

AN EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY RIVER ENVIRONMENT: THE 1618 SURVEY OF THE ITCHEN

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ABSTRACT

In 1618, a survey was made of the river Itchen and the barriers that existed to its navigation: the mills, dams and weirs, the bridges, the overhanging trees and collapsed riverbanks. It provides a contemporary view of the state of the river. The survey was part of a longstanding struggle to open river navigation between Winchester and Southampton, seen as economically beneficial by the inhabitants of the former city. Some of the barriers were described as recent and reflect the changing developments of the previous century, the destruction of mills by Henry VIII in the 1530s, the secularisation of lands belonging to the bishop of Winchester, and the subsequent rebuilding of some of the mills. This article incorporates the full text of the survey and an introduction and discussion of the wider issues.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The purpose of this article is to provide a modern-English translation of a document with an exceptionally detailed description of a river environment from almost four centuries ago, that is, a survey of the 10½-mile stretch along the Itchen River from Woodmill in the parish of Bitterne, now a northern suburb of Southampton, to that part of the river opposite the East Gate of Winchester (Fig. 1).¹ Its purpose was to establish – or re-establish?² – a navigation from Southampton to Winchester, while respecting the rights of riparian landholders, especially those who operated or leased mills along this stretch of the river. It is not exceptional, since at least one other similar survey is known for around 1675–6, concerning the Hampshire/Wiltshire Avon from Christchurch to Salisbury.³ The Itchen survey, however, is probably unique

in having an accompanying map, produced by John More (or Moore) sometime over 1618–19 following the written survey's appearance in early 1618 (Figs 2–4). Altogether, in addition to providing an exceptional description of a river environment of the time, as we shall demonstrate, it also helps to illuminate the evolution of the river's environment for decades and arguably centuries before.

Certainly the state of the river that the survey and map together describe in 1618 was not amenable for such activities as navigation, being dominated by a number of obstructions that would have rendered passage by boats virtually impossible. This alone would have been bad enough, but the obstacles also likely impeded the movement of migratory fish, especially salmon, as well as reducing the amount of land available for agricultural purposes in the river valley.

Comprising one of the most important categories of these barriers were clearly the mills and accompanying weirs or dams strung out along this stretch of river from Winchester to Southampton Water. There were at least six according to the numerical summary of 'impediments' at the end of the survey (fol. 14^v), but also at least four more were mentioned or indicated in the survey and/or map, making a total of ten drawing upon the river's water resources.⁴ Even if such mills did not comprise a direct block on the river, but instead drew water from the river by means of a long mill-leat, as at Shawford Mill (Fig. 3), they nonetheless significantly affected overall water flow. On at least two points along the river – first, when water was drawn off separately for Shawford and Twyford Mills, and, second, further downstream for Barton Peverill and 'Stoke' (Bishopstoke) Mills (Fig. 4) – the

