Chapter 24
The River Nene

Fig 24a. Residents of the River Nene - cygnets at Water Newton Mill.

The River Nene forms the Southern boundary of the parishes of Sutton, Ailsworth and Castor. The river, which is the focus of the Nene Park, which runs from the heart of Peterborough to Wansford, is a typically English river. It meanders gently between reed fringed banks, home to many kinds of wildfowl, where swans nest and herons stand motionless seeking their next meal, and it is the winter home for migratory geese. The Nene, which has one of its sources on the battlefield of Naseby, is 145 km long and is the sixth longest river in the United Kingdom, although its gentle flow through the parishes is indicative of the fact that of all the major rivers in the UK, it has the lowest volume of discharge.

The peace and quiet of the river that is today enjoyed by walkers, anglers, leisure craft and the occasional swimmer belies the importance of the river to those who have lived and worked on its banks over the last two millennia. The river was for many years the main thoroughfare from Northampton to the sea, and has carried many cargoes that have been a key part of the economy of the area.

The Romans

At the time of the Roman occupation, the Nene at Castor was running on a very similar course to the one that we see today, as evidenced by the footings for the Roman bridge at the Ermine Street crossing which were discovered - and destroyed - by dredging operations in the present river in 1925. East of Peterborough the river flowed South through Whittlesey Mere to Floods Ferry then into the Great Ouse. Downstream from Peterborough *'so much has been done by man and by natural processes to alter and remodel the waterways of Fenland that not a single river now flows along the same bed and in the same direction as it did when the Conqueror invested Hereward .... on the island of Ely'* [1]. Given the nature of the Fens and their shifting rivers, the Roman settlement at Durobrivae was probably established at Castor as the most Easterly place where an all weather road between London and York could cross the river and not be subject to the regular flooding and changing river courses of the Fens.

Although Castor was the most Easterly crossing point of the river and the main Roman town in the area, there was plenty of Roman activity in the Fens. The Romans were probably the first to straighten and canalize some of the rivers in the Fens, both for navigation and for drainage. Archaeological evidence suggests that Car Dyke was built by the Romans to link the river Cam at Waterbeach to the Witham at Lincoln, a major Roman city with navigation links to York. Historians dispute whether the primary purpose of Car Dyke was drainage or navigation, but whatever the primary purpose, there is no doubt that it would have enabled the inhabitants of Durobrivae to trade extensively across a very wide area.

Fig 24b. The Nene at the site of the Roman bridge. The town of Durobrivae was behind the trees on the right, and potteries and ironworks located on the left bank.

The river was important for trade in a wide range of goods, and there is some evidence that there may have been a Roman wharf in Castor, close to where the railway crosses the river in the Southeast corner of the parish. Significantly, this site is downstream of the first set of rapids at Alwalton prior to the improvement of the rivers by Roman engineers. Raw materials were brought in to Durobrivae, including iron ore, clay and fuel for the iron works and pottery, and the finished products exported. Corn, hides and agricultural produce were also exported via the river. There were Roman quarries at Barnack and Wittering, and for heavy loads such as stone transport by water was the easiest option, so it is likely that a bystander on the Roman bridge would also have seen stone being taken down river to Car Dyke and beyond. It is also possible that the bystander would have seen cargoes of salt as one of the canalized sections of the Nene led into the fens and terminated a short distance from a Roman Saltern, where salt was extracted from the marshes.

The Church Builders

'No more enduring limestone has ever been quarried in England than that which came from the 'hills and holes' of Barnack .... Coarse textured and very shelly, it was particularly well suited to the robust character of both Saxon and Norman building in England' [2].

Barnack Rag was the mason's choice of building material for many of the ecclesiastical foundations in Eastern England. It was used in the seventh century for the building of the successive abbeys in Peterborough and, until about 1500, in the building of the great abbeys in the fens and surrounding areas. Transporting the stone from the quarry to the building site was a problem; some of the stones in the foundation of Peterborough Cathedral weighed up to three tonnes, and on land were moved on wooden sleds drawn by eight yoke of oxen. There is evidence of a dyke running towards the Cathedral from a point roughly where the Key Theatre is now situated, minimising the distance from the river to the building site, suggesting that the stone was transported by barge from Barnack. There is no firm evidence of where the stone was loaded into the barges for its trip downriver, although this probably took place near Wansford.

