

When Cyril Matthews, now 97, was young he swam and fished in the Lode, as did many other children and adults.

"I can't remember learning to swim, but it was in the Willows, which was a sandy part of the Lode, not far from the Hythe...I suspect that my elder brother said, "Go on, get in, boy" and that was that. So ...that was my first introduction to water."

But *"...the new drainage canal made the Lode redundant and village people lost the means of youngsters learning the art of swimming and fishing."*

30

Lakenheath Village pond

The village, like most, had a pond so that the wheels of carts could be swollen to fit their iron tyres in dry weather, and so horses could drink.

The pond and green was turned into a beach for the children in 1942, which made national news in a feature article in the Daily Mirror 16 July. The newspaper wanted to charge a hefty

fee to share the story, so in 2019 the Heritage Group asked Daphne Austin to interpret the scene as an art work – ‘The Sea Side at Lakenheath’

31

Green Dragon

The Lakenheath Lode joins the Little Ouse at Botany Bay – so named as it was very remote and inaccessible – at the far end of Lakenheath Fen

Until the 50s or 60s there was a pub here, the Green Dragon, apparently *“And you could always get a pint there, it didn't close”*, used by boatmen, rail maintenance workers and families would come from Lakenheath on nice days for picnics.

There was a chain ferry, which you pulled across the river, to get to farms on the other side or to cut short your journey.

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going upstream on the Little Ouse, under Wilton Bridge, past Hockwold Lode, to the new railway bridge, a popular place for swimming and fishing

image: Swimming at the New Bridge, 1930s

Earlier boating with members of the same family:

Rowing on the river, about 1900

Violet Parrott, Celia Rissbrook, Marguerite (Daisy) Rissbrook

33

Several swim spots along the river,

(depending on whether you lived in Town Street or Brandon Ferry/bridge)

Osier Holt (later called Ouja Halt or The Luger), near the earlier river crossing

The Leeches, *“a shallow sandy bottomed stretch below the staunch where I learnt to swim with my grandfather”*

Image: Brandon Staunch, 1978

(There was also The Girl Guides – where “Grafton House had sand tipped in the river” and The Bathing Place, a deep stretch upstream of the bridge where swimming club established 1922.)

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Brandon Bridge with lighters, late 1890s

Originally called Brandon Ferry, the town grew up at a crossing place for travellers including pilgrims to Walsingham. Maltings were an important riverside industry but were demolished to build the current bridge in 1954.

Mary Chapman with Eleanor Ridsdale, 1943 at Brandon Bridge, with their new dinghy, looking upstream from below the bridge, you can see the temporary bridge put in for the tanks to cross, as the old bridge was too narrow

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Mary Baldwin (nee Chapman) on Santon Downham Staunch, 1947 – then as now a very popular place for picnics and swimming

Fisons at Two Mile Bottom, early 20th century
the factory kept navigation going until 1929 – it had stopped going as far as Thetford by the early 1920s

Two Mile Bottom common was a very popular destination short cycle ride or drive from Thetford, for swimming, camping. There was a spring so you didn't need to take a bottle of water with you. For a more exciting swim, some would go to Turfpool staunch just upstream where the current was stronger because of the structure.

Still just outside Thetford until the mid-20th century, one of many popular swim places was First Staunch, and also the water meadows by the Priory

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Town Bridge from the Haling Path, with lighters, about 1910

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Town Bridge from the Haling Path about 1910 – you can see the tops of the Maltings – more about those in a moment

"There was a navigable river in the town, which above the bridge branched into many brooks and streams. This made us all expert boatmen, swimmers, and fishers." Roger North, 17th-century attorney general, on his time at Thetford Grammar School

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Maltings, from Town Bridge, about 1965

very different from today, Until the mid-1960s buildings enclosed the river above Town Bridge. *"We used to take the aircraft 'belly' fuel tanks, cut a hole in the top, join two together and put a bit of board across. We went down what us young lads used to call Death Alley – as the only thing in between the sunken barge at the corner of the island and the Town Bridge was metal rings in the wall."*

Same interviewee remembers the Maltings still in action, the smell of fermenting grain would attract numerous rats, and boys would get their air rifles, and prop them up on a little post and just shoot – hardly needed to aim as there were so many!

39

The Water Mill, about 1910

Coffee Mill workers, about 1945

This mill ground coffee for the Ibex coffee company 1936-1956.

"I used to watch the sacks being hoisted up to the mill, and if a sack had a small hole I'd get a few coffee beans and nibble on them all day. I can still taste them now if I close my eyes and remember. The girls use to smell lovely when they finished work."