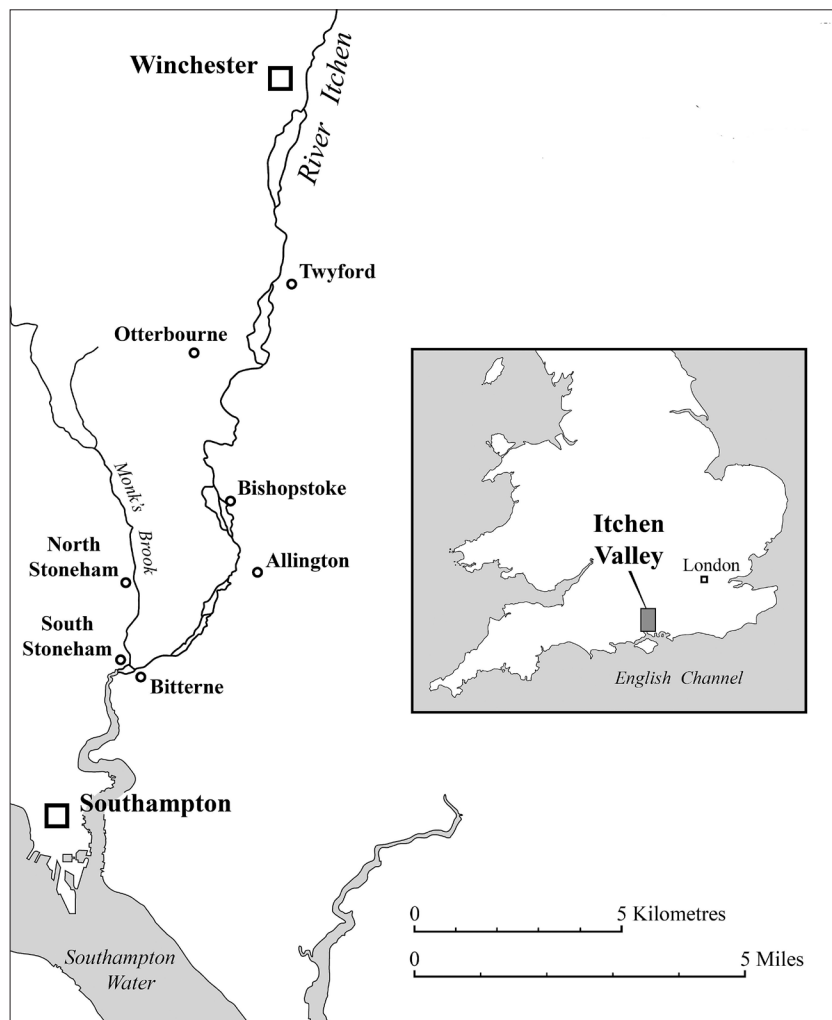


Fig. 1 Map of river Itchen showing the stretch covered by the survey, from Woodmill (Bitterne) to Winchester

river's flow, for a short distance at least, was effectively divided into three parts. In each of these cases two of the channels powered mills and whatever water flow remained dumped into the old channel of the river, described in the survey as the 'ancient' or 'main' course.⁵ This implicit priority for mills rendered any channel for navigation (or fish) much more prone to the vagaries of weather, particularly during the summer when water flow was traditionally at a low point.⁶

The perceived obstructions did not stop at mills. Bridges crossing the river were also felt to

be restricting easy passage of boats in particular. Eight 'bridges', presumably for vehicles and/or pack-animals, and a further four footbridges, were seen as problematic in the 1618 Itchen survey. The most common negative characterization of these bridges was that they were 'low' or, in one case, 'very low'.⁷ Here the contrast with the c.1675–6 Hampshire/Wiltshire Avon survey is instructive, where the main concern about bridges in this later case was for the narrowness of arches,⁸ where the lowness of the bridge was only mentioned once.⁹ This might suggest that the Itchen bridges were relatively rudimentary

in 1618, perhaps even of flat, timber construction from bank to bank without arches, which would have had their road-beds closer to the water surface, creating greater trouble for navigators. There were also two mentions of boundary rails (fols 13^v, 14^r), which were also clear blockages for boats, although they would have been easy enough to clear.

What was probably much more pernicious to navigation, as described in 1618 survey, was the generally slovenly state of the river. Two very obvious signs of this decrepitude were the 'weir athwart the said main river now somewhat decayed' on the lands of Sir John Seymour near Otterbourne (fol. 13^v) and the 'diverse stakes' standing near the low bridge at Bishopstoke (fol. 13^r), the latter possibly being stakes upon which to array fishing nets or stray piles from a pre-existing weir (see more on this below). Even more importantly, there were over twenty references to sunken banks and over thirty-five to trees and bush overhanging the stream,¹⁰ obvious hindrances for the towpaths that would be an essential feature of later navigation on the river.¹¹ Taking this together with the problematic weirs (either in operation or decayed), bridges and boundary rails, this provided a trenchant indictment concerning the neglect of the river for virtually any economic purpose other than milling.

Some of the more recent history of the river, however, is tellingly revealed in the survey's pages. Three comments from it are particularly noteworthy. When discussing Woodmill the survey remarks that its two 'great' weirs were blocking the navigation between Southampton and Winchester. Significantly the survey goes on to say in its original English that these weirs 'are not very auntient' (fol. 12^r), with the implication that the blockage of the river by them was relatively recent. Similarly, there is a reference to 'one baye [that is, a dam] w[ith] Pyles newly made a little above S[t] Crosses [sic] athwart the said maine River tor[n]inge the whole course of the same River out of his anciente course towards S[t] Crosse Mill' (fol. 14^r) (Fig. 2). Finally, there was a reference to part of 'Seagrove'¹² Mill (near to the East Gate of Winchester) being 'lately erected' (fol. 14^r). The first two of these cases were charged with hampering 'the free passage' of the river, while

the third was categorized, along with other matters concerning the river at this point, as a 'nuisance'.

