

**The Navigation of the River Lea at Hertford, the Turnpikes
and Water Works, and other matters relating thereto.**

BY MR. R. T. ANDREWS. (*Continuation*).

In the year 1667 the New River Company put a dam across the River Lea between Hertford and Ware, and in 1669 the rightful navigation was again adjudged to be through the Manifold ditch between Hertford and Ware; in the same year, Lord Fanshawe, the owner of Ware Park, made the lock at Ware Mill, and agreed to provide sufficient water to carry the barges, and to charge 6d. per barge each way; but he suffered the lock to be out of repair, so that the barges could not go; the agreement was made on October 11th, between Sir Thos. Byde and the Corporation of Hertford, and included the keeping of the lock in repair. The New River Company also had an action against Henry Dunster, for that it was agreed on April 7th, that he was to make up the bank of the New River in Chalke Island, which he had cut wrongfully—they had had this land 60 years; but H. Dunster wanted £5,000 for what was worth only £1,000, and though the fire in London hath destroyed their deeds, yet he (H. Dunster) is ordered at his peril to cut the banks again; and on the 19th of May following they asked that a proclamation should be made concerning the cutting of these banks, inasmuch as several persons had done it; then again on August 28th they issued a petition, which set forth a complaint that the bargemen had pulled up a dam in the Manifold ditch, by which the water was made to pass through two pipes, anciently there placed to supply the New River, and the two jetties ordered to be placed at the head of the Manifold ditch 14 feet wide for boats to pass; but because the weeds are cut away below the jetties, the pipes are dry; and so another commission was ordered to view and report thereon. This trial was held on Sept. 22nd, when it was ordered that the New River Company were to take away their great pipes and to lay two lesser ones, one of 8-inch, and the other of 6-inch bore, so as to be constantly served with water to supply their river, and if not constantly supplied, then the company could set up a jetty or turnpike to raise or force the water to the pipes, but so as not to cause inundation; and on October 11th, the deed between Thos. Byde and the Corporation was sealed and delivered. Robert Andrewe was the man who gave the information respecting the pipes at Chalke Island.

In 1670 Thomas Harbor had a lease of the two turnpikes, and there was £1 spent for cutting the weeds from Consett's Warehouse (Weir House) to the butts in Hartham (at the north-end); about this time also there were several great floods. The Corporation gave Thomas Byde a lease of the fishing for 21 years in the common waters, with the exception that all could angle; but they also gave a lease of this fishing to Henry Chauncey for 21 years at 10s. per year, with leave to keep swannes; perhaps Thomas Byde's was not executed.

On March 4th, 1674, W. Smith, the miller at the Town Mill broke the boards of the turnpike, and lowered the water (which I suppose affected his mill tail) and laid a barge aground, and damaged her.

In June 1676 there was again a noise between the new River Company and the Corporation about Manifold ditch, and complaint was made that several persons belonging to the company did in the night time pull up the piles and stakes at Manifold ditch, whereby the water runs out and the navigation is hindered. The names of the persons were obtained, and indictment laid against them. Also that Francis Pryor, of Ware Mill, had refused flushes of water for passage of barges. Sir Thomas Byde had ordered him to pass no barges belonging to the Corporation until the piles at Manifold ditch were set up, and added that if there had been other than Hertford barges they should not have passed, and if they got to Hertford they should not return again; and so the Court declared that the order given by Sir Thomas Byde, and the exaction of money for the passage of the said barges is a violation and breach of the promise and agreement, and if he will not make good the moneys so received and carry out the said agreement, a committee shall be formed at the next month's court to open the navigation through the Black ditch, or Manifold ditch, to the intent to turn the stream into the old and ancient channel, so as to give boats and barges a more free passage; and they (the Corporation) will treat with the New River Company or committee for that purpose.

The next month Mr. Edmonds and Mr. Lawrence were deputed to treat with Sir Thomas Byde and report thereon, and the month following the former agreement was confirmed and re-agreed to.

It was not until 1680 that navigation surveyors were appointed,—they were Benjamin Jones, Richard Martin, Nicholas Lucas, and William Guise, to receive moneys and repair damages and give in an account of the same. In the same year £39 was expended for the repair of the turnpikes, and an account was rendered in the next year (1681) for the passages of barges through them, amounting to £3 12s. There was also a ditch made between the King's Meads, at a cost of £1 11s.

From this time the information respecting the turnpikes and navigation is but fragmentary.

In 1685 someone was paid 2s. 6d. for "Keeping ye turnpike at ye assizes," but whether this refers to a gate or door or to the foregoing is not known.

In 1687 the bridge at the turnpike was repaired, and an amount charged in the Mayor's account for the year.