Taking a stone laden barge down river was no easy task. At the time there were no locks or staunches, so the river probably included a number of rapids that could only be negotiated with a heavily laden barge at times of high water. At times of low water when this was not possible, the barge was unloaded, the stones and sometimes the barge itself were dragged along the bank until there was enough water to re-float the barge and its cargo. Transporting stone was no pleasure trip, and sometimes took as many as ten days to complete the journey from Wansford to Peterborough.

Peterborough Abbey was one of the earliest owners of the quarrying rights at Barnack, but rights were granted by Peterborough to Ramsey Abbey during the reign of Edward the Confessor in return for the provision of *'4,000 eels for the Lenten fare of the brethren of Peterborough'* [3]. Other religious foundations were granted leases to use Barnack Rag, including Ely Cathedral and St Edmunds (Bury St Edmunds), Crowland, Ramsey, Sawtry, Spalding and Thorney

Abbeys. Although built largely from Caen stone, there are records of Norwich Cathedral purchasing stone from Barnack in 1301. All this stone would have been transported on the Nene and fenland waterways, but the passage of stone by the river was not always trouble free, and the Abbot of Peterborough was issued with a writ by William I forbidding him to interfere with the passage of stone from the quarry to the river.

For an annual rent of 6/- (30p) the Abbots of Peterborough and Bury St Edmunds were given the right to transport marble and any other stone by the river Nene between Alwalton and Peterborough. The abbey of Peterborough also had the right, granted by Pope Eugenius III in 1146, to take a toll from ships and boats carrying merchandise past Alwalton, 2d for a large ship, 1d for a smaller ship and $^{1}/_{2}$d for a boat [4].

The document also refers to the carriage of a 'marble' on the river. This stone was quarried from the Alwalton Lynch [5] on the Eastern bank of the Nene between Castor and Alwalton, and possibly at smaller quarries in Castor and at Water Newton. The 'marble' is formed by the oyster beds that are laid down in the limestone, and it has been identified in a number of Cathedrals in the East of England. In Peterborough Cathedral the bowl of the font, the base of the pillar in the West porch and the effigy of Abbot Benedict on the North side of the choir are all of Alwalton 'marble', although the greatest quantity can be found in Lincoln Cathedral [6].

A quarry at Sutton also provided stone for local buildings, including the rectory at Elton, some five miles upriver. There is evidence in the fields North West of the village of the roadway down which the stone was dragged to the river, and at low water the remains of a timber and gravel wharf can still be seen. There is also a 'winding hole' and post in place. These were used to harness the flow of the river to turn a lighter ready for the return trip.

The Growth of Trade

There are no records of the use of the Nene for trade after the end of the stone trade in 1500 until a description of the state of the river in a pamphlet published in the 1650s, but it is probable that some trade continued. The pamphlet *'Some Considerations of the River Nine, running from Northampton to Peterborow, and so to the Sea; shewing the Feasibility and conveniency of making it Navigable'* signalled a greater interest in the use of the river for trade. At this time the head of navigation was at Alwalton, and large river craft and even some small sea going ships could bring goods some 30 miles inland from the Wash. At Alwalton the goods had to be transferred to smaller boats that could be portaged around obstructions such as shallows and mill dams. The writer of the pamphlet, whose identity is not known, estimated that the river could be made navigable for about £8,000 [7].
This proposal included 33 locks to take vessels of 8 to 10 tonnes, small enough to pass through the upstream bridges to Wellingborough, Thrapston, Oundle and elsewhere. The economic advantages of such a proposal were considerable, as

Fig 24c. The Nene at Water Newton.

at that time the cost of carriage alone of coal brought overland to Northampton was greater than the purchase price of the coal itself in Peterborough. This indicated that the Nene was being used for carriage of cargo well inland, at least as far as Alwalton, and that it made good commercial sense.

However, it was not until some 60 years later, in 1713, that any action was taken to improve the navigation above Peterborough. Small craft had been trading upriver before then; a record of 1648 shows a cargo of cheese being taken from Peterborough to the Michaelmas Fair at Higham Ferrers when the state of the roads in the wet season made overland carriage impractical. However, the boat had to be unloaded at sixteen mill dams, dragged over the dam and reloaded upstream [8]. In 1713 an Act of Parliament appointed commissioners to engage *'such Person or Persons to make the river navigable and passable'*. The Act allowed only for one person to make the whole river passable, but no one could be found to undertake the task. In 1724 a second Act was passed which allowed the task to be undertaken in as many stages as appropriate, and in September 1726 two people, Robert Wright and Thomas Squire, were contracted to make the section from Peterborough to Oundle navigable at their own expense, and recover the cost from tolls of 1s 6d (7.5p) charged on each tonne of goods carried. Thomas Squire agreed to improve the river from Oundle to Thrapston on the same terms, and this was completed in September 1737. The 'improved' Nene from Peterborough to Thrapston became known as the Eastern Division.