The implication is that this new weir, dam, etc., construction was relatively recent, but there is a larger story to tell here, going back at least eighty years. Certainly in the case of Woodmill, and very plausibly in the case of the dam directing water to the St Cross mill (Fig. 2) and the erecting of part of 'Seagrove' Mill hard by Winchester, the new constructions were in fact *reconstructions* following demolition in the late 1530s. This was connected to the legislation known as the 'Statute of Sewers', enacted in 1532.¹³ A memorandum of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister at the time, catches its spirit: 'An Act that never weir nor water-mill shall hereafter be erected or made within this realm.'¹⁴ This mood was riding the wave of generally frustrated legislative activity about river blockages, going back all the way to Magna Carta.¹⁵

Nor was it the usual, soon-to-be-disillusioned bluster about such river obstructions. Both Henry VIII and his chief minister at the time, Thomas Cromwell, were particularly determined to see the legislation carried through to its intended conclusion across the entire kingdom. In addition to the firmness indicated in Cromwell's memorandum, the king himself was resolved to lead by example, allegedly suffering a loss of over 500 marks (£366 13s. 4d.) income per year through the uprooting of royal weirs and mills by late 1535.¹⁶

The total impact of this legislation throughout the kingdom is still to be determined, but demolition of mills, weirs, arrays of fishing nets and the like in various river systems in England were carried out over a reasonably lengthy period from 1535 to 1539.¹⁷ Hampshire was certainly an early target. After a two- to three-year hiatus after the legislation's creation, likely the time it took to set up the various commissions,¹⁸ a letter patent designating those sitting on the commission of sewers for Hampshire was issued on 28 January, 1535.¹⁹ The actual demolitions seemingly started in middle or late 1535, with the king himself allegedly directing some at least of them for the county during October and November, 1535, when he was at Portsmouth and Porchester.²⁰



Fig. 3 1618 map of river Itchen from Woodmill to Winchester: stretch near Twyford showing Shawford and Twyford mills



Fig. 4 1618 map of river Ichen from Woodmill to Winchester: stretch near Bishopstoke showing mills at Barton and Stoke

That this activity had a significant impact upon the Itchen is clear from a letter dated January 10, 1536, sent by the mayor and citizenry of Winchester to Cromwell, expressing their gratitude for the changes they were already seeing in the river, with salmon 'kyppers' (that is, kippers, young fish) appearing in the stream and previously inundated land becoming dry. The letter also describes the bishop of Winchester's discomfiture at having much of the infrastructure of Woodmill torn down and intoned darkly about 'the great lords and their officials' attempting to frustrate the prosecution of the Statute 'in these parts'.²¹

The scale and timing of the bishop's losses are revealed in the manorial accounts for his estate. The 1535–6 accounts for Twyford and Bitterne record the destruction of Brambridge Mill, Twyford Mill and Woodmill 'by order of the lord king's justices of the sewers'.²² The dating of the demolitions is clearest for Woodmill, since the cost of destroying at least part of the mill's infrastructure was borne by the bishop himself,²³ which appeared as a charge in the 1535–6 account of £13 13s. 11d. for 'diverse men hired and working around the pulling up, eradication and carrying away of diverse posts and stock of the lord's mill in the same place [Bitterne] called Woodmill'.²⁴ This suggests that the bishop's tearing down of that part of the milling complex for which he was responsible²⁵ occurred sometime after September 29, 1535, the start of the 1535–6 account,²⁶ but before the above-said 10 January, 1536, letter of the mayor of Winchester and his colleagues. That equivalent dismantling costs were not recorded for Brambridge Mill and Twyford Mill in the 1535–6 Twyford account, despite both mills being recorded as 'eradicated', etc., in the same account, suggests that such expenses for these mills were incurred and recorded in the previous accounting year, but unfortunately the 1534–5 set of bishopric accounts has not survived in order to check.²⁷

Concerning the costs of destroying at least part of Woodmill, the £13 13s. 11d. mentioned above is entirely plausible, since most weirs at the time consisted of posts or piles rammed firmly into the riverbed, then having wooden hurdles (screens) placed between the piles, so as to provide a base around which faggots

of brushwood, heaps of broken stone, earth and turves were thrown in order to create the necessary seal against the river's flow.²⁸ Uprooting the piles and dredging away the hurdles, faggots of brushwood, stones and mud was by no means an easy task, the costs and labour demands for which eventually began to sap the momentum of the legislation.²⁹

Can the experience of the bishop's mills be seen as representative of the Itchen as a whole from Woodmill to Winchester, since there were other landholders along the river for whom, in the current state of knowledge, we have little equivalent information as to how their assets on the river fared after the Statute of Sewers? It might be said that the bishop was a special target,³⁰ as unlikely as that may seem given his power in the region, but the mention in the 10 January letter from the Winchester mayor and citizens that 'the great lords and their officers' were resisting those executing the statute suggests a wider set of injured parties than just the bishop. Smaller operators were also caught up; the 1535–6 Bitterne account also records the destruction of three fishing weirs (*warae piscariae*) formerly drawing a combined rent of 3s. 4d. per year from James Betts, John Pese and Richard Heckeley, again on the order of the justices of the sewers.³¹

