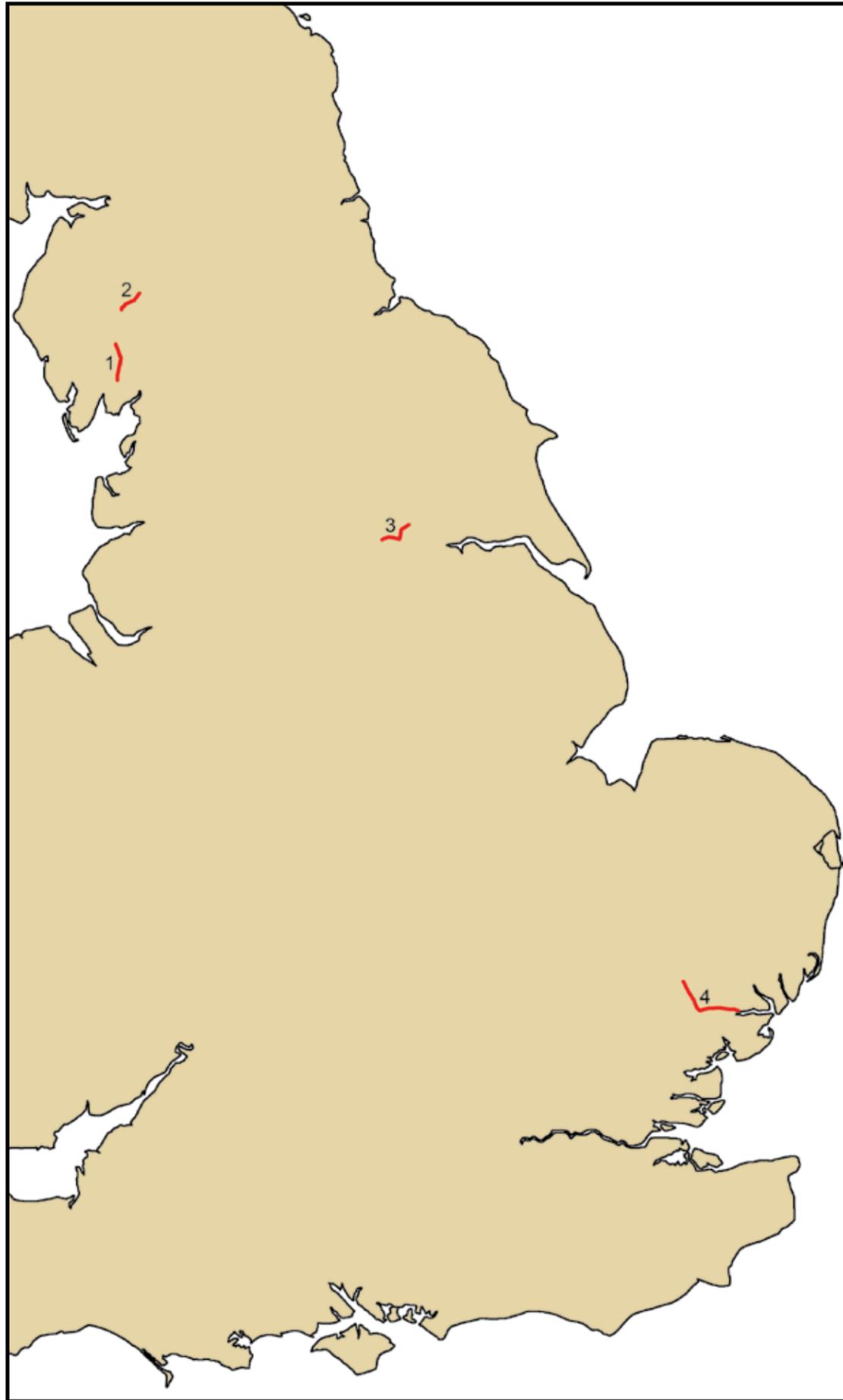


Stuart Fisher



***More British
Navigations***



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Cover: Pines manage to get a grip on Silver Crag, Ullswater.



Lakeside ferry terminal on Windermere.



Riparian property at Stratford St Mary on the River Stour.

Acknowledgements

P5 from *The Prelude* by William Wordsworth.

P9 from *Daffodils* by William Wordsworth.

P15 from *Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandrie* by Thomas Tusser.

Every effort has been made to trace authors. *Canoeist* is happy to correct any error or omission in future editions.

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Typeset in 9pt Bembo

Legend for maps

-  Featured river
-  Other canal or river
-  Motorway
-  Other road
-  Railway
-  Open water or sea
-  Inter-tidal zone
-  Built-up area
-  Woodland

Scale 1:200,000.
North is always at the top.

Photographs

All photographs by the author.

1 Windermere

England's largest and most popular lake

*Midway on long Winander's eastern shore,
Within the crescent of a pleasant bay,
A tavern stood; no homely-featured house,
Primeval like its neighbouring cottages,
But 't was a splendid place, the door beset
With chaises, grooms, and liveries, and within
Decanters, glasses, and the blood-red wine.*

William Wordsworth

shoes, buttons and tools from the fort are displayed in the Armit Museum in Ambleside and at Brockhole while a heap of stones at Borrans dates from that era.

Windermere was the basis for Arthur Ransome's *Swallows & Amazons*, one of the best loved of all children's stories, the Unexpected Arctic being at this end where the River Brathay eases in past marsh marigolds. Nearby is the Brathay Hall training centre.