Jonathan Smith paid 10s. rent for the turnpikes in 1697, and in the next year the Corporation demised them to him and Thomas Webb, for a term of 21 years, at 10s. per year, and the free passage of all navigable streams between Hertford and Ware. Mr. Smith deceased between that time and 1703, when his widow paid the rent; he and his partner were indicted in 1700 for shutting up the turnpike at Odell Mead (Old Hall Mead), and putting a plank upon the same when there are more barges plying on the river than in the navigation. Mr. W. Sibley paid his rent of 10s. a year as usual from the Dicker Mill.

At Michaelmas 1707 the two turnpikes were let to John Ward for 10s. per year for 21 years, but he did not keep them in repair or pay his rent, and Ward getting into prison the Mayor and Corporation made the lease void, and in 1708 the Corporation leased to John Osmund a piece of land at the upper turnpike to erect Waterworks thereon, to supply the town for 99 years, at 3s. per year, and to build a Waterworks and put up a cistern in the Oat Market, on the Old Cross, in the parish of All Saints (*sic*), for £3 per year, and to take the lease of the two turnpikes at the same rent. The turnpikes were kept locked, for in 1709 I find that Goodey

Dines was paid 1s. for locking them up, and 10s. for a quarter's wages ; this appears contradictory in the face of the lease granted to John Osmund, and this lease, when run out, was in 1720 transferred to John Izard—the two turnpikes, sluices or water-gates, commonly known as the upper and lower turnpikes, (the lower one in King's Meads having been removed many years, as before shewn, and the middle turnpike come to be called the lower), situate and standing, and being upon the river Lee or Lea, in or near a certain mead called Great Hartham, in St. John's Parish, and the water between Hertford and Ware, for the passage of boats and barges, as Thomas Webb and Jonathan Smith lately occupied as per lease, April 11th, 1798, for him to hold for 21 years, at 10s. per year, the Corporation reserving to themselves the right of fishing—(the Izards have lived at the flood-gates near the Old Waterworks within living memory), but in 1729 John Mason paid for the turnpikes, and in 1731 £2 was paid for them ; I think this John Mason was the tenant of the Dicker Mill.

I suppose that about this time (1733-4) the river had become nearly impassible, for I find that a petition was sent to Parliament for leave to provide a new cut for barges down Hartham Common ; or else some alterations were necessary to the old cut, but it does not say what was the issue of it.

In 1734 Job Frogmorton took four acres of land, covered with water, and the two turnpikes, in St. John's Parish, from September 29th, for seven years, but for some reason soon after he was ejected by force of arms, and the case was put before Thomas Denison, of Lincoln's Inn, for his opinion as to whether the ejectment would lie, and he answered, yes, it would.

In the next year, 1735, Mr. William Whittenbury made a model for a new cistern for the committee of the said river Lea, at a cost of £3 3s.

In 1738 Thomas Orger did a quantity of carpenter's work to the turnpikes, so that the Corporation had a meeting about them, at which they spent 5s.

In this year they agreed with Thomas Byde, and his successors, that they should charge 12d. per barge for going through the lock at Ware Mill ; that they are to keep Manifold ditch stopped to reach a height as is sufficient to supply the mills ; and to keep the lock, &c., repaired, and as the New River Company lately agreed to purchase in fee, Ware Mills, and the lock or cistern, they agree to the same covenants, and it shall be lawful for the Corporation to build a turnpike, jetty, or other device across the said River Lea, between the said mills and Water Lane, near the wall of the Priory orchard in Ware aforesaid, and without any toll, and may cleanse and scour the river Lea between Hertford and Ware bridge ; and the New River Company are to obtain an Act of Parliament for establishing the navigation in the new cut now used. The Corporation paid 10s. to the ringers for ringing the bells, when the Navigation Bill passed, in 1739.

In this year the Corporation leased to Richard Hall, a waggoner, for £7, a piece of land in All Saints' and St. John's parishes, on the north side of the river Lea, near the turnpike there, going out of Odell (otherwise Old Hall) Mead, into Great Hartham, 150 feet long from east to west, 71 feet broad at the east end, and 61 feet broad at the west end, adjoining Robert Adam's meadow, and late in possession of George Osmund, now deceased, and the waterworks, house and mill standing thereon, and the cistern standing on the Old Market Cross in

All Saints', but the Waterworks themselves appear to have been let for 31 years to him, for 1s. per year, and leave to lay pipes from same for water to the cistern on the Old Cross, and to make all good, and to supply water free for fires, and to keep the cistern full, and to put down fireplugs, and to take all water rents; yet in 1740 I suppose all this failed, as a petition was got up to Parliament for an Act to supply the town with water from the river Lea, and the Corporation, in 1743, bought of Richard Hall, all his right and title in the Waterworks.