The bottom line is that the Itchen river valley seemingly underwent a significant environmental and ecological transformation over the course of 1535 and possibly part of 1536,³² perhaps even to the degree that navigation was now much more likely on the river. But a curious feature of the 10 January, 1536, letter is that initially the mayor and his fellows at Winchester never mentioned navigation. Rather they only cited the revival of fish migration – the 'kyppers' mentioned above – and the resurfacing of long-flooded land. Over two years later (22 June, 1538), a letter from the bishop of Bangor to Cromwell described a very unconstrained form of fishing activity thriving on the river, to the degree that there were complaints that the attraction of this new pastime was withdrawing essential labour from neighbouring areas.³³ The bishop of Winchester, accepting that he had lost his mills (for the time being), seems to have restored some order to this situation by consolidating the

entire river from its source at Alresford Pond to what looks to be its mouth 20–25 miles downstream at ‘Itchenferry’ (apparently located at or near Weston – see below) into a single ‘fishery’, which was leased at 40s. per year on a life-term to a Henry Francis on 10 December, 1541.³⁴ It is, of course, possible that Francis and his successors allowed people to net or hook fish along the banks for a fee (where riparian landholders allowed it), but it should at least have blunted the initially free-for-all response to the newly resurrected bounty from the river.

In short, the new pattern of exploitation on the river became heavily slanted towards fishing. This accords with another comment in the 1538 letter that ‘...the river between Winchester and Southampton is not yet perfectly scoured (according to the effect meant and provided for by the King’s statutes)...’.³⁵ This opens up the very real possibility that, not only was the ‘clearance’ incomplete by 1538, but that it *never* progressed beyond that stage, leaving a debris field of some significance along the river, remnants of which may still have been evident in 1618, as in the decayed weir near Otterbourne or the ‘diverse stakes’ at Bishopstoke mentioned above.

In any case, any window of opportunity for navigation on the Itchen at this time was bound to be narrow. The force of the Statute of Sewers seems to have weakened quickly in succeeding reigns. In 1555 the Dean and Chapter of Hereford Cathedral, supported by the citizens of the city itself, successfully petitioned parliament to allow them to rebuild two water grain mills and two fulling mills, all to be run off a single wear, on the grounds of the unemployment and poverty the original destruction had caused their citizens.³⁶ Similar concerns were shown for the lower Itchen area, when William [Paulet], the 1st Marquess of Winchester was given a licence to resurrect Woodmill and hold it of the bishop of Winchester in a letter patent of 16 July, 1563, which argued that it would not result in local flooding and ‘that it should be rebuilt for grinding the corn of the queen’s subjects near the sea coasts there and furnishing her ships in time of war’.³⁷ It was not until 1571–2, however, that the resurrected mill appears in the bishop’s manorial accounts for Bitterne, when John, the 2nd Marquess of Winchester (and William’s

son), was recorded as holding Woodmill from the bishop for £13 6s. 8d. per year.³⁸ The nearest preceding set of bishopric accounts to survive was that for 1569–70, when Woodmill was apparently still in ruins,³⁹ so we might presume that the mill was rebuilt in 1570–1, likely, according to the 1563 licence, at John’s cost (or even his father’s, since William only died in early 1572). In any case, once rebuilt, Woodmill was there to stay under a number of successive lessees.⁴⁰

One cannot tell if a similar revival happened at about the same time for the Twyford and Brambridge watermills, as the manor had been granted as a whole to Sir Henry Seymour in 1551,⁴¹ thus ending the string of Twyford accounts revealing its mills, although, of course, the 1618 survey and 1618–19 map clearly show the mills back in operation by then. In addition to the reconstruction of Woodmill, the 1569–70 Bitterne account refers to a periodic fine of 5s. for a ten-year ‘farm’ (that is, lease) of various pieces of land. One of these parcels was in the tithing of Weston (right on the eastern side of the Itchen estuary as the river debouches into Southampton Water) and included half of the ferry (*passagium*) of ‘Itchenferry’ and half of a *gurgites* ‘called a weir (*wara*)’.⁴² The purpose of this weir is not given, although it may have been a part-recreation of the three fishing weirs torn down in 1535–6.