At the time that the Eastern Division was being developed further work was being undertaken to improve the navigation downstream, with a new channel being cut between Peterborough and Guyhirn, improving access to Wisbech. However, trade through Wisbech to the Wash was severely restricted by the state of the river below Wisbech. The main access to the Wash was still to the Great Ouse and Kings Lynn, so Peterborough became the hub of river traffic from both the Northern Fens and the inland route to Northampton.

Another Act of Parliament was required in order to ensure the development of the Western Division from Thrapston to Northampton. This Act, which received the Royal Assent in 1756, allowed the Commissioners to borrow money to undertake the work, which was completed in 1761. The completion of the task was a cause for great celebration in Northampton, as the price of coal in the town, where fuel had always been expensive and in short supply, dropped immediately to two thirds of the price it had been for decades before. The Universal Magazine reported: *'No less than 38 barges laden with coal and other merchandise and adorned with flags and streamers came up with the greatest of ease to the public wharf. ……The most general illuminations that were ever known, ringing of bells at all the churches, and every other demonstration of joy concluded the evening without the least rioting or other disturbance'* [9].

For a time the main route for bulk cargoes into and out of Northampton was the improved Nene, and tolls on the Western Division were generally healthy, covering the cost of maintaining the waterway and the salary of an inspector of works to supervise the maintenance of the river. However, proposals were put forward in 1792 to link Northampton with the Grand Junction Canal, and in 1793 an Act of Parliament authorised the construction of the link. This coincided with a reduction in income from tolls on the Nene, and the Commissioners were looking to the link with canal to be the salvation of the Western Division. For a while this proved to be the case, but records indicate that by 1827 almost 90% of the tolls were collected at Northampton, and only 10% elsewhere in the Western Division [10], and this had a knock-on effect on the through traffic on the Eastern Division.

The Decline of Trade and the Coming of the Railway

We now need to go back a few decades and consider the Eastern Division. The management of the division was originally in the hands of two families, the Wrights and the Squires, and in 1731 Wright sold his share of the tolls to the Squire family, who added total control of the Division to their other interests in Peterborough, which included lighters, inns, brewing and *'even a bank in Peterborough (but) the family seems to have extracted all possible profit from the Nene, without ploughing back enough of this to ensure satisfactory maintenance'* [11].

The Eastern Division included 14 locks and 8 staunches, whereas the Western Division contained 20 locks. This itself was an impediment to navigation as staunches, also known as flash locks, are not as easy to use as locks. A flash lock is effectively a weir with a single gate to allow navigation. Boats either had to navigate with or against the flow of water over the weir, or open the gate and wait until the water levels in the whole pounds on either side of the weir became equal, effectively dropping the water level in long stretches of the river. If the weir included a mill, this was very unpopular with the miller, as it deprived him of full power until the gate was closed and the water level rose again. An Ordnance Survey map of 1901 shows a staunch between Sutton and Wansford, and it is depicted in a watercolour in the vestry of Sutton church. (see colour plate section).

This, however, was not the only problem. A report prepared by Thomas Yeoman in 1759 had indicated that the navigation between Water Newton and Wansford was in a poor state, and commissioners seemed to have very little power to require the proprietors to take steps to improve the waterway. An Act of Parliament of 1794 gave the commissioners the power that they needed in order to ensure effective navigation, and the Act includes a clause stating that the river *'is in many Places grown up and decreased in depth, so that Boats and Lighters navigation thereon, for want of proper and sufficient Depth of Water, are frequently stopped'* [12]. The commissioners took some time to use their new powers and some improvements were made in 1802, but the effect of the link between Northampton and the Grand Junction Canal on trade in the Eastern Division was such that the tolls collected were insufficient to pay for the necessary repairs. By this time another threat to the viability of the navigation was not far over the horizon – the coming of the railway.

Fig 24d. Water Newton Mill, built in 1791 and converted for residential use after 200 years, in 1991.

