

Did you know?

The Deben was once a River Highway

The Historian's Story - It is difficult to imagine how the river was in historical times, when it filled all the marshlands and shallow valleys that surround it (darker areas). The coast was a completely different shape, stretching far out under what is now sea.

Goose Ford The brown area as far as Kirton Creek was the port of 'Gosford' where fleets of ships could shelter and be loaded. Our shallow, muddy, Kirton Creek had the streets and quays of the port of Guston. Bawdsey was an island (Bawde's island).

From the 1300s to the 1600s the river was gradually walled to make the current channel.

The activity was because movement of goods and people was by water, not by road. On the highway of the river, ferries linking the shores are of particular interest as they show the constant movement of landowners and working people across the river.



Fords and Ferries Local place names Ufford, Wilford, Seckford, Carlford, tell us of the crossing points. The landowner rented out the ferry rights, providing he and his staff had free passage. The ferryman was often provided with a house. Horses provided the power, until relatively recently - they would have to swim across. **Bawdsey** - the rent for ferry rights was 12/6 per year in the 1300s.

A steam ferry was run from the late 1880s until about the 1930s. **Kirton Creek** linked to Ramsholt and also to Shottisham Sluice at The Rocks. **Waldringfield** crossed to Stonner Point and Ramsholt.

The vicar also preached on both sides! The parish clerk had to watch for his boat coming before ringing the bell for the service. The work force for the cement works in Waldringfield came across from Sutton. **Woodbridge** - there is still a shelter on the Sutton shore.

Loder's Cut



Imported chalk at Waldringfield cement works. Many piers such as this gave Low Water access

In 1879 a channel was dug just below Woodbridge to cut off a Troublesome Reach. It is named after a respected bookseller John Loder, who was fined following a libel lawsuit. The townspeople raised his fine, but oversubscribed, so he asked to spend it on something beneficial for the whole town.

We continue to appreciate his generosity to the present day.