

'RIVER WEY FLOOD VICTIMS GET 50p PER ACRE COMPENSATION.'

Iain Wakeford 2014



As noted last week the Wey Navigation was one of the first man-made waterways in this country – long before Canal Mania gripped the country, with local farmers and labourers being the original 'navvies'. At the height of construction up to 200 men were employed on the work.

Despite the difficulties created by the 'creative accounting' in the construction of the Navigation, the waterway was an immediate commercial success with corn, flour, timber and other agricultural products being carried to London and items such as coal being transported on the return journey. Chalk, Beer, Bark (for tanning), and rags (for the paper industry), were also regularly carried, and in later years gunpowder from the works at Chilworth were often taken by barge. Although it was a commercial success, for some shareholders and others it was a financial disaster. Some of the work on construction was not up to standard with the result that local fields were often flooded.

The original idea of Sir Richard Weston for a 'new ryver' through the Sutton Place estate was to irrigate the fields - but to irrigate them in a controlled manner and at the right time of year. The floods that occurred because of the poor work on construction were evidently in the wrong place at the wrong time! They did little to improve the fields, and did a great deal to

hinder the mill-owners along the length of the Navigation

Some craftsmen employed on building or repairing the waterway had not been paid, and in 1654 the shareholders took Major Pitson to court. In 1671 a Commission was set up to look into claims against the Wey Navigation and six trustees were appointed to run the waterway from then on.

The claims by shareholders are, on the whole, not as interesting as the claims 'for work done' or 'for loss from damage'. It is from these latter claims that we discover most about the locality and its people.

One of the claims is from a man by the name of John Trigg who claimed £5.13s for work he had carried out on the construction of the waterway in 1655. In the claim he was described as a 'yeoman' of Sutton in Woking, and it may well be that this is the Trigg who gave his name to Triggs Lock at Sutton Green.

The parish registers for St Peter's at Old Woking start in 1653 and the first entry in the Baptism Register is for Margaret Trigg, daughter of John Trigg junior, born on the 4th September and baptised on the 3rd October. Whether that was 'our' John I do not know as there appear to be two or three John Triggs in the Woking area about this time. The burials register records in June 1654 the death of Jane, the daughter of

The lock at Sutton is possibly named after John Trigg

John Trigg of Sutton (whose son James was born and baptised early the following year), but also John Trigg of Hale End in Woking, whose daughter Annis was born on the 23rd September 1655. Ours is most likely the 'Sutton' John, but Hale End tithing extended to the Runtley Wood area, so 'Hale End' John could also be a candidate.

There are a number of other Triggs recorded in the Sutton area in the late 17th century. In 1661 James Trigg, a yeoman, gave 6 shillings as a 'free and voluntary present to Charles II' upon the reinstatement of the monarchy. Margaret Trigg, a widow, gave 4 shillings, but there is no record of John ever giving anything!

Perhaps he didn't want to 'volunteer' money to Charles II. Perhaps, having not been paid for his work in 1655, he couldn't afford to, or maybe he was just not in town when the collectors were present!

In the Hearth Tax returns of 1664 John Trigg is recorded as being taxed on just one hearth at Sutton, whilst James had three hearths and another Trigg (a widow by the name of Anne), paid for two. The cottage at Triggs Lock had just one hearth and chimney!

It is possible that John Trigg's father was William Trigg as in his will dated 18th April

1639 he left property to his son John Trigg when he reaches the age of 24. Intriguingly William was described as a carpenter (just the skills needed in making locks and bridges), with his will being proved on the 6th January 1654 – just as the Wey Navigation was being built. There was a Richard Trigg and a Henry Trigg all recorded in numerous wills in the area in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, so it is also possible that John Trigg was the offspring of one of these – one way or other, they were probably all related (see Thomas Bristowe's will on the next page below)

Likewise John's mother could have been Margaret who in 1628 is recorded in the will of Thomas Butlere of Send as being his daughter and mother of at least five children called Richard, Henry, John, Elizabeth and Agnes.

If non-payment of the 'Wey' money was causing problems for John in the 1660's, by the 1670's (when he put in his claim), he must have at least started to go up in the world. This may have been short-lived, as John Trigg of Sutton next appears in the records as a 'husbandman' of Sutton. That was in 1693, when he was apparently 68 years of age. This would seem to tie in with the above - making him 30 when he helped build the Navigation, and about 46 when he put in his claim and 82 when he died in 1707.