In any case, the 1618 survey shows strikingly that any changes brought about on the Itchen by the 1532 Statute of Sewers were scarcely permanent, and, indeed, attitudes concerning how the river should be managed were seemingly turning away from the unbending approach embodied in the Statute of Sewers by at least the early 1560s on the Itchen (as in the licence to rebuild Woodmill) and perhaps even earlier across the country at large, judging from the Hereford example above. Defenders of the Statute may well have pointed out that the fishing for salmon and other migratory fish had significantly improved on the Itchen after 1532, and bits of land along the river otherwise drowned by activities such as milling were now available. However, once the enthusiasm for the Statute’s precepts faded after a few decades, the somewhat unstable and (*pace* the fishing benefits) poorly exploited environmental conditions it had created succumbed quickly

under the pressure from riparian landholders and others to restore mills, weirs and like structures on the river now considered even more to be essential to the local economy.⁴³ For those looking for navigation on the river in the sixteenth century, however, it does provide a range of about two (or even three) decades after the late 1530s, where at least preparations for such navigation, even if likely never fulfilled, might appear in the record.⁴⁴

In short, the early 1570s reappearance of Woodmill – historically a key structure in limiting the extent of navigation and likely fish movement on the Itchen – as a functioning entity on the river would seem to give us a sort of *terminus a quo* from which any navigation (at least, leaving fish aside) was once more no longer possible on the river. For other reappearing ‘obstructions’ the timing is less certain but the ultimate result is not. We know that other mills and like structures, such as Twyford Mill and Brambridge Mill, had reinserted themselves back into the river environment by 1618, with perhaps some new ones added.⁴⁵ Indeed the picture given of the river in the 1618 survey is that it had returned to something resembling its pre-Statute of Sewers condition, a decent approximation of a traditional centuries-old state of the river likely going back to the 1270s, when population rise and improving damming techniques – especially for mills – seemingly began to close off rivers that had formerly been more receptive to navigation.⁴⁶

If the 1618 survey, then, seemingly shows the Itchen, compared to its previous history, going through a regressive environmental change, in one respect, however, it was unusually forward-looking. Despite the problems the commissioners were facing in improving the river, and the strong action that was likely to be required to achieve this, the tone of the survey was decidedly – perhaps even remarkably – conciliatory.⁴⁷ In rough outline it was suggesting a scheme to satisfy all demands upon the river, rather than to make changes at the expense of a particular group (especially mill-holders), as the suggestions of ‘cuts’ around Woodmill and Brambridge Mill indicate (fols 12^r, 13^v). This was in sharp contrast with the Statute of Sewers and earlier legislation, which took an unflinchingly belligerent attitude to the local economy

and specifically targeted mill and fishing weir owners, simplistically thinking that eradication of such ‘obstructions’ was all that was needed to achieve more optimal exploitation of rivers. Although a great deal of this ‘clearance’ was obviously achieved in the late 1530s, it likely only made rivers like the Itchen more unruly, better perhaps for the migration of fish, as the mayor and citizens of Winchester supposedly observed, but essentially irrelevant for navigation unless substantial and careful improvements within a more investment-friendly atmosphere were made, developments which were scarcely mentioned anywhere in England during the post-Statute period.⁴⁸

In this respect, the later 1618 survey with its suggestions for ‘cuts’, mending of banks, and scouring of channels (not to mention the creation of locks that would be needed for the later establishment of the navigation, but not referred to directly in the survey) foretold the considerable resources and care that would be required in manipulating the river in such a way as to balance various interests as harmoniously as possible. Old systems of management whereby riparian landowners were considered responsible for their own parts of river banks, as the survey implies at several points (and as the accompanying map would reinforce by carefully showing the boundaries on the river between these various riparian landholders), had to be changed or at least moderated, as concepts such as giving monopoly rights to prospective investors in the navigation, or levying taxes for improvements or compensations to landowners whose interests were affected but overruled for a wider public benefit, became more acceptable.⁴⁹ As the commissioners of the 1618 survey put it to the king:

‘Also we do think and verily believe if his Majesty please to give leave that some few shelves and banks being removed out of the said river and the said banks of the said river freed from trees, bushes and other stuff and frith before presented and the Banks which are sunk being cast up and the said river scoured and certain cuts being made besides the mills standing upon the said river, whereby a free passage may be had from the sea to the City of Winchester that it will be a most famous and profitable river.’ (fols 14^r – 14^v)

If the authors of the survey were guilty here of putting too rosy a gloss on future proceedings in stating that such improvements could be achieved very easily – since it would take in the end nearly a century for a functioning navigation on the Itchen from Southampton to Winchester to be completed⁵⁰ – their vision of a more conciliatory approach was undoubtedly the way forward.