With most of the trade with Northampton coming through the Midlands, particularly with coal now coming from the Midlands coalfields rather than from the North East and upriver through Peterborough, the level of trade on the Eastern Division of the Nene never reached its former level, although in 1842 a document in the House of Lords Record Office records the passage of 4,772 tonnes of goods up and down the river between Northampton and Peterborough. Cargoes included iron, salt, oil cake, stone, slate, corn and timber, and the document also notes that this is probably a lower than average figure, on account of a dry summer and cold winter which would have made trade difficult. As each lighter carried approximately 10 tonnes of goods this volume of trade would have been carried in some 480 journeys, so a bystander on the bank at Castor would have probably seen two or three lighters pass in a day [13]. Wansford played a significant part in the river trade as a distribution point for goods coming up river and transferring to the roads for distribution throughout the East Midlands, from as far away as Leicester. Goods carried included timber, coal, grain and other agricultural produce. The wharf at Wansford was also used for the shipment of timber from the Burghley and Bedford estates, including the cut timbers for at least two men-o'-war which were shipped by river and canal to the shipbuilder's yard in London [14].

By this time the threat from the railways was coming closer, and the Commissioners of both the Eastern and Western Divisions agreed the proposals of the London and Birmingham Railway Company to build a line connecting Peterborough to Blisworth and their main London – Birmingham line. In 1843 an Act of Parliament gave approval for the construction of the line and for a while the river contributed to its own downfall through the profitable trade of carrying materials for the building of the railway. Records indicate that brick making machinery and other materials for the construction of the Yarwell tunnel were carried on the Nene, and a new cut created at Wansford to facilitate the shipping of quarried materials [15].

The coming of the railway marked a slow decline of river traffic above Peterborough, although trade carried on with some difficulty below Peterborough, particularly the import of timber via Wisbech. However, by the beginning of the 20th century the river was in a poor state *'The locks .... are in fair condition, although requiring a deal of handling in some cases, through their comparative disuse'* [16]. Bonthron, who was undertaking a pleasure cruise from Northampton to the Wash, reports that he had been warned about the state of the river, to the extent that it was impassable in places, and they would be unable to complete the journey. He was agreeably surprised to find '*a fine and attractive river*' and did complete his journey, although he did encounter weeds and rushes in some areas. However, it must be noted that he was travelling in a skiff, and bringing a laden lighter downriver will have been a very much harder, if not impossible, task.

However, by 1930 navigation was impossible, as a survey by the newly created River Nene Catchment Board made

clear when it reported that in places the river was clogged with silt and vegetation, and that it was difficult to make out the channel in a *'series of shallow pools and rills that threaded their way uncertainly through a sort of morass'* [17].

Fig 24e. The silting of the river. The silting of a backwater demonstrates how easily a slow flowing river can quickly become blocked.

Floods and Droughts

Drought and flood have been a regular feature of the Nene until the present day, and although improved management of the river in the 20th century has eliminated the worst effects of drought and ensured that the navigation is maintained, floods are still capable of causing chaos.

The lack of water in the river was a regular hazard faced by lightermen, and it was reported in 1876 that there was a mere six inches of water at the Town Bridge in Peterborough, and that in order to enable the passage of boats, lighters were sunk across the river *'and they then put a tarpaulin in front; stuff it by the sides, put the deck boards here and there, and get two or three poor little boys, naked, to go into the river and stuff up the sides that the water may not escape'* [18]. By creating a temporary dam, the water level could be increased sufficiently for the passage of cargoes, although such measures took time and it was not unknown for a passage from Wisbech to Peterborough to take a month. By the 1930s a combination of silting and a dry summer meant that the river was so low at Sutton that people could walk across.

Other activity on the river contributed to the reduction in flow, as upstream of Peterborough millers put flash boards on their weirs to increase the depth of water behind their mills, and below Peterborough the depth was reduced from the middle of the 18th century by the railway companies extracting almost 900,000 gallons a day to meet the needs of their steam engines.

Floods were frequent and often extensive. In December 1848 a report described extensive flooding along the whole length of the river from Northampton to Peterborough, and in 1885 the Peterborough Advertiser reported: *'After a week's heavy rain with only slight intermissions of a few hours at a time, it was nothing more than was expected that the Nene should once more overflow its banks ……. The staunches, the locks, the mills raised their slackers and opened their flood gates, but all attempts to keep within its natural channel were fruitless, and at the end of last week and the early part of this many thousands of acres of land were under water ……. Above Peterborough the whole bed of the river was under water to the depth of several feet and as some of the highroads have to cross the valley, they became in many places impassable except for vehicles'* [19].