The islet of Seamew Crag guards Pull Wyke, a rare bay with reedbeds. In a Bannisdale slate area, the lake is



Fairfield, source of the glacier which created the lake.

Fed by the River Brathay, Windermere reaches southwards across Cumbria to the River Leven, on which a dam holds up the level of the lake. It is one of those lakes radiating out from the Lakeland dome.

It is England's largest and longest lake, also its most popular and one of the busiest with 1,600 powerboats on a pleasant day. It all lies within the Lake District National Park, the largest south of the border, established in 1951. Beyond the head of the lake is Fairfield, the horseshoe shaped mountain hollow which was the site of the glacier which produced the lake.

It takes its name from the Old Norse man Vinnandr and is used for water supply. In 1930 Sir Henry Seagrave was killed attempting the world water speed record. The speed limit was lowered in 2005 so that even water skiing is no longer possible.

The surface is free of plants but there are eels, perch, pike and trout and it is the main home for deepwater toothed Windermere char. It also has roach and rudd, introduced by anglers for themselves to catch. Cormorants, swans, mallards, tufted ducks, goldeneye, shelducks, redbreasted mergansers, greylag, Canada and barnacle geese and blackbacked and blackheaded gulls might be seen. There have also been claimed sightings of an ugly monster, the eachy. Much of the shoreline is wooded with oaks, birches and pines in evidence.

At the head of the lake is **Ambleside** with its many outdoor clothing shops, a magnet for tourists. There is a carpark across the road from the lake near the Waterside Inn and Regent Hotel at Waterhead, together with toilets, making it a useful place to launch small craft.

A thin band of Coniston limestone runs through Waterhead, supporting lush plants which like lime, in contrast with those on the acid soils across the rest of the region. Running along the east side of the lake is the A591 which, between Keswick and Windermere, has been voted Britain's best road.

Agricola built a wood and clay fort at the head of the lake, upgraded by Trajan in about 100. Furness sandstone blocks were used, probably delivered by boat, the foundations of the Galava fort remaining. It was attacked up to three times and a selection of Roman pottery,

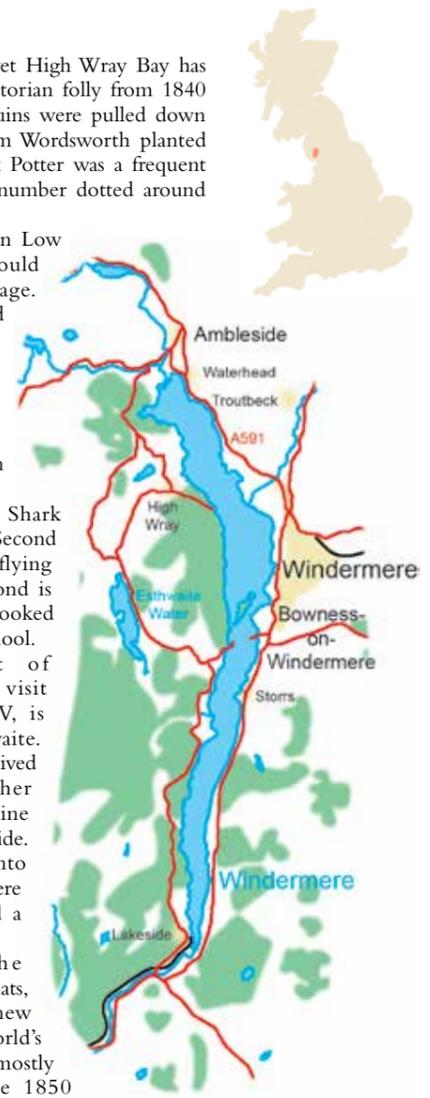
67m deep off Watbarrow Point yet High Wray Bay has a sandy bed. Wray Castle is a Victorian folly from 1840 but some accompanying mock ruins were pulled down as being a bit too unsafe. William Wordsworth planted a mulberry tree here and Beatrix Potter was a frequent visitor. A boathouse is one of a number dotted around the shoreline.

Ruskin had a family holiday in Low Wood when he was 11 and would return to the lake for his old age. Beyond Low Wood Hotel and Langdale Chase Hotel on the eastern shore, Brockhole, dating from 1898, is now the Lake District visitor centre. Set in 13ha of gardens, it has Edwardian terraces, unusual plants, an orangery and a scented garden.

White Cross Bay, Ransome's Shark Bay, has the concrete apron of a Second World War factory, Sunderland flying boats taking off from here. Beyond is the Trout Beck confluence, overlooked by Talgarth Hall and the Lakes School.

Beyond the viewpoint of Adelaide Hill, named after a visit by the widow of William IV, is **Windermere**, formerly Birthwaite. It developed after the railway arrived in 1848, Wordsworth and other preservationists preventing the line from being completed to Ambleside. These days the town merges into **Bowness-on-Windermere**. There is a Windermere Air Show and a Windermere Steamboat Festival.

After Rayrigg Hall, the Windermere Jetty: Museum of Boats, Steam & Stories, reopened in new buildings in 2019, offers the world's finest collection of steamboats, mostly Victorian and Edwardian. The 1850





The Langdale Pikes rise above the end of Windermere.



The head of the lake.