John Trigg of Sutton, Woking, Husbandman, sick and weak 31st January 1703/4.

To my brother William £5 and £3 p.a.; to my bother Henry, deceased's four children Richard, Margaret, Elizabeth and Mary, £5 each after the death of my brother William Trigge; to my cousin Elizabeth wife of John Phillips of Chobham £5 after the death of William; to my cousin Margaret Trigge's daughter Elizabeth Jackeway £8 at 18; to Richard son of Richard Wisdome, snr. £5 after the death of brother William and bedstead, mat, cord, featherbed, bolster and its trappings I lie on, joined chest and broad box; to Elizabeth wife of cousin Richard and Ann Hayward children of my cousin Mary Charman £2 10s each after the death of William; residue to Richard Wisdome of Sutton, Woking, yeoman, snr. Executor. Witness Richard Lee; Benjamin Bristow and John Bristow.

Proved 1st July 1707.

John Trigg was not the only one to claim for work carried out in the construction of the Navigation. Henry Ellyott of Pirford also put in a claim for £9.6s 'for work done and materials used'. This was probably the same man recorded in the 1664 Hearth Tax returns as paying tax on two hearths at Pyrford and whose will was made in April 1672.

Another man claiming for work and materials was Francis Pomefoy, a husbandman from Woking, who claimed just £2.6/10. Unfortunately I can not find any other reference to Francis Pomefoy in my files, nor can I find anything of Thomas Roker another

'husbandman' - this time from 'Woadham'. His claim was for £12.

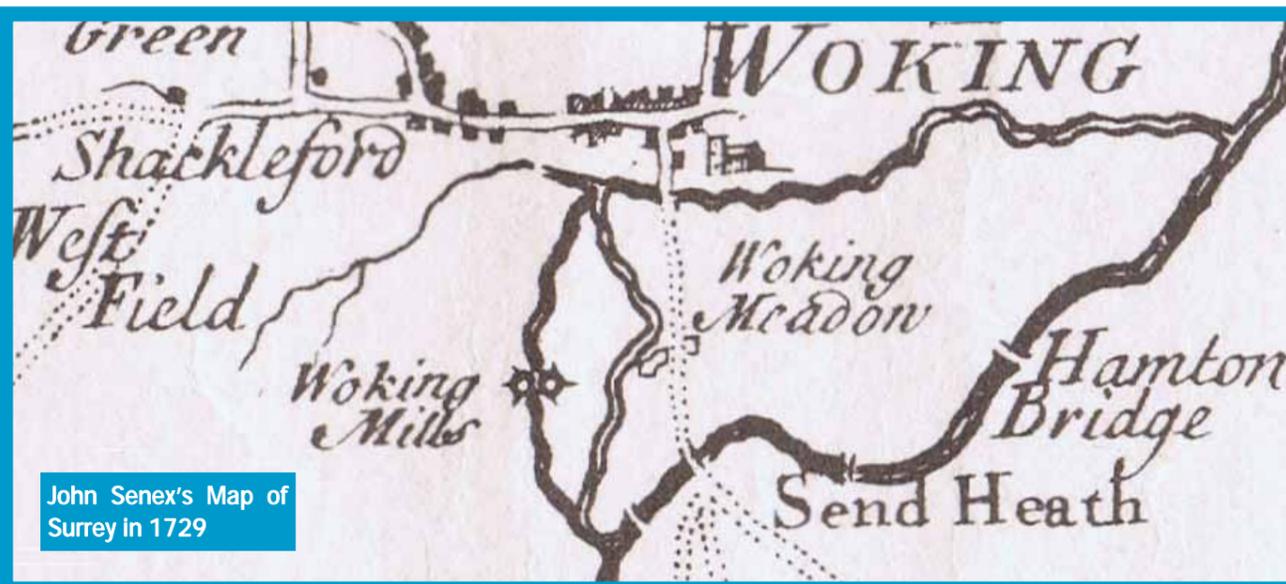
I was equally unsuccessful with Robert Cooke, a labourer from Woking, who claimed £30 for work carried out in 'repairing the banks and locks'. However it is just possible that this is the same man who made out his will in 1690 as Robert Cooke of Guildford, Yeoman (and possibly the son of Robert Cooke an innkeeper of Woking who left property to his son, Robert, when he died in 1621).