Floods are still a feature of the Nene, and although the fields adjacent to the river in the parishes of Castor, Ailsworth and Sutton have regularly flooded, the villages themselves have not been affected. The main events of the last century took place in 1912, 1947 and 1998. In August 1912 the water level at Peterborough's Town Bridge rose to 17' 8" above ordnance datum (the normal for summer being 8' – 9'), and many of the boatyards and riverside properties were flooded, with *'householders placing planks on top of barrels and using ladders to gain access at bedroom level'* [20]. Two of the most significant floods occurred in 1947 and 1998, although the Nene burst its banks on many other occasions. In 1947 heavy snowfall in early March had almost cut off Peterborough, many villages were isolated and over 1,000 lorries were stranded on the A1 between Wansford and Stamford. By 17th March a rapid thaw had set in and the flow of the river at Peterborough's Town Bridge was 200 million gallons an hour, compared with the normal winter flow of 12 million gallons per hour, and the river level peaked at 17' 9", some 8ft above normal levels. Between Castor station and Water Newton the river was quarter of a mile wide, although the worst flooding was avoided as the river levels had been lowered in anticipation of the thaw [21].

No such action was possible in 1998, when very high rainfall in a very short period did not allow the river levels to be reduced before the run-off from the ground already saturated by a wet winter entered the river. On this occasion the

water level in Peterborough was slightly less than the record level set in 1947, but upriver of Wansford the floods set new records, partly because of the volume of water coming down from Northampton being held back by the Old London Road Bridge, which forms a significant barrier to floodwater [22]. From the Milton Ferry bridge, the view across to the sailing club on Lynch Lake in Ferry Meadows was of a continuous sheet of water, the course of the river being indistinguishable from the flooded water meadows and the lake itself. Again, although the river was almost at record levels, the villages of Castor, Ailsworth and Sutton were not flooded as they are set back from the river on slightly higher ground. (see colour plate section).

The Boats and the People

There is little hard evidence to give a picture of the type of craft that traded on the river in medieval times but an analysis of later boats – the fen punt and the fen lighter - provides clues as to the way boats carrying stone for the abbeys of the Fens might have looked. The clues suggest that the boats would have been double ended, tapering to a point at each end, as this would give greater rigidity than a boat with a flat, or transom, stern [23]. Evidence of the carrying capacity of these craft comes from Engine Farm in Whittlesey, where four blocks of Barnack ragstone lie in a field which once lay under Whittlesey Mere, the original route of the Nene. These stones, weighing eight tonnes in all, may have been lost when the boat carrying them foundered, possibly in a squall. The state of the rivers between Barnack and Peterborough, then on into the Fens, suggests that a draught of less than a metre would be needed, together with a broad beam to ensure stability. Putting all these factors together '*... the required vessel would have performed satisfactorily if constructed to a length of about nine metres, with a beam of just under three'* [24]. Over the centuries cargo-carrying craft in the Fens and the feeder rivers evolved into the fenland lighter, capable of carrying twenty tonnes, being thirteen metres long and with a beam of just over three metres.

The propulsion of commercial craft would have relied largely on muscle power, either human or horse. Quanting was one way of engaging human muscle power. Using a long pole, the lighterman dropped one end to the bottom of the river near the bow of the lighter, put the other end to his shoulder, and walked aft, taking his lighter forward. Using this method, the lightermen would have effectively pushed their craft every inch of the way! Hauling the craft from the bank, using either human or horse power was often made difficult by the state of the banks until the development of the river in the 18th century, when proper 'haling' ways were constructed, together with the locks. Using the wind was possible, and early prints show lighters using sails, although the very shallow draught of the lighters meant that this was practicable only when the wind was directly astern. However, probably the easiest method of propulsion was to 'go with the flow'. The building of the abbeys often took decades, or even hundreds of years, so the stone could be brought to the site at the leisurely natural pace of the river, requiring the use of human muscle only where rapids or other obstructions had to be negotiated.