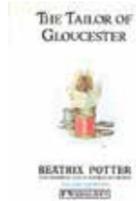


steam launch *Dolly*, recovered from the bed of Ullswater in 1962, is the world's oldest mechanically powered boat. The 1869 8.5m iron carvel *Esperance* was the inspiration for Captain Flint's houseboat in *Swallows & Amazons* and is the oldest boat on Lloyd's Register of Yachts. An 1898 motorboat is the oldest in the country and other exhibits include Beatrix Potter's rowing boat and a Windermere steam kettle.

of Beatrix Potter is a major attraction for Bowness, the most popular Lake District resort, home to the Royal Windermere Yacht Club of 1860 although yachting regattas have been held here since 1818. The 15th century St Martin's church has chained books, notable stained glass windows and a wooden statue of St Martin cutting his cloak to give half to a beggar.

Belle Isle is the largest island in the Lakes, accompanied by Thompson's Holme and other smaller islets, and is the only inhabited island on Windermere. It was occupied by the Romans and Vikings and was defended by the Cavaliers for eight days. The round 1774 Grade I Georgian house was referred to by Wordsworth as a pepperpot.

Potter was the most successful children's author of all time, in addition to being a serious scientific researcher, and with her royalties bought 16km² of land in the Lake District which she left to the National Trust. The World



Wansfell Pike rises above Waterhead.



Wray Castle above a boathouse by the lake.

On 19th February 1635 47 people in a wedding party drowned when the ferry sank, the ghostly shouting of the Crier of Claife monk to the ferryman at midnight on that date marking the disaster. The Crier returns as a mental wreck and has since been exorcised to a small quarry.

The Victorian Claife Viewing Station was built to give fine views over the lake, the name from the Norse kleif, steep hill. The Cross Lakes Shuttle vehicle ferry pulls itself across the lake on wires. Ferry House is the home of the Freshwater Biological Association.

Blackwell, high on the east side, is 20th century and one of Britain's finest Arts & Crafts houses.

Ramp Holme, which takes its name from ramsons or wild garlic, stands off Storrs, storth being Old Norse for undergrowth. The Georgian Storrs Hall in Italian mansion style, where Sir Walter Scott met the Lake poets



The lake shore at Bowness.



Ferry House, departure point for the Cross Lakes Shuttle.



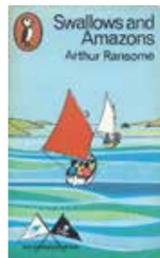
Ramp Holme, named after wild garlic.



Rawlinson Nab projects into the lake.



Lakeside with the ferry terminal and Lakeside Hotel.



in 1825, was built with profits from slave trading. In the basement there are still some chains used for securing slaves. Storrs Temple of Heroes, a small cylindrical structure on the edge of the lake, guards Ransome's Houseboat Bay.

Cunsey Beck joins from Esthwaite Water before Rawlinson Nab projects conspicuously into the lake, which is gradually becoming narrower and progressively more remote. Lazy Bay, between Rawlinson Nab and Grubbins Point, is believed to be Ransome's Horseshoe Cove.

Beyond Graythwaite Hall, Silver Holme was Ransome's Cormorant Island while Silverholme was the home of Oscar Gnosspelius, who piloted his seaplane inventions on the lake. On the opposite bank are Tower Wood sewage works and the Great Tower Scout camp.

The Lakeside YMCA national centre, sometimes used by the Open Canoe Sailing Group, faces Blake Holme, Ransome's Wild Cat Island, the centre of activity in *Swallows & Amazons*.

Up the hill from the lake, among the trees, is the Stott Park Bobbin Mill which operated from 1835 to 1971, a Victorian mill producing 28,000 cotton bobbins a day, using local coppice wood and beck power. Still in working order, it includes a turbine and a steam engine.

The steamers of Windermere Lake Cruises operate from Lakeside, one of the country's top ten paid visitor attractions. MV *Tern*, of 1891, is the oldest of the cruisers. For smaller craft the only landing place here is the private beach of the Lakeside Hotel. The ferries connect with

the trains of the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway, half of the branch of the former Furness Railway. British Railways closed the line in 1965 but retained the ferries. Rolling stock includes Alexandra, Princess of Wales' royal saloon and steam railway trips may give sightings of buzzards, foxes and roe deer. At the station is the Lakes Aquarium with the UK's largest collection of freshwater fish.

Facing Ransome's Antarctic is the Victorian Fell Foot Park with vistas of daffodils and rhododendrons.

The lake eases seamlessly into the River Leven, running away through the Backbarrow Gorge, a meltwater channel adopted after the route south became blocked by glacial drift.



Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway saddle tank Repulse.

2 Ullswater

England's most beautiful lake

*I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

*Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of the bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in springly dance.*

*The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:*
William Wordsworth

St Patrick's Well is said to have had healing properties and the saint to have performed baptisms here but the name Patterdale, from Patrick's dale, is from a less famous 12th century namesake.

A memorial stone is to Donald Campbell, who took the water speed record to 326km/h in *Bluebird K7* in 1955.

The best place to launch portable boats at the head of the lake is by the pier at Glenridding, where there is a carpark. The pier is served by the passenger cruise boats, which have been used here since 1859.

In 1962 the 1850 steam launch *Dolly*, which had been sunk by ice, was recovered from the top of an underwater precipice in the lake and is now in Windermere & Steamboats Museum as the world's oldest mechanically powered boat.

Glenridding was a lead mining village, the pier built on a delta of debris swept down the Red Tarn Beck after the dam at Keppel Cove failed following a storm in 1927.