I have not covered Thetford's brief time as a spa town in the early 19th century, Spring Walk and the waterfalls that were favourite beauty spots, or the Pulpware works based on an earlier mill, all very important in the town.

40

Nuns' Bridges – ancient river crossing, Icknield way,
Fishing, about 1970

41

River Swimming Baths and Sheds, 1928
River Swimming Baths, early 1960s

"The deep end had a spring board eight feet above the water for those that wanted to show how brave they were at diving."

"If one dived too deep it stirred up mud. I remember one boy coming up with an eel!"

"They would put a harness around your waist and have a very long pole and walk you up and down the swimming pool till you got confident enough to realise you were swimming."

There were wooden changing rooms, and a *"rickety-rackety bridge made of old telegraph poles lashed together"* gave access to the other side of the river.

"It was rather like the beach, always lovely and sandy, and a lot of families would picnic in that area, and then slip across and go into the bathing sheds for nothing."

42

Melford Bridge, on the river Thet
popular place for paddling as in this early 20th century image
known as 'Bridge Tavern' which was the name of the pub by Thetford Bridge station
made into a picnic meadow, popular now

43

Barnham Cross Common about 1966
another destination in the Little Ouse, family was would spend all day there in the summer
with a picnic – or a baked potato heated up at the gasworks

44

river Blackbourn goes through Euston and has been much used by the villagers of Honington
and Sapiston, and still is, though nowadays only at the bridge and alongside the nearby
community woodland

Raft race and paddling at the ford, near Sapiston Mill, 1980s

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Wissey – Map

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Sugar beet being carried by lighters, Wissington sugar beet factory, 1970

Memories of using a horse and cart to take sugar beet to Ely beet factory – could jump the
queue as they couldn't wait like lorries (on the Lark, but same elsewhere). Memories of

seeing the barges being loaded up with sugar beet from the fields (Whittington) later used rail, then road.

factory at Wissington, 1925, renewed in 1970s . Wide area of the river, so that the barges could turn round, now used for recreation

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Stoke Ferry Bridge

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Wharves by Stoke Ferry Bridge

The Stoke Ferry history group is putting together a thorough and detailed history of the village and river, many stories on their website and more being added all the time

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Mayflower

1954 article: *Make a houseboat your home*

Capt. Crosse ...who celebrates his ninetieth birthday next Sunday lives in a comfortable houseboat moored at one of the most picturesque spots on the River Wissey at Stoke Ferry "I have electric light and a gas stove where I can prepare my tea, and I have my main meals sent in from a nearby hotel. I have not known such trouble-free comfort and good health for years," he said.

50

Cut Off Channel – photo shows a different channel but would have been similar

Digging the Relief Channel, near Downham Market, 1954

memories of it cutting off the route from across the common

of clear water and long sandy beaches, swimming,

driving a car when it was frozen solid one year

– important drainage channel, later used for recreation,

still popular for swimming

51

Whittington Water Lane, Maltings

(image of horses and carts at Whittington Maltings)

"... the horses and carts used to take the malted barley down to the barges and also bring barley to be malted from the barges up to the Maltings. And the rule was that there had to be enough space for a horse and cart to turn round." Roger Warner

it is still a route down to the river, though has been made much narrower now, and the Maltings have been turned into a housing development

lots of information on the Stoke Ferry history group website

Whittington boating and other leisure

1940s ... *my father and his brothers were very keen fishermen and they spent a lot of time on the river, in a punt or a rowing boat.*

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Salmon's Hole

It's an area where there's a sandy beach... it was a very popular spot for recreation.... I've got a picture of my father, and his cousin and his sister, in a punt in the very spot. Roger Warner

Junction of Stringside Drain and the Wissey

The photo of Helaine is there, at Salmon's Hole.

a Mr Salmon had a large farm in the middle of Stoke Ferry.

Helaine also has many memories of swimming at Stoke Ferry common in the Cut Off Channel

And photo of Alexis in the Stringside drain

One family remember swimming further upstream: Great fun was had in the water at the weir where they would sit on it, repeatedly getting washed over it.

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Oxborough Ferry, around 1910

John Makepeace went fishing in around 1949.

The ferry cottages had been demolished with little left nor much sign of where the ferry had operated ... His grandfather told him how he put carts and horses on the platform ferry to avail himself of the short cut it offered.

...We swam in the river near the swimming hole further along the bank towards Oxborough. The swimming hole was deeper water and the south bank was cut back - and was always muddy. ... rope hanging from a tree above the water.