When the Navigation was completed it had to be looked after - hence John Freeland's claim for £20.1s for labour in 'looking after part of the river'. This is probably the John Freeland who was taxed on two hearths in 1664 when he was recorded as living in the 'Shackleford' tithing of Woking, so presumably the section he looked after was in the Woking area.



Was the Navigation Cottage built on the site of John Worsfold's cottage?

If that really was his normal weekly wage then he must have been very pleased to see Charles II returned to the throne, as in 1661 his 'voluntary present' was one shilling (one day's pay)! John Worsfold of Send, made his will in 1691, by which time he too was described as a 'yeoman'.



Intriguingly John Freeland's name also crops up in the will of Thomas Butlere of Send's when, like John Trigg, he is listed as a grandson, probably being the son of Thomas' eldest surviving daughter, Jane.

There were (and still are) a number of Freeland's in the Woking area, but the 1671 claim seems to be the last record of this particular John.

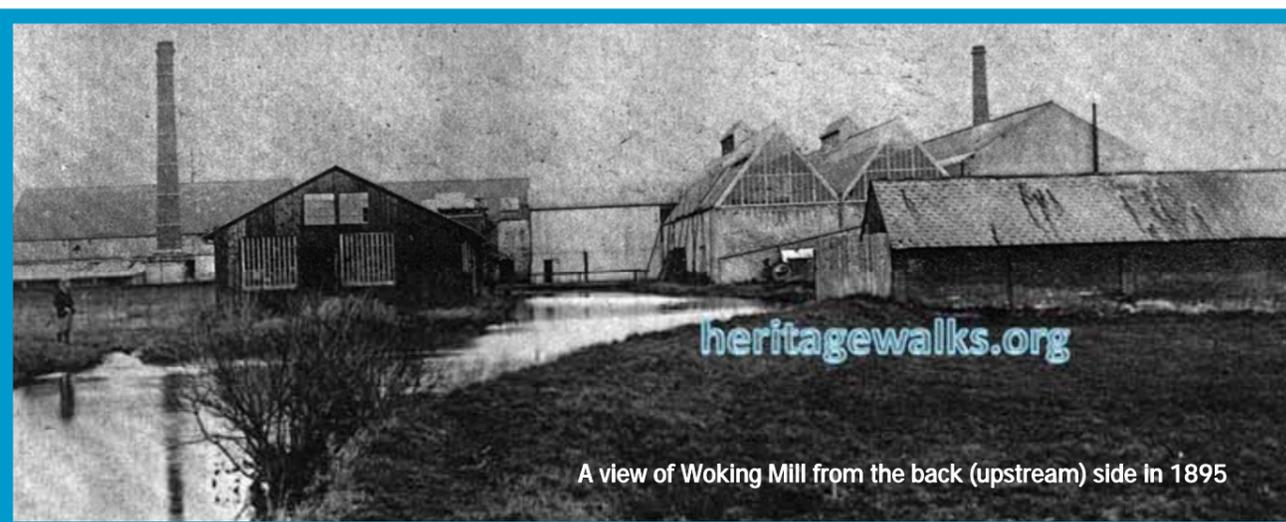
Another John claiming in 1671 for work on the navigation was John Worsfold of Send. In his claim he is described as a husbandman. His work was on repairing the banks of the river, possibly in the area now know as 'Worsfold Gates'!

From his claim we can judge how much such work would have cost. His claim was for five weeks work at a rate of five shillings a week!

In 1661 a Thomas Crosse was described as a 'yeoman' of 'Worplesdon', but this may have been the same gentleman who was described as a 'Gentleman' from Send in 1671 claiming for 'several loads of timber to make the locks'. Judging by Thomas Crosse's 'voluntary present' in 1661 he was far from poor - he gave 10/- as a free and voluntary present to Charles II.

Another gentleman who was far from poor - James Zouch - put in a claim as Lord of the Manor of Woking. He was claiming £400 for the loss of water to his corn mill at Woking, which he had leased to James Collyer.

