

HISTORICAL JOURNEYS ALONG THE RIVERS WITHAM AND WELLAND

1. Introduction

The intention has been to follow the course of the 2 rivers, the River Witham and the River Welland from their respective sources to the points where they debouch into the Wash, while identifying and briefly describing nearby places of present and especially past significance; I have also given short biographies of people associated with some of the said places. The river journeys have been in an important sense virtual, in that I have not tramped for miles along the river banks. For the most part, I have followed the rivers on maps and satellite views, identified sites of interest, and then worked out ways of getting near enough to see them, and obtain photographs. Sometimes that has not been possible, usually because sites are private, which status has been respected; where access is available occasionally or conditionally, I have sometimes used photographs from the Internet, acknowledging their provenance. Many sources, including books and published papers have been referenced, and most of them appear in the bibliography, though I have not listed guidebooks for specific sites for fear of it becoming too large. Maps on the National Library of Scotland website, maps.nls.uk have been generally helpful, but particularly so in identifying the sites of watermills in the past, and though far less comprehensive, those on the British Library website, bl.uk have also been of assistance.

The places described are all near to the rivers in question; in some of the towns on their banks I have strayed to places where the river or its valley cannot be seen, but otherwise I have kept close. Rather less attention has been given to tributaries than to the chosen rivers; they have not been tracked as systematically but sites of interest on their banks have been included. The aim has been to keep the rivers central to the narrative, rather than using them as a vehicle for a wider study of the lands around them. I should acknowledge some of the limits of the investigations associated with the rivers; landscapes, settlements, buildings, industrial sites and associated people are all covered, but the natural histories of the river courses are not favoured by more than the odd aside, nor are leisure pursuits carried out on and beside the rivers. Accompanying each of the main river accounts, is a map with accompanying Tables, all prepared by Dr. Alastair Robertson, (my brother) giving the locations and types of the mills operating between the 18th and 20th centuries. Obviously many mills operated centuries earlier, not least those appearing in the Domesday Book, but information about those which did not survive until pre-modern times is sparse. In particular it is not usually possible to locate them with precision, or to determine the timespan over which they operated. I originally posted the document as a single PDF, but have modified the presentation so that each item, including this introduction, is a separate PDF, accessible from a home page on the website 'historicaljourneysalongbritishrivers.com'.

Please click on one of the links below to access a river journey.

[River Witham](#)

[River Welland](#)

Bibliography

Title	Author (s)	Publisher	Date
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Water and Wind Power	Watts M.	Shire	2005
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Websites

Site	Comment
britishlistedbuildings.co.uk	
pastscape.org.uk	English historic buildings
maps.nls.uk	Historic maps
gridreferencefinder.com	Convenient access to Google & OS maps
drtomsbooks.files.wordpress.com	My own gazetteer of ancient bridges
en.wikipedia.org	
ceh.ac.uk/index	Hosts the National River Flow archive