Silver Crag with its junipers rises straight from the water, a most attractive setting. On the west side is Stybarrow Crag where the Mounsey family beat off Scottish raiders in 1648 and were voted Kings of Patterdale for their performance.

Patterdale's Revd Mattinson was noted for burying his mother, marrying and burying his father, christening



Looking south towards the Kirkstone Pass from Glenridding.

Located in the Lake District National Park, Ullswater has been claimed as England's most beautiful lake. Reaching northeast across Cumbria, it is used for water supply, water being pumped to Haweswater. The name of the lake and of Lyulph are from Ulf, baron of Greystoke.

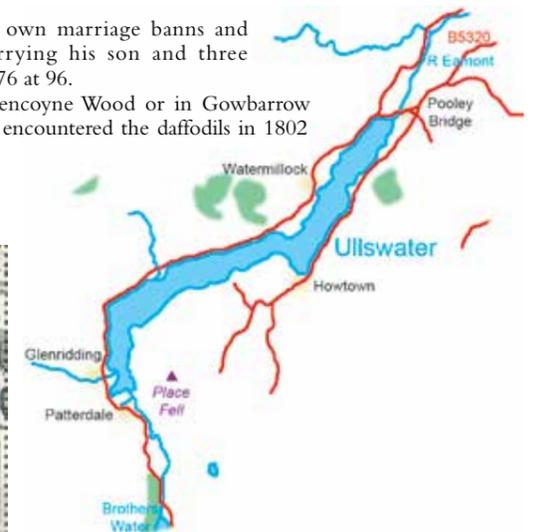
Brothers Water has been cut off from Ullswater by river borne debris, the two now linked by Goldrill Beck, which creeps out of the bushes to feed Ullswater.

The lake is subject to fickle winds, downdraughts, turbulence, high waves and breakers, some boats using moorings at the southwest corner of the lake for more shelter at the foot of the Kirkstone Pass. Wordsworth called the nearby King George V playing field 'the prettiest field in England'. It faces 657m Place Fell although 949m Helvellyn is better sought from lower down the lake.

Oaks and pines are present. The lake has perch, trout, schelly and, according to Arthurian legend, monsters. Waders, swallows, blackheaded gulls, greylag geese and low flying jets might be seen in the air while sheep are the usual livestock.

his wife, reading his own marriage banns and christening and marrying his son and three daughters, dying in 1776 at 96.

It was either in Glencoyne Wood or in Gowbarrow Park that Wordsworth encountered the daffodils in 1802



Distance
16km from Waterhead
to Lakeside

OS 1:50,000 Sheets
90 Penrith & Keswick
97 Kendal &
Morecambe



The ferry terminal at Glenridding.



Glencoigne descends from the west to Ullswater.



Pines get a grip on Silver Crag.



Looking southwest to Hallin and Gowbarrow Fells.

which were to result in one of the best known of all English poems.

Norfolk Island stands off Silver Point where the lake turns from north to northeast. The hills remain high, particularly on the east side, falling away just as steeply underwater to a depth of 63m below Kilbert How. Wainwright, probably the ultimate authority, called the path to the east here 'the most beautiful and rewarding walk in Lakeland'.

This steep slope continues to Long Crag, opposite

which Aira Beck joins at Aira Point, dropping over High Force and 22m Aira Force, the setting for Wordsworth's *Somnambulist*. The 16th century Lyulph's Tower has become a 1780 Gothic Revival hunting lodge by the Duke of Norfolk with castellation and arched windows for the Howard family. A resident in a former castle was the beautiful Emma, who met Sir Eglamore near Aira Force but was distraught when he left for the Crusades and she often sleepwalked to where they had encountered. When he returned he touched her and she



Looking up Ullswater towards the Lakeland peaks.



Martindale Common stands to the southeast.



Moorings at Watermillock.

woke up but tripped and fell to her death. He became a local hermit.

The Borrowdale volcanics give way to Skiddaw slates and a lower topography from Skelly Neb from where shelly or skelly were caught by stretching nets out into the lake.

The Outward Bound Mountain School is sited behind the neb with plenty of aquatic activity. Opposite is a significant inlet with another outdoor centre at Howtown, the foot of Fusedale, an area used for England's first postbus.

Arthur's Pike rises to 532m but then the scenery becomes more gentle with rounded limestone hills. Looking back allows progressively more of the Lakeland

peaks to be seen as the foreground drops away. Sharrow Bay has a 16th century country house alongside.

Ullswater Yacht Club is faced by Watermillock. Tents and glamping huts also face the lake. The lake at Waterfoot is terminated by a conspicuous rounded hill, topped by a settlement and the Celtic Dun Mallet hillfort.

Water leaves as the River Eamont, which looks placid enough in normal conditions but in 2015 it was high enough to bring down the three century old Pooley Bridge carrying the B5320. The slender 2020 replacement is the first stainless steel road bridge in the UK. A beach on the left beyond the bridge is a suitable egress point for portable craft.



Strategic settlement site overlooking Pooley Bridge.

Distance
11km from
Glenridding to Pooley
Bridge

OS 1:50,000 Sheet
90 Penrith & Keswick

3 Selby Canal

Avoiding the tidal Aire

Because of the meanders on the River Aire, West Haddlesey is closer to Selby than to Knottingley by water although closer to Knottingley as the crow flies. This route has more river navigation than canal.