Oxborough Drain and River Gadder

We played in the ferry river. We played in what we call the 'second bridges' which was down the Foulden road and we played in there because it was a sandy bank and it was clear and you could see the bottom and we paddled, we caught tiddlers and had lots and lots of fun. There used to be a watermill there and where the watermill was, there was a (big) tree cut down and people used to actually jump off the tree trunk into this. Mary Saunders

54

Finishing school, article The Sketch, 1950

"WHAT more happily and characteristically English background for 'finishing' a girl could be found than Oxburgh Hall...

The girls bathe in the dredged and deepened moat ... On a sunny morning

Lady Paston-Bedingfeld is on the bank, Elizabeth about to dive and

Margaret in the outboard motor-boat with Sir Edmund." [Bedingfield, 9th Baronet]

The Bedingfields used to fish, boat and to swim in the moat, along with the gardener's son, Bob, and locals were invited into play and go boating in the moat.

"We used to fish in the moat for eels and my brothers and I used to do this on a regular basis... Mum cooked the eels. She cooked everything She cooked the trout, she cooked the roach." Mary Saunders, gardener's daughter

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Gooderstone ford – image left and bridge – building with steam roller – looks like a special occasion...

"A new reinforced concrete bridge has been erected in Gooderstone by the Swaffham Rural District Council. Part of the cost had been subscribed by Mr. Neil McNeil. Our photo shows the testing of the new bridge." Published: Saturday 01 August 1914 Downham Market Gazette

56

Northwold mill and Didlington estate

My father was Head Keeper on the Didlington Estate and I also used to swim with another keeper's son Gerald Dye, both in the river and at the mill. Our fishing expeditions in the river were unmitigated failures equipped with a bent pin, dough and string.

Maurice Jay - 27th August 2019

boys swimming and fishing on the estate and at the mill is mentioned in Heron Lake, along with this 1920s swimming pool. Its author, Leslie Paul, spent a year stationed here as an officer, at Didlington Hall in the Second World War.

(Leslie Paul, *Heron Lake: A Norfolk Year*, 1948)

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North Pickenham Ford, 1934

there are many more stories along the river Wissey and its tributaries, and Lynford Water, Stanford water and the battle area, the Watton Brook, Loch Neaton, and Thompson Water... And on the rivers Lark, Little Ouse, Thet, Blackbourn...

But no time to tell them now

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Thanks:

To you for listening

To our oral history interviewees

and all who told us their stories and lent us their photos

and to experts on navigation and other aspects of the rivers

More information: <https://brecks.org/> and osbrecks.co.uk [from early December]

Additional links

Google map of historic swim and other recreation places

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=13aleZ9gIISS1U1-cR5kq2nooiE77HLo&usp=sharing>

'A Fun History of Thetford's Rivers 1880s to 2000s': [watch on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV3NDh5KQKs) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV3NDh5KQKs>).

Tales from the Riverbank exhibition

online: <https://www.imogensriverswims.co.uk/blog/os-brecks-2/tales-from-the-riverbank-online-exhibition/>

Isleham Society https://www.facebook.com/groups/islehamsociety/?locale=en_GB
Mildenhall and District Museum <https://mildenhallmuseum.co.uk/>
St Edmundsbury Chronicle
<http://www.stedmundsburychronicle.co.uk/riverlark/larkhome.htm>
Suffolk Archives <https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/>
Lakenheath Heritage Group <https://lakenheathparishcouncil.gov.uk/lakenheath-heritage/>
Brandon and District Local History Society <https://bdlhs.org/>
Brandon Heritage Centre <https://www.facebook.com/BrandonHContr/>
Ancient House Museum <https://www.ancienthouse.norfolk.gov.uk/>
Stoke Ferry History Group <https://stokeferrydhg.org/>
Oxborough History Group – [oxboroughhistorygroup\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:oxboroughhistorygroup[at]gmail.com)
Methwold History Group <http://www.methwoldhistorygroup.org.uk/>
Swaffham Museum <https://www.swaffhammuseum.co.uk/>

From early December this website will expand upon the talk and report on the projects:

osbrecks.co.uk

Meanwhile, this section of the website is on the two BFER projects, Tales from the River and Healing Waters:

<https://www.imogensriverswims.co.uk/blog/os-brecks-2/>

These notes go along with the slides for the online talk 14 November 2024, part of the [The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme](#) (BFER), supported by the [National Lottery Heritage Fund](#).

You can also watch the presentation on the BFER YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeINiewDUC0> (52 minutes)

Imogen Radford November 2024