James Collyer also claimed £400 'for loss of water during the past eight years' and £50 per annum until the expiry of the lease in thirteen years time. Although this claim went back only eight years, we know that James Collyer had been the miller at Woking for some time before



A view of Woking Mill from the back (upstream) side in 1895

then as he was recorded as such in 1661 and his name appears on a 'traders token' dated 1657. I don't know when he ceased to be the miller, but by 1678 his nephew James Hooke was the miller.

Woking was not the only mill affected. At Newark, Francis, Viscount Montague, Lord of the Manor of Ripley and Send, claimed £1,000 for damage to his land and flooding taking away water from his mill, and 'Henry Allen, of Newarke in Send', claimed £33 for labour in taking care of the 'tumbling bay called Walsham bay'.

Henry Allen of Send made his will in 1689, in which he is described as a miller. Was this Newark Mill?

Other claims were for flooding to fields with perhaps not surprisingly a number of claims for damage done to the 'common' meadows - the Broadmeads in Sutton, Send and Woking.

John Bristowe of Sutton, a yeoman, claimed £28 for the past fourteen years and £50 for the 'total spoiling of his meadowland' in the Broad Mead (presumably at Sutton); Lionel Rawlins of Woking, gent, claimed £20 for damage done to his seven rods of meadow in Send caused by flooding; and Thomas Mascall of Send, gent, claimed '£20 for past damage and £1 per annum for future damage' to two acres of land he held in Woking Broadmead for the past twenty years.

I am not certain how they calculated the claims 'for future damage', but I hope anyone who is flooded now will get more than Thomas Mascall's 50p per annum per acre in compensation!

John Bristowe is recorded in 1661 as contributing 30/- to the 'Free and Voluntary Present to Charles II', and in 1668-9 was recorded as being aged 60 when he gave evidence in a case regarding the Wey Navigation. It is probable that he was the son of Thomas Bristowe a yeoman farmer of Sutton

Thomas Bristowe of Sutton, Woking, yeoman, sick and weak, 24th March 1625/6. To be buried in the churchyard; to repair of church 2s 6d; to poor 10s.

To my son John Bristowe a bed and bedstead in the loft over the parlour and its contents and twelve silver spoons, a brass pan, three tables, two sheets, my biggest cauldron, six pewter items when he comes into his land; to my son Henry Bristowe £100 at 21, a brass pot and cauldron; to my daughter Elizabeth Forder £1; to my daughters Joan Bristowe, Mary Bristowe, Agnes Bristowe and Catherine Bristowe £50 each at marriage or 21; to my daughter's son John Forder 5s; to my godson John Trigg son of Henry Trigg 3s; to my godson Henry Trigg son of Richard Trigg 3s; to my godson William son of William Trigg 3s; to rest of godchildren 1s each; residue to my wife Elizabeth Bristowe, executrix.

Overseers John Bristowe of Streame, Henry Trigg, Richard Trigg (3s 4d each).

Witness Henry Trigg and John Trigg. Proved 14th September 1626.

The 'tumbling bay' at Walsham, originally maintained by Henry Allen of Newarke in Send,



who in 1626 left property to his son John (who would then have been 25) and money to his god-children including John Trigg (see left).

Richard Lee of Sutton next Woking, yeoman, claims £40 for damage to land in Sutton Broadmead in Woking. There are a number of Richard Lee's at this time, but it seems probable that this is the gentleman, aged 75 in 1679-80, who gave evidence in a case regarding the tithes and bounds of the rectory of Woking and chapel of Horsell. He may also have been the Richard Lee listed in the Lay Subsidy records for the 1620s - 40s, and the Richard Lee of 'Loampits' who made out his will in 1680.

Lionel Rawlins of Woking, gent, owns seven

rods of meadow in Broadmead, Send. Claims £20 for damage to his meadow by flooding. There were two Lionel Rawlins' during the 17th century (possibly father and son), but this one was probably the Lionel who we know was aged 55 in 1668-9, and who in 1701 transferred land in Woking to William Walden. Lionel Rawlins' Will was dated 1707.

Sarah Tichborne in the county of Surrey, widow, owns five rods in Broadmeade, Send and two acres in the lower end of the Lower Broadmeade. Claims £30 for damage by flooding.