THE CREATION OF THE SURVEY, ITS DATING, AND THE PERSONALITIES INVOLVED

The survey seems to have been carried out in a very traditional way, that is, relying on the testimony of (fifteen) jurors to create a description of the river from Woodmill to Winchester over the three days of January 21–23, ‘1617’ (although more probably 1618; see below).⁵¹ Another four days were required to distill the findings of this enquiry into the 27 January version below.

Three hands (presumably all male) are seemingly evident on the document in committing it to paper. In the order in which they seem to have worked on the text, these included: 1) a primary writer, the most artful of the three in terms of his calligraphy, who laid down the original text and in some places later edited it; 2) a secondary writer, seemingly more archaic in his spelling and language, who made nine further corrections to the text; and 3) a tertiary writer who inserted convenient identifiers for the type and sometimes number of obstructions on the river at that point onto the left-hand margin of the text (usually capitalised single letters like ‘M’ [for ‘mill’], ‘B’ [for ‘bridge’], etc.); he also provided a numerical summation of these various obstructions in the river on fol. 14^v. We shall refer to these three individuals as the primary/secondary/tertiary writers or ‘hands’ on the document as appropriate throughout the text and footnotes.

In terms of identification, the primary writer was likely connected to ‘the recorder of Winchester’ mentioned on fol. 11^r, or, even more likely, a professional scribe under the recorder’s supervision. The ‘recorder’ himself was almost certainly John More (or Moore), who

lived from c.1561 to 1620. He was not only sergeant-at-arms, as indicated on fol. 11^r, a position he held from 1614 to 1620, but also holding the position of recorder from 1596–1618.⁵² (As a result, More thus seemingly appears twice in the list of commissioners on fol. 11^r, as does Simon Barksdall, the mayor.) The position of recorder was nominally one of making sure that the proceedings of town meetings were written down and preserved, but it came to hold considerable authority; John More used the position to welcome James I to Winchester in 1605, for example. If so, any involvement he had in drawing up the survey was probably supervisory, just as it seems to have been for the later creation of the map. Thus, although the primary hand was probably that of a professional scribe, the nine corrections made by the secondary hand might well have been those of More himself.

A pencilled comment in a twentieth-century hand on the otherwise blank fol. 15^r has described the script of the tertiary writer as being ‘similar to that of Sir Hy [Henry] Whithed’, but there are reasons to be cautious about this. Although Whithed was certainly an important figure in south Hampshire at the time,⁵³ his name is not found among the commissioners of ‘water works’ on 11^r, nor among the smaller group of ten named commissioners present at the Guild Hall from 21–23 September, ‘1617’ (fol. 12^v). Nor was he among the fifteen jurors listed on fol. 11^v (although, given his knightly status, it would seem unlikely that he would⁵⁴). He was, however, one of the landholders along the river, which might well have put him in a conflict of interest that removed him from the process.⁵⁵ Why someone of his status would be involved with a routine summarising (or editing) of the document also raises doubt.

Concerning the dating of the actual document, the ‘1617’ noted above is deceiving. Actually the year involved was almost certainly 1618, since calendar years in England at this time normally started at the Annunciation or Lady Day (March 25). Thus, ‘1617’ actually covered 25 March, 1617, to 25 March, 1618, causing the January dates cited on the survey to fall in 1618 using the modern calendar.⁵⁶ This is confirmed to a certain degree by the opening

remarks of the survey on fol. 12^r, pronouncing that the meeting at the Winchester Guild Hall took place on 21–23 January ‘...in the yeare of our lord God accordinge to the computation of the Churche of England 1617⁵⁷’ (fol. 12^r), very likely identifying the dating as being of the Julian (or ‘Old Style’) calendar, with presumably a Lady Day start to the year, rather than the Gregorian (or ‘New Style’) dating established by the Catholic Church under Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 with its 1 January beginning.⁵⁸

A careful examination of the corrections and inadvertent slips among the various scripts on the opening paragraph on fol. 12^r gives some clues about how the document was formed. The initial words on the document seem to have been a false start by the primary writer, who apparently wrote ‘The xx’, before thinking better of it (he was likely going to write the date he started the document – presumably some time after the 21–23 January meeting but not necessarily the eventual 27 January). He initially put a faint vertical stroke through this, and then messily attempted to rub it out, before going on to write ‘The presentment of the Jurie, etc.’, with the stem of the capital ‘T’ written over the extreme right-hand part of the rubbed-out area. After writing the introduction and indeed likely the entire document, the primary writer added ‘The xxvijth of Januarey 1617’ in the left-hand margin of fol. 12^r, in one spot crowding the text itself.⁵⁹ When the document passed to secondary and tertiary writers, the latter scribbled out the left-hand-margin dating by the primary writer, and added his own form of dating, ‘27^o Janar. [sic; ‘January’ was clearly meant] 1617’ at the top of fol. 12^r in a more careless hand.