On February 5th, 1740, Thomas Jarsley paid in his account of moneys received at the turnpikes from July, 1736, to December, 1739, inclusive.....£ 16 12 6
 Three-and-a-half years' salary, £4. per year 14 0 0

£ 2 12 6

And reported that Mr. Fordham had 20 boat loads of wheat to his mill, and yet had not paid; and the Corporation, in 1743, decided that the upper turnpike should be repaired for the benefit of the navigation of the river Lea, and they borrowed £200, at five per cent. to repair the Waterworks. The bargemen evidently disliked the turnpikes, or the toll on their barges, as in 1747 the turnpike door was opened with a false key, and according to Thomas Jarsley's account the bargemen demanded the key of the lower turnpike before the barge was clear.

Constans Weir was sold by the Corporation, in 1750, to James, Earl of Salisbury, and then they held it and paid a rent of 5s. per year for the Island and Weir; this is noted in the year 1752, and 1759, when they paid £1 15s. for seven years' rent; in which year also William Hanscomb agreed to furnish the town with water, and take tolls of the barges through the turnpikes, and account for the same, and do all repairs for one year, from September 29th, for £30. Some extensive repairs were evidently done at this time, taking a long time, as in 1763 there is an account of 1s. paid for the passage of the first barge through after the repairs, and recorded in the Mayor's accounts of that year, but William Hanscomb continued to do the work required at the engine house.

In 1766 was a meeting of the river Lea trustees, at Waltham Cross.

Borough of Hertford { At a meeting of the Mayor and Aldermen
 in the { of the said Borough, held in the Council
 County of Hertford. { Chamber, within the said Borough, the Ninth
 day of February, 1767.

Ordered that Mr. Alderman Atkinson and Mr. William Hanscomb, of Hertford, aforesaid, carpenter, do on Friday next, the 13th inst., wait on the committee of the trustees of the river Lee, at the Crown and Anchor tavern, in the Strand, London, with the following observations pursuant to their requests:—

First, that they do desire of the trustees that the upper turnpike may continue in the same place as it now does for the following reasons, viz. :—

If it is taken away, Dicker Mill, the property of Lady Townshend, will be rendered useless, as will also the Waterworks, which supply the town of Hertford with water, and the navigation of the river Lee cannot be carried on to Hertford without it. As to the lower turn-

pike and Constans Weir, the Corporation of Hertford do unanimously agree not to burthen the trustees with any expense relative to either of them.

JOHN CAMP, Mayor.
 JOHN KIRBY.
 BENJN. CHERRY.
 T. COULSON.
 RICHD. CUTLER.
 JNO. GREENELL.
 THOS. TOLLER.
 JOHN BEBB.
 JNO. RUNNINGTON.

In the account of Elizabeth Sams, in the year 1768, occurs—"A new key and mending the lock to ye turnpike, 1s. 6d."

In 1769 thirteen feet of elm pipe, at 1s. 8d. per foot, and iron hoops, was put down in the river (these ran from the Waterworks to the Old Cross cistern), and in 1771 men took up and mended the pipes in the river 23 feet of 4-inch elm pipe and hoops, and John Crow and Robert Duke supplied 49 pints of beer, at a cost of 8s. 8d. to them.

In the next year, 1772, it is recorded that the Waterworks supplied 89 persons, besides Christ's Hospital, which paid £2 10s. a quarter for their supply. John Hanley, in 1773, had £30 per year for looking after the Waterworks, and this was increased, in 1786, to £33, and paid to Edward Dines; in which year there appears to have been a serious breach in the bank of the Dicker Mill river. There was some work done at the Folly in 1776, as an item informs us, in Jos. Dine's account, "paid to Mr. Ellis's men for drawing the firs to the Folly to make the stank with," (most likely for laying pipes), as it also says, "boring 66 feet, at 4d. per foot."

In 1779 a question had evidently arisen as to the height of water in the Dicker Mill stream, as engineers were called in to settle it.

It was not until 1793 that a cistern was erected on the top of a tower over the engine house at the old Waterworks, for supplying water to the town; and in 1795 Lord Townshend agreed to let Old Hall Mead for laying the pipes, which the Corporation had applied for—on lease—perhaps the water pipes which still come from the Old Waterworks, and up Bull Plain, to the Town Hall. Then, in 1805, Mr. Best had the Waterworks for £45 per year, and continued the contract until 1813; and in 1814 it was resolved that iron pipes be laid instead of the wood ones now in the river; and here my record ends.

For further information I would refer the reader to Turnor's History of Hertford (p. 187).

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