The River Today

By the late 1920s the Nene was in a poor state, with very little trade on the river above Peterborough, although there was still some quarry trade to Wansford. It took a week for a small motor launch to travel from Peterborough to Northampton, and it had to be dragged overland in some places [25]. In 1930 the River Nene Catchment Board undertook a major programme of improvements, including the removal of the remaining staunches (including those at Sutton and Alwalton), the rebuilding of all the locks and the dredging of the river. This improvement is seen in the state of the river today, with the large guillotine locks, which were hard work compared with the hinged gates, but in recent years have been made easier with the installation of electric motors for raising the guillotine. The improvements encouraged the return of some trade, notably to the mills at Wellingborough, and Thames barges bringing grain to Cadge and Coleman's mill in Peterborough until the mid 1960s. Probably the last regular commercial use of the river above the port of Wisbech was made by the Nene Barge and Lighter Company which carried stone for the Catchment Board from Wansford to Sutton Bridge, near the mouth of the river, for the maintenance of the navigation at least until the mid 1970s.

Fig 24f. Milton Ferry Bridge, for many years an important crossing point of the Nene, now linking the parishes with Ferry Meadows Country Park.

It is ironic that the river is now maintained in a better state than it has been throughout almost two thousand years of known use for commercial purposes. The traffic has never been so light, and with the exception of

the dredgers and other craft used for the maintenance of the waterway, all the traffic is for leisure. There are yacht clubs at Alwalton and near Orton Staunch, and regular boat trips are undertaken by the Key Ferry from its base by Peterborough's Town Bridge. The river also attracts walkers, anglers and families spending a day in the countryside, picnicking on the banks and taking the occasional swim on hot days, as has been the case since the 19th century. An Ordnance Survey map of 1901 shows a designated 'bathing place' at the end of Splash Lane, with an enclosure and small building, possibly a changing hut.

Although the use of the river for trade has never been easy, its effect on the economy of the towns and villages along its banks cannot be dismissed. For centuries, the only alternative to a lighter carrying up to ten tonnes of cargo was either a pack horse or horse and cart travelling on very rudimentary roads, and with a load many times less than that of a lighter. Much of the trade of the river simply passed through the villages of Castor, Ailsworth and Sutton, but the Nene certainly provided the means of getting local produce to market and until the coming of the railway was an economic lifeline, not only for the three riparian villages, but for all five parishes.

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I have lived in Castor for 27 years, in Allotment Lane, Old Pond Lane and Samworths Close. I worked for the County and City Councils in a number of posts in the Education Department, and retired as Head of Community Education. Before coming to Castor I worked in maritime related jobs, and researching the history of our river has been an interesting variation on the maritime theme. I hope that you enjoyed the outcome.

Notes

1. Donovan Purcell, *Cambridge Stone,* Faber and Faber, 1967, p96.
2. *ibid*. p29.
3. *ibid.* p30.
4. The Precentor's Registers of Peterborough Northants Record Society, Vol XX, p 533, quoted in Donovan Purcell *Cambridge Stone* Faber and Faber 1967 p71.
5. A lynch is defined as a terrace or ledge, a stretch of flat land along a shore or river bank.
6. Donovan Purcell pp 72, 73.
7. John Boyes and Ronald Russell, *The Canals of Eastern England,* David and Charles, 1977, p196.
8. *ibid*. p197.
9. *ibid* . p200.
10. *ibid*. p208.
11. H.J.K.Jenkins, *Along the Nene,* Cambridgeshire Books, 1991, p31.
12. *op cit* John Boyes and Ronald Russell, *The Canals of Eastern England*, David and Charles,1977, p202.
13. Peter Waszak, *The effects of Railways on River Transport in Peterborough 1845 -1903,* Peterborough Local History Society, Vol. 24, Oct 2003.
14. *Peterborough Citizen,* 5th June 1928.
15. Peter Waszak *The effects of Railways on River Transport in Peterborough 1845 -1903,* Peterborough Local History Society, Vol. 24, Oct 2003.
16. P Bonthron, *My Holidays on Inland Waterways,* Thomas Murby, London, 1917.
17. H J K Jenkins, *Northamptonshire Past and Present,* Northamptonshire Record Society, Vol VIII, 1992, p 191.
18. *op cit* John Boyes and Ronald Russell, p216.
19. *Peterborough Advertiser,* 5th December, 1885, p6 col3.
20. Peter Waszak, *The Railway and Great Floods of the Past,* http://www.datum-line.co.uk/links_research/railway_floods.htm .
21. *ibid.*.
22. *ibid.*
23. H.J.K.Jenkins *Along the Nene,* Cambridgeshire Books, 1991, p15.
24. *ibid* p31
25. *op cit* John Boyes and Ronald Russell, p221.

Fig 24g. Water Newton Lock, built during the upgrading of the 1930s, now with a motorised guillotine gate.