Knottingley was the glade of Cnotta's people in Old English times. Now it has the Knottingley & Goole Canal, part of the Aire & Calder Navigation, from which the Bank Dole Cut leaves at Bank Dole Junction, a 400m link, bypassing 3km of the River Aire. Duckweed and arrowhead edge the cut.

Bank Dole Lock, with its pontoons, returns the route to the Aire, perhaps Geoffrey of Monmouth's River Wunued, made navigable in 1699. A pipe bridge crosses. With high levées, the river is subject to flooding.

The boundary with Wakefield, which has followed the river to here, leaves as powerlines cross the river and an area designated as a nature reserve. The rest of the route is in North Yorkshire and has mallards, herons, swans, cormorants, great crested grebes, moorhens, kingfishers and swallows.

A timber road bridge across the river is followed by Beal Lock, which avoids a low weir. In places there are willows, weeping willows or marsh marigolds. A cow, knee deep in the river, might pause to regard a passing boat, a half eaten length of Himalayan balsam trailing from her mouth.

Water skiers use this reach of the river from a base near where more powerlines cross, these lines all converging on the former Eggborough power station, swinging from side to side as the river undertakes exaggerated meanders.

The Selby Canal's Haddlesey Flood Lock is usually left shut, approached beyond another pipe bridge via a narrow 90° junction from the river which might be flowing quite fast. The landing pontoon is out on the river, the walk to the lock passing a house with a prominent walnut tree and a winch as a garden ornament.

The River Aire becomes tidal 1km downstream below a weir at Chapel Haddlesey which is hard to pass, even on foot, although it had a lock in earlier days. The difficult tidal conditions on the meandering river have been avoided by cutting the Selby Canal. By William Jessop, it was opened in 1778 by the Aire & Calder Navigation to pre-empt a proposed Leeds-Selby Canal. However, it was only 1.1m deep and declined in use after



Bank Dole Junction seen from the Bank Dole Cut.



The weir at Beal.

the Knottingley & Goole Canal was opened, these days carrying little traffic.

With high banks, it is rural and attractive. Hawthorn, ash and sycamore trees shelter reedbeds, reeds and lilies, an environment home to whitethroats, hawker dragonflies, damselflies, hares, grass snakes, bream and roach.

The canal leaves West Haddlesey under the weathered sandstone Tankard Bridge.

Paperhouse Bridge, accompanying a stone aqueduct, is where illiterate boatmen were said to have moored overnight and been read the news from newspapers. From a more recent era, the next bridge carries the East Coast Main Line, rerouted to avoid the Selby coalfield.

Burton Hall Bridge links Burton Hall, on the site of a medieval manor, and Burn with its airfield. Burn Bridge, next to the Anchor Inn, carries the A19. It is followed by the stone Brayton Bridge with the A63.

From here there are angling platforms and the cut



Water skiers and Eggborough power station.



The approach to Haddlesey Flood Lock.





Tankard Bridge at West Haddlesey.



The East Coast Main Line crosses.



Approaching Paperhouse Bridge.



Burton Hall Bridge provides a diving platform.



Water lilies near the A19 bridge.



Winches at the entrance to Selby Basin.

becomes progressively less rural. It is followed by the Trans Pennine Trail, however, to the River Ouse, where it divides.

Brayton has the 15th century 32m spire of St Wilfrid's church on a Norman building with a magnificent chancel arch.

Brayton railway bridge, built for the East Coast Main Line, now carries only the Doncaster–Hull line. It is followed by Bawtry Bridge with the A1041.

Selby, from the Old Scandinavian for willow village, was established by the Danes and developed after the canal arrived. The 1970 market cross came a dozen years after the canal's opening and it is now a market town and the furthest inland port.

Selby Boat Centre precedes a swing bridge at the entrance to Selby Basin and Selby Lock, used for two and a half hours before to two hours after high water on the River Ouse. Selby Swing Bridge is the railway bridge across the river, a difficult structure for craft to negotiate. Nearby is the station, its notable roof carried on cast-iron columns at 4m centres supporting Vierendeel girders.

The town's pride is Selby Abbey, probably the best of its kind in the north of England. It was founded as a monastic wooden structure by monk Benedict after a vision in Auxerre, in 1069, the year following the birth here of Henry I, and had the dried finger of St Germain. Abbot Hugh rebuilt it in 1100 in limestone with three towers. It was damaged by Cromwell's men but restored in 1871 by George Gilbert Scott before a fire in 1906 caused more damage. It retains its Norman arches and spectacular stained glass, including, from the 14th century, a Jesse window and the Washington window with his coat of arms which was used as the basis for the US flag.

As Pittancer of Selby Town, comedian Tim FitzHigham is one of only two people to have handed out Maundy Money, perhaps a disappointment for those who hoped to meet the other, the Queen.



Decorative welcome to Selby.

Distance
19km from the
Aire & Calder
Navigation to
the River Ouse

Navigation
Authority
Canal & River
Trust

OS 1:50,000 Sheets
105 York & Selby

Connections
Aire & Calder
Navigation –
see CoB p281
River Ouse –
see RoB p154



Selby Basin and the lock down onto the River Ouse.

4 River Stour

Inspiration for artists

*Then tooke I wife, and led my life
in Suffolk soile.
There was I faine my self to traine,
To learne too long the fermers song,
For hope of pelfe, like wordly elfe
to moile and toile*

Thomas Tusser

The Stour or mighty river rises at Wratting Common and flows southeast to the River Orwell, forming the Suffolk/Essex border from Great Cornard. Its use to carry 30% of the Essex water supply part of the way from the River Ouse in Cambridgeshire to Abberton Reservoir assists its flow rates.