The overall impression of the document is one of being very much an initial rendering with many casual interpolations and corrections meant to instruct a further draft.⁶⁰ The variable spelling we associate with early English was much in evidence, and the corrections to achieve spelling consistency supplied by the secondary writer, from our perspective today, only seemed to make the situation worse. Also, the increasing errors and false starts towards the end of the primary writer’s contribution (that is, to the middle of fol. 14^v) suggest increasing fatigue.

Given the potential significance of the

document, it seems likely that a fine copy was eventually meant to result, but the existence of such a copy, or an intermediate draft, has yet to be confirmed.⁶¹ In terms of its longer political goals, the survey was likely intended as part of petitions made by Winchester MPs to the king in the 1620s in order to initiate navigation on the Itchen.⁶² This would follow the process through which other river systems were being improved for the same purpose,⁶³ although any resulting legislation on the Itchen did not appear until 1665 and completion of an effective navigation along the river not until at least 1710.⁶⁴

Finally, it is not the intent of this paper to provide an extensive prosopography of the names given in the document, but clearly many weighty individuals and families in the region were represented (such as the bishop of Winchester, the earl of Southampton, the Flemings, the Philpotts, etc.). Many had been or would be members of parliament, especially those designated as ‘knights’.⁶⁵ Some, notably the bishop of Winchester, had important assets on the river, although, as in the case with Henry Whithed and John Seymour, concern over any conflict of interest certainly did not stop them from being among the larger pool of commissioners, even if they were notably absent among the ten hearing evidence at the Winchester Guild Hall on 21–23 January, 1618.

The later map prepared by or under John More was certainly influenced by the written survey, perhaps no more so than making sure that the land held by the various riparian owners was clearly indicated on the map, but its careful attention to scale and generally accurate following of the river in its meanderings as it exists today suggests that the route was actually perambulated and was not simply an imagining of the river as described in the written survey.⁶⁶ The map was prepared by John More mentioned above and titled, in modern English, ‘The topographical description of the water course between the city of Winchester (‘Winton’) and Wood Mill made by the travel and view of John More, anno domini 1618’, the year given indicating that the map was prepared sometime between March 25, 1618, and March 15, 1619. It would seem likely that More’s ‘travel and view’ took place during the drier months of summer of

1618 and that the map was finished sometime after that. We have used the more expansive dating of 1618–19 to indicate that some of this work might have spilled over into 1619.

THE DOCUMENT [HRO 36M70/8, fols 11r-14v]

Editorial notes

In presenting the document, we have tried as much as possible to maintain the general form of the text. Punctuation has been added occasionally when the meaning of a passage is very unclear without it. The interpretation of ‘u’ versus ‘v’, the two letters often standing in for each other (and sometimes ‘w’!), is usually clear from the context, and the appropriate letter has been used rather than the one literally on the manuscript. Occasional bits of Latin have been translated into English, such as ‘In primis’ (fol. 12^r), which has been rendered by us simply as ‘First,’ as well as the ubiquitous ‘Item’, usually starting each sentence, given by us as ‘Also’.

Abbreviations were common in the text, often indicated by a superscripted letter (or letters) or abbreviation marks. The latter often involved only a simple stroke across the top of the word to indicate a missing letter or letters, but some have a very distinctive shape indicating a particular letter combination, such as the upside-down hook, facing right, with an small indentation in its stem, indicating an ‘re’ element in the word, most commonly in the word ‘present’. We have supplied these missing letters as necessary, as well as striking out letters to modernise the spelling, such as rendering ‘uppon’ to ‘upon’. At several points we also removed the survey’s tendency to treat the river as a person, as, for example, when it was recorded that ‘the river changed his course’; in such situations we replaced ‘his’ with ‘its’. Any problematic or editorial issues beyond these are indicated in square brackets or discussed in footnotes.

[*fol. 11^r*].