John Cathringham of Send, yeoman, owns five rods in Broadmeade, Send, Claims £15 for damage by flooding.

Thomas Parkhurst of Woking, yeoman, owns one acres in Broadmeade, Send. Claims £10 for damage by wearing away of the soil, flooding, and stopping up of a way.

Thomas Mascall of Send, gent, claims £20 for past damage and one £1 per annum for future damage to two acres in Woking Broadmead which he has owned for the past twenty years.



The floods at Send March in 1968

John Rutland of Ripley, yeoman, claims £40 for damage to land in Newarke mead in Send by flooding.

James Atfeild of Send, yeoman, claims £10 for damage to meadow at Newark in Send by flooding.

Robert Colton of Send, husbandman, claims £10 for damage to meadows at Newarke in Send.

Finally John Slifeild the younger¹³, of Pirford, yeoman, claims £36, being two pounds per annum for the past eighteen years for damage to his land. Claims a further six pounds because the river had overflowed onto his land bringing 'dirt and filth upon the same'. Claims two pounds spent on materials and repairs. The name John Slifield appears in the records of Pyrford a number of times during the 17th century. Some obviously refer to John Senior,



Pyrford Lock has not altered much over the years, although the fields in the background are now part of Wisley Golf Course.

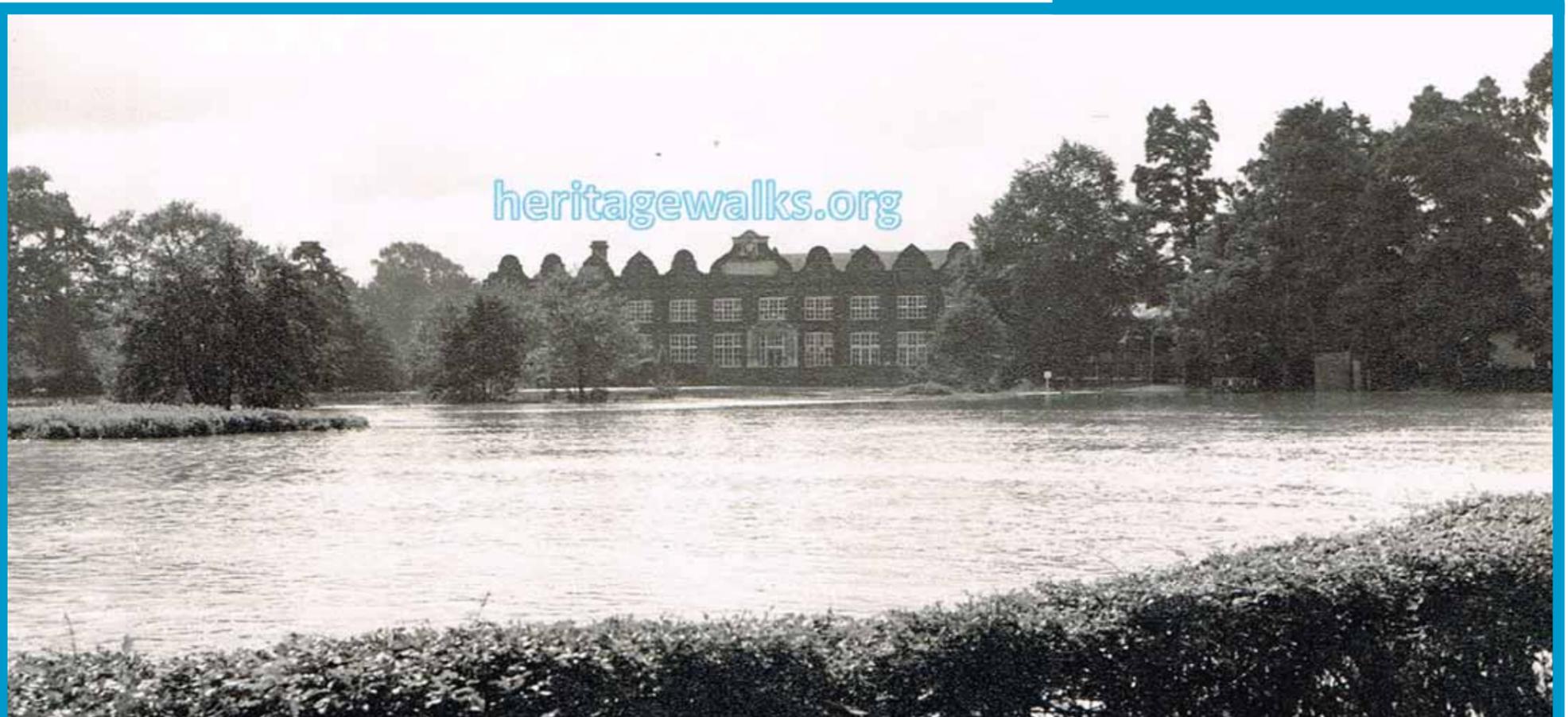
others to John junior, but often the records are unclear. There may even have been another John Slifield in the area at that time, although this does seem unlikely.