It was navigable for commercial traffic from about 1504 and canalized in 1713 with 15 locks although plans to link it to the Ouse and Cam were not carried out. It imported coal and grain for its mills and exported flour as well as bricks to build the suburbs of south London. Commercial traffic ceased in 1935. It was one of the three target waterways identified for action at the IWA's inaugural meeting in 1946.

Unusually, there are portage platforms at every lock site and numerous safety warning icons and life rings. After July it becomes very weedy in places and can be little over a metre wide in places between walls of reeds or sometimes stinging nettles to encourage steering skills on its twisting course, often with low branches. Rarely, the reeds meet in the middle from opposite banks.

Brundon Mill is approached over a bridge bearing an Environment Agency notice proclaiming it to be the head of navigation. Above is a weirpool with a metre high sloping weir, a small step at the crest and a low footbridge at its base.

There is limited parking next to the bridge, the river approached through a gate with a notice stating that it an RSPB swan sanctuary, swans gathering here in quantity.

Ashes, alders, weeping willows, horse chestnuts and sycamore trees often line the river and then give way to water meadows where horned cattle graze, highland



Swans gather at Brundon.



Lilies cover the water approaching Sudbury.

cattle included. Water lilies, sedges, reedmace, watercress and reeds are frequent, duckweed building up before sluices. Damselflies and hawker dragonflies may be seen over the river.

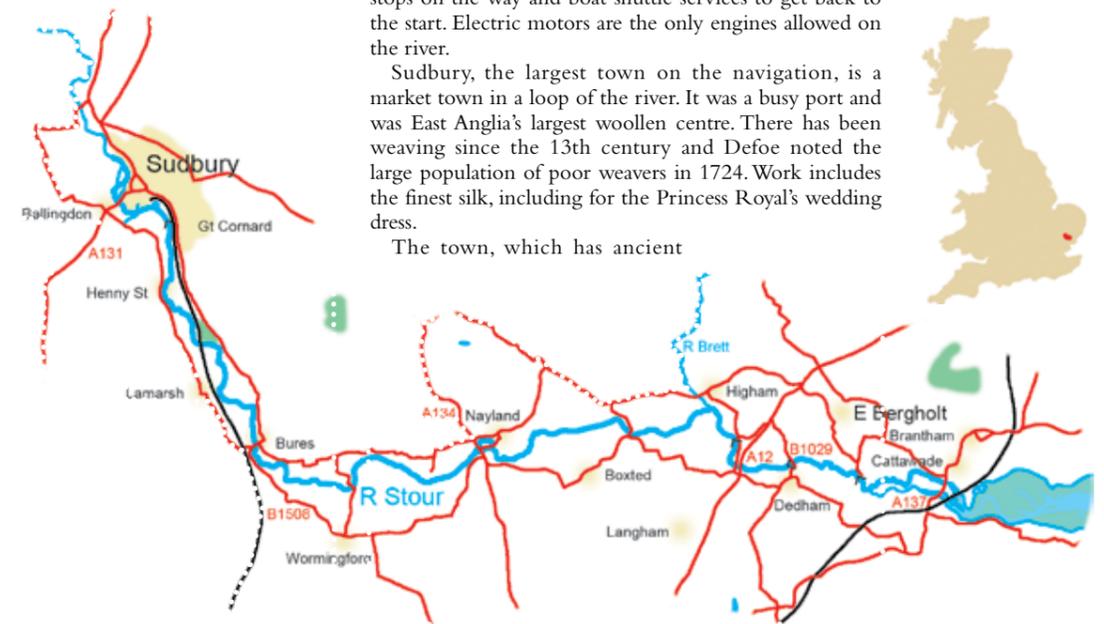
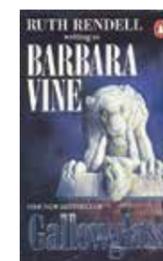
Fullingspit Side Weir, a popular swimming area for the local youth, is avoided by ignoring braiding which takes a channel away to the right.

A road leads down from the left with some parking beside parkland and then a portage is required to the right by Sudbury Croft Sluice, into the shallow gravel-bedded weirpool.

Channels converge in front of the Boathouse Bistro. Canoes can be hired by Ballingdon Bridge, which carries the A131. Canoe trips generally take place below here with the options of champagne hampers, overnight hotel stops on the way and boat shuttle services to get back to the start. Electric motors are the only engines allowed on the river.

Sudbury, the largest town on the navigation, is a market town in a loop of the river. It was a busy port and was East Anglia's largest woollen centre. There has been weaving since the 13th century and Defoe noted the large population of poor weavers in 1724. Work includes the finest silk, including for the Princess Royal's wedding dress.

The town, which has ancient



More British Navigations

buildings, was probably Dickens' Eatanswill in *The Pickwick Papers* and was used in *Gallowglass*. Salters Hall is 15th century and the Anchor Inn medieval.

St Gregory's church, founded in the 7th century by St Felix, has the skull of archbishop Simon Tybald, who was beheaded by Wat Tyler's rebels during the 1381 Peasants' Revolt. St Peter's church, now used for concerts and exhibitions, has outside a bronze statue of Thomas Gainsborough. Gainsborough's Georgian-fronted half timbered 1480 Tudor town house, where he was born, has an upper floor with weavers' windows as his father was a wool merchant. The house has 18th century furniture, has a gallery with more of his work than any other has and also features other East Anglian artists. The walled garden contains a mulberry tree.