Commissioners for the water works from Southampton to Winchester

Earl of Southampton	William Hodson
Lord Bishop of Winchester	William Budd
Sir John Seymour	Thomas Chelde [Child]
Sir Henry Wallop	Edward White
Sir Benjamin Tichborne	Lancelot Thorpe
Sir Richard Tichborne	John Trussell
Sir Thomas Stewkely	William Kirtkby [sic]
Sir Thomas Fleminge	Edward Coll
Sir Charles Mountague	William Downe
Sir Humphrey Druwell	Thomas Cobb
Sir Richard Gifford	Edward Betts
Sir Thomas Neale	John Wayt
Sir John Powlett	Bartholomew Smith
Sir Richard Norton	
Sir Thomas Billson	
John More, Sergeant at Law	
The mayor for the time being [that is, Simon Barksdall, gentleman, mentioned on fol. 12 ^r below]	
The Dean of Winchester for the time being [that is, John Young, doctor of divinity, mentioned on fol. 12 ^r]	
The warden of St. Mary College [Winchester College]	
Symon Barksdalle	
The recorder of Winchester [probably John More or Moore above]	
Henry Gifford	
John Gason	
William Chandler	
[first name omitted, possibly also William?] Prym	
[first name omitted, possibly also William?] Sauadge	
[Savage]	
Thomas South	
Richard Venablas [Venables]	
Robert Stansb[ur]ie	
George Pemerton	

[*fol. 11^v*]

The names of the Jury
for the Commission of Sewers

Symon Unwyn gent[leman]
Richard Cowse gent
Michael Tutt gent
Richard Ashton gent
William Hodson
Thomas Brace
Thomas Blackborone [Blackbourne]
Robert Lamborne
John Godson
Jerrame [Jeremy] Helinge
Mathewe Ledford

John Lefson
Phillip Boare
John Newman
William Breyton

[*fol. 12'*]

27^o Janar: 1617 [1618]⁶⁷

The presentment of the Jury given up before his Majesty's Commissioners of Sewers at the Guild Hall within the City of Winchester in the County of Southampton [Hampshire] the day and year aforesaid upon the view had and taken of the walls, ditches, banks, gutters, sewers, 'goates'⁶⁸, bridges, gullies, streams, weirs and mills from the coast of the sea of Southampton along the great main river [of the Itchen] unto a certain bridge called Blackbridge by St Mary's College near the city of Winchester and so from thence to the City of Winchester aforesaid the XXI, XXII, and XXIII of January in the year of our lord God according to the computation of the Church of England 1617^o,⁶⁹ namely Simon Barksdall gentleman, mayor of the City of Winchester aforesaid, Sir Humphrey Drewell knight, Sir Richard Gifford knight, Sir Richard Tychb[o]rne knight, John Young, doctor of divinity, Dean of the Cathedral Church of Winchester, Henry Gifford esquire, John Gason esquire, Thomas Child gentleman, Edward White gentleman and Lancelot Thorpe gentleman.⁷⁰

First, the jury does present that there is a certain mill called Wood ['M:' in left-hand margin at this point⁷¹] Mill with two great weirs thereunto adjoining erected upon the Main River aforesaid, which hinder the free passage of any sea vessel, boat or barge to and from the said City of Winchester and the said port of Southampton. And that the said weirs are not very ancient, the which mill is held from the Lord Bishop of Winchester aforesaid.⁷² And they also present that, notwithstanding the said mill and weirs, a cut may be made in either side of the said River above the said mill without any damage as we suppose to the said mill, whereby any boat or other small sea vessel may pass to and fro [upon]⁷³ the said river to the town and port of Southampton. And that the land on the south side belongs to the Bishop of Winchester

and the land on the north side to Sir Henry Whithed knight, the which land so to be taken in for that purpose will contain in quantity a quarter of an acre or thereabouts.⁷⁴ Also the said Jury does present that the said river there is somewhat narrowed by encroachment and that the bank of a meadow there called Townhill Mead, being in the tenure of one Thomas Dumm[er]⁷⁵ are sunk into the said river, having also diverse small trees and withies [twigs or branches] growing upon the banks of the said meadow. Also we present that there are certain withies and small trees growing on the banks of the said river, being the meadow and pasture of Sir Richard Mylls, knight, now in the tenure of Robert Illman, which do annoy the free passage. Also we present that there are certain withies and small trees annoying the said free passage upon the banks of the meadow called Stonyfield Mead belonging to the College of Winchester now in the tenure of [a space was left here, seemingly for the later addition of a name].

Also that part of Townhill Orchard is encroached upon the said river near the bridge called Mansbridge with diverse small trees and withies there growing on the banks annoying the said passage on the said river.

[*fol. 12''*]

Also we present that there is a low bridge upon the said river ['B.' in left-hand margin here] called by the name of Mansbridge which hinders the said free passage. Also we present the said river is somewhat narrowed by sinking and decay of banks by the said river along the high way from Mansbridge within the tithing of Townhill, the same River there being much choked with weeds and diverse small trees and withies on the banks of the meadows called Mansbridge Meads to the