John Slifield Senior was one of Pyrford's churchwardens in 1668 (together with John Sayle - see below). He continued to be a churchwarden until the early 1680s and in 1685 John Slyfeilde Senior made out his will. In

the Feet of Fines for the same year there is a record of the transfer of lands in Pyrford between him and his son, John Slyfeilde junior.

John Junior appears to have been a man of some wealth as in 1688 he bought further land in Pyrford from William Stoughton, and the following year land from John Tichburne and William Bold. John Tichburne sold more land to him in 1691.

History repeating itself – the floods of the 1960's replicating the floods of 300 years before!



ITS ALL GRIST TO THE MILL AT BYFLEET



The Wey Navigation may have brought problems for some local farmers and labourers, but it brought benefits too. Their goods could be taken to market much easier – especially London where they could get a much better price than locally, and other goods could be ‘imported’ into our area cheaper as well. Some mill owners, of course,

objected to the new waterway disrupting the flow of water for their machinery, but they too benefited from new markets and in Byfleet a new mill was established next to the Navigation at Parvis Bridge.

That was the grist mills producing various animal feeds that were set up here in the 1780’s. Originally there were about six

buildings on the site, but now only a couple remain (no longer working as a mill).

The towpath here must originally have gone in front of the buildings (so that the horse could pull the barges), but at some stage, presumably after horses ceased to be used, the towpath was diverted around the back.



NO BRIDGE FOR BRUSHETTS

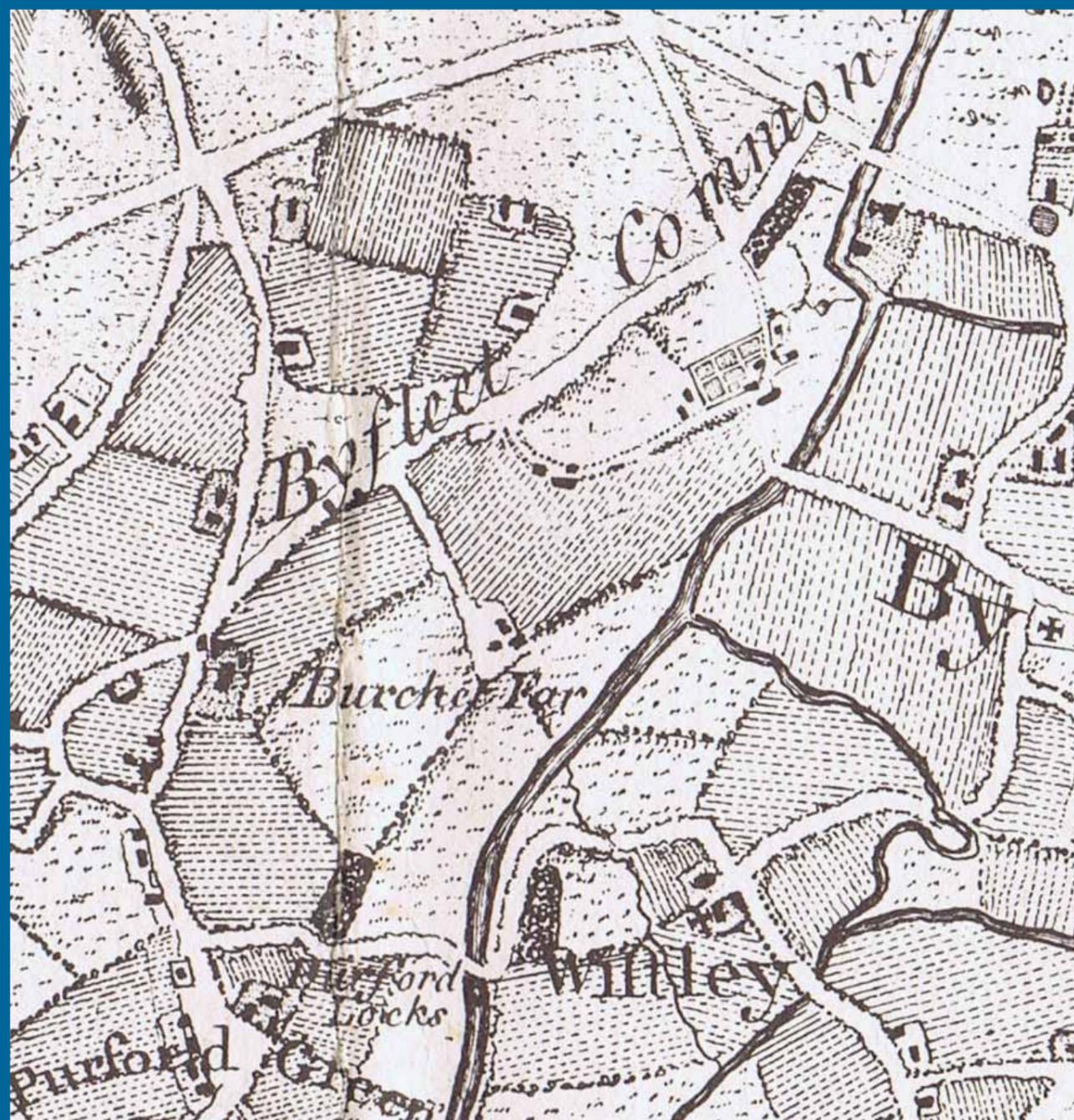
In Pyrford one local farmer had more to complain about than most. He was John Sayle, gent, who claimed that about 1660 the river broke its banks flooding his meadowland called Brushetts and bringing with it two hundred loads of gravel, sand and mud. Four years later the river flooded his fields again and six months before putting in his claim it happened a third time. But his biggest bugbear was the fact that when the Navigation was made it cut through his land causing him 'to make a detour of one and a half miles to reach part of his land until a promised bridge is built'

For that he claimed £180 damages for the past eighteen years and £10 per annum for the future!

For the flooding he claimed £20 for past damage and £2 per annum for the future for the first flood in 1660, with £24 and £4 per annum for damage caused by the 1664 flood and £2 for the flooding of 1670.

The claim for the bridge doesn't appear to have made much difference as a century later it still hadn't been built, if this map of 1768 is anything to go by. The bridge at Pyrford Lock can clearly be seen at the bottom, with Parvis Bridge at the top and 'Murrays Bridge' just below it, but Dodds Bridge (the bridge that John Sayle was promised) is not on the map!

Whether John Sayle's ancestors ever received compensation I do not know. All I know is that he died in 1668/9, his will (written in January 1687/8) being proved on the 2nd March that year. In it he left 'all money due to me from John Freeland of Ockham' to his wife Joan, who from the rest of his estate was to pay John Bowell, their son in law, 'what is due from my daughter Mary's portion', and '£10 given to my daughter by her grandfather Thomas Boxall, deceased'. There is no mention of any son, so presumably Brushetts Farm passed out of the Sayle family with on or before the death of Joan.



Brushetts appears to be a corruption of Burchetts Farm on the map of 1768 (above). The farm was at the end of what is now called Dodds Lane, now occupied by Traditions Golf Course. Presumably in John Sayle's day the farm had fields on the other side of the Navigation towards Wisley church and Byfleet, probably accessed by the bridge at Pyrford Lock (or possibly what is now Murray's Bridge by West Hall). It appears that Dodds Bridge (below) was not built until the end of the 18th century or possibly into the early 19th century.



CAPTAIN CORAM & THE NAVIGATION CHARGES

In 1999 the Surrey Archaeological Society published an article by K.R. Fairclough on 'The Pocket Book of Captain Coram', detailing his involvement with Gunpowder manufacture in Surrey and his use of the Wey Navigation. Thomas Coram set up the London Foundling Hospital in 1739 and the notebook appears to have survived as it recorded the names of prominent supporters (as well as his business receipts and expenses). But it is his notes of journeys on the Navigation from March 1729 that are of interest from our point of view.