Maria Marten had William Corder's baby here. Later she was shot by him as the victim of the sensational Red Barn murder.

From Ballingdon Bridge to Henny Street there are a number of underwater obstructions down the sides of the river while obstructions on the banks take the form of pillboxes. Rosebay willowherb and teasels are softer bank adornments. A disused railway bridge is now used for a footpath and cycleway.

The Ballingdon Cut was found to contain 14 barges sunk in 1918 on the orders of the Admiralty in case they fell into German hands. Opposite, the Granary, at the head of the Granary Cut, has the headquarters of the River Stour Trust, founded in 1968. This arm also has the Quay Theatre, rowing boat hire and racing rowing craft. Comedian Tim FitzHigham is commodore of Sudbury town quay.

A river loop leads towards the station and the Kingfisher Leisure Centre with pools, flume, wave machine and water cannon. A slipway is private.

Great Cornard was used in filming the *Lovejoy* TV series and Gainsborough painted Cornard Wood. Great Cornard Lock has been restored and is accompanied by a canoe portage route. The autogate sluice is next to a weir with a 100mm drop and then a gentle slope and a footbridge over with a warning of the limited headroom.

The river passes a sewage works where several people were injured when a train hit a sewage tanker on the



The weir at Great Cornard.



Henny Regulator Weir hardly justifies the title.



Lamarsh Weir with its fish pass.



Approaching the former royal capital of Bures.



Bures Mill overlooks the disused Bures Lock.

level crossing in 2010. A stranger incident took place in 1449 when people at Sharpsight Meadow watched as a spotted red dragon from Ballingdon Hill took an hour to beat a black dragon from Kedington Hill before they returned to their respective hills.

The Henny Street Weir, opposite the Henny Swan pub, involves portaging left past a weir with a steep metre high slope. The lock is disused, as are the others to Stratford St Mary.

The Shalford or Henny Regulator Weir is a 100mm step with platforms above and below where it would appear that a single platform could straddle the drop. Instead, with any significant flow the step would drown out.

Arrowhead and bur reed appear and cormorants, moorhens, kingfishers and herons might be seen.

Pitmire or Daws Weir has a steep slope of over a metre, portaged on the left.

Powerlines cross before and after the bridge carrying the Sudbury-Marks Tey railway at Workhouse Green. The Paradise Centre has 2ha of landscaped gardens and the Daws Hall Wildlife Farm reaches to the river and forbids landing. The Grade I Holy Innocents' church at Lamarsh was built with a round tower by the Normans.

Lamarsh Weir has a steep 300mm drop with a fish pass in the centre and portaging platforms on the left.

Bures is approached past the herringbone brick and timber Great Bevills, built about 1190 by Sir Richard Waldegrave for his son. Bures was a royal capital, Edmund having been crowned King of East Anglia here in 856. Ancient buildings include St Stephen's chapel of 1218 and the 16th century Eight Bells Inn. After the B1508 bridge there is a platform on the right to reach the recreation ground.

The portage on the right at the disused Bures Lock with its autogate is into a side channel although this is obstructed by a plank just downstream at low flows, needing to be lifted over, a locked gate perhaps preventing access to a second launch platform downstream. Facing is the large white Bures Mill.

From here the area is designated as the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Constable country with chalky lowlands. There are few positive landmarks but portages are named and have grid references. Banks

of Himalayan balsam or black sheep are met before the moated Smallbridge Hall.

The disused Wormingford Lock is accompanied by an autogate. The portage route is on the right while the main weir on the left has a metre high slope. Departure is under a segmented iron bridge carrying a minor road. The brick columns at its corners have stone caps with carved motifs which are seen most easily from the river.

Rushbanks caravan site has riverside camping and several large camouflaged tents house River Stour Boating with hire canoes.

The ancient Garnons farm is on the south side of the river while a moat lies to the north at Wissington. Sloes in season precede a low footbridge and then a large



Sheep on the river bank near Smallbridge Hall.



The weir at the disused Wormingford Lock.



The segmental bridge with its engraved pillars.



Wiston Weir has vertical steps.



Nayland Horseshoe Weir is stepped.



Langham Flumes and the following rock weir.



Riverside cottage at Stratford St Mary.



Nayland's mown grass waterside area.

river. St James' church has the altarpiece *Christ Blessing the Bread & Wine* by Constable. Court Knoll takes its name from the 15th century Alston Court.

Nayland Horseshoe Weir with its vertical steps is portaged on the right. Beyond the Anchor Inn the channel has great fluctuations in depth, from gravel shallows to deep holes.

Boxted Mill requires a long portage on the left through a private garden, the river taking a vertical drop or passing through a large Archimedes screw. Beyond is a waterworks.

Langham Flumes is a gauging weir with a pair of contoured concrete chutes which give a fast run through. However, a line of anti scour rocks follow quickly with a shootable narrow 300mm drop in the centre. The portage route is on the right.

A number of triangular structures of branches have been built out into the river and these could give problems when submerged. The River Brett joins at Higham.

Between Roger Brown Lock at Stratford St Mary and Cattawade are powered craft. Horses had to cross the river on the boats they towed and *The Leaping Horse* painting suggests they also had to jump towpath stiles.

The village name is from the Old English *straetford*, ford on a Roman road, the road in question being the one from Colchester to Caistor St Edmund. There are attractive properties large and small above Stratford St Mary Bridge, the A12 now crossing next to it on a more recent span. Although St Mary's church stands well back from the river it has a prominent position which makes it conspicuous from various points on the river.

tree which has fallen across the river. In lower water conditions it is possible to limbo under the trunk at the root end to reach the portage platform on the right. Wiston Weir has vertical steps. Behind Wissington or Wiston Mill is Lower Dairy House Garden, laid out in cottage garden style.

Convolvulus and cow parsley grow on the banks. The Roman road from Colchester crossed in this vicinity and a footbridge uses the abutments of a more substantial and more recent bridge.

The Nayland Tunnel or Nayland Bridge is a 30m Armco culvert crossed by the A134. Mown grass dotted with trees makes an attractive public riverside area at Nayland, a small market town with colourwashed houses, some with small statues in gardens leading down to the



Traditional housing in Stratford St Mary.

The river often has low banks and some of the meadows appear to be below river level. A strange modern building in a field on the south side is quite large with Doric columns and a riverside balcony, its purpose unclear.

Dedham Mill is surrounded by old pastel washed houses in what Pevsner called 'easily the most attractive small town in Essex'. Flemish cottages from the 12th to the 15th centuries were a cloth factory, a dye house remaining. The Marlborough Head Inn was a cloth merchant's house, perhaps from 1430, the cellar being for woad vats. The Sun Inn yard has a 17th century covered external staircase.

Dedham was a recruiting area for Protestant dissenters to the USA. The Grade I Sherman Hall with two centuries of graffiti engraved into the brickwork was the home of the Sherman family who were to be American politicians and soldiers, the name also being used for the tank.

The headmaster of the former Elizabethan grammar school, its building founded in 1574 by a cloth merchant, encouraged John Constable, one of his pupils, to take up painting. Constable learned at Dedham Manor, where the lord in the 15th century was Sir John Fastolf, Shakespeare's Falstaff. In *The Paston Letters* Fastolf complains of Sir John Buck, parson of Stratford, taking his fish and swans and damaging his mill and then the Duke of Suffolk taking his manor. After his death, Edward IV became involved in a dispute between the Earl of Essex and the Pastons over the manor.

The 1892 church of St Mary the Virgin was funded

by clothiers on a site used since at least 1322. It has Constable's *The Ascension*, a 40m tower often featured by Constable, shields on the roof showing the arms of the state of Massachusetts and the Avery Oak of Dedham, Massachusetts, and the grave of Tom Keating who produced Constable forgeries to order.

Another local painter was Sir Alfred Munnings. The Dedham Art & Craft Centre includes a toy museum in the former 1739 Victorian Congregational church.



Boxted Weir and Archimedes screw.



Classical architecture near Dedham.



Dedham Mill as it looks today.

A long portage on the left avoids Dedham Lock, closed permanently by the Environment Agency in 2014, and a flood control structure. Beyond Dedham Bridge, carrying the B1029, is a rowing boat hire centre and the Dedham Rare Breeds Farm.

East Bergholt has a 1531 bell cage with England's heaviest church bells, exceeding 4t. The belltower was incomplete, perhaps because Cardinal Wolsey was in disgrace, so the bells were inverted and rung by hand. They may have been moved from the far side of St Mary's churchyard to deaden the sound and placate an objecting landowner.

John Constable, the father of English landscape painting, lived in Flatford where his father operated the 1773 mill although John failed to learn the corn business. His brother, Abram, collected the haling rents on the privately-owned towpath, *Flatford Mill* is one of his best known paintings, another being *The Haywain* which includes famer Willy Lott's cottage, the mill and cottage now forming part of a field studies centre. In 88 years Lott never left the cottage for more than four successive days. The drydock, now restored, featured in *Boat Building*. The 16th century Bridge Cottage has a Constable exhibition. Mallards, Egyptian geese and hired rowing boats mill about on the water.

The large boarded and thatched Granary faces Flatford Lock, portaged on the right, and a flood control structure.

Beyond another moat the river reaches the large Judas Gap sluices, across the top of which the navigation channel crosses, apparently ascending a small tributary although the appearance is more conventional by the time powerlines cross. Swallows swoop in the summer.

The final canoe hire point is on the left before the



Hired rowing boats at Dedham.



A Stour Trust trip boat on the river at Flatford.

A137 and a redundant arched bridge at Cattawade. Brantham Old Tidal Stop Lock is also disused for navigation, the gates closing automatically on the ebb at the former tidal limit. A slipway leading up from the left side of the river faces another leading down onto the tidal River Stour at the Brantham Barrage.

Poet Thomas Tusser of Braham Hall wrote his *A Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandrie* in 1557, later expanded to *Five Hunderd Pointes of Good Husbandrie*. A chemist who worked in the local Xylonite factory and had her own way with words was Margaret Thatcher.



The old bridge and one of the slipways at Cattawade.



Flatford's Granary faces the restored lock.

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Distance
39km from Brundon
to Cattawade

**Navigation
Authority**
Environment Agency

Navigation Society
River Stour Trust
www.riverstourtrust.org, East Anglian
Watenvays Association
www.eawa.co.uk

OS 1:50,000 Sheets
155 Bury
St Edmunds
168 Colchester

Connection
Tidal River Stour –
see RoB p200

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Coastal Britain: England & Wales

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