Thomas Coram was a sailor and shipwright who had retired to England after spending most of his working life in the New World.



Having returned to England, Thomas Coram (above) apparently became appalled by the abandoned and dying newborn children and young on the streets of the capital. He spent seventeen years campaigning for the establishment of the Foundling Hospital, which received its Royal Charter on the 17th October 1739 from George II for the 'Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children'.

In January and February 1729 he notes payments for the construction of a barge at Lambeth to carry gunpowder under sail up the Thames and then to be pulled by horse on the Wey. The maiden voyage to Guildford began on the 4th March at 11 o'clock at night (to take advantage of the incoming tide), with Coram on board.

On the evening of the 5th March the barge was moored at Weybridge on the Navigation and Coram recorded 'bought 5 quarts of ale from Lord Portmore's bailiff' for trip upstream, & spent 3s 6d at house where 'we sat by the fire until day light'.

The barge took two days to reach Guildford, with payments for rope at 'Oaking' of sixpence for 'the stopping the mills to raise the water', and 5s 8d on a leg of mutton, bread and beer for the bargemen's dinner when they reached Guildford.



Apart from the spelling of Woking the payment to the mill is most interesting and obviously troubled Coram at the time. On the 8th March he spent the evening with Mayor of Guildford, Peter Quenell, but the following day he travelled back to London by land to visit the Earl of Portmore, the owner of Navigation. We don't know what was said at the meeting, but a few days later he visited the Houses of Parliament to search for the Acts of Parliament concerning the Wey Navigation (noting a payment for 3s 6d, for a copy I presume). Later Coram noted 'unreasonable demands' on the barge's fourth voyage to Guildford suggesting that he was questioning either the 'riverage dues' (tolls charged by owners of Navigation) or additional tolls by millers to allow barges to pass.

On the 18th March Coram returned to Guildford where he hired horses from the Mayor to travel to Weybridge where the Earl of Portmore was staying at his country estate - Portmore Park.

The barge, now laden with Gunpowder from Chilworth, left Guildford on the afternoon or evening of the 21st March when a payment of sixpence was made to 'Mr Rusels the millers man' at Stoke Mill. The pocketbook also notes three shillings being paid to Mr Burchet the miller at Woking and '5s for horse and 4s 6d for man to help barge'. Finally there was a payment of eight pence for a night's keep for the horse and payment of £1 10s 4d to 'Lord Portmore's bailiff Mr Hammerton' for '6½ tons of river dues at 8s 4d per load'.

These payments had been negotiated in 1670's. Tolls were probably variable and subject to negotiation on each voyage, depending on the water supply and the state of Navigation.

Toll income was an important asset and advertised as such when mills were sold. In August 1749 the London Gazette advertised the Snuff & Corn Mill at Woking noting 'the riverage or penning for barges', whilst in December 1782 the Sussex Weekly Advertiser advertising the sale of Stoke Mill noted 'the penning of the water for the convenience of barges passing to and from Guildford of which the yearly tolls amount to between £50 & £60'. When Newark Mill was sold in 1795 the sales brochure noted 'the pennings for boats and barges navigated

Thames Lock at Weybridge, near where Thomas Coram's barge was moored on the evening of the 5th March 1729.

on the said river, with the wharfage and toll, had produced for several years a neat £70 per annum', a not insignificant figure.

Coram, and no doubt others, questioned all these charges and in April 1729 noted in his pocketbook '10s 6d to the unreasonable demands of Lord Portmore's Steward', along with nine shillings to millers along the Wey for shutting down their mills. That was on top of the four shillings for the horse to tow the barge up and down the waterway, four shillings 'for a man to assist the boat down the river', and 2s 6d for the bargeman (plus 1s 6d for two nights keep for Coram's own horse).

The pocketbook only records four journeys involving Coram's barge, although others may well have taken place afterwards and the carriage of gunpowder by others continued for some time.



The payments to millers in compensation for loss of water varied according to the conditions. This might explain why Mr Russell at Stoke only received sixpence, when Mr Burchett at Woking was paid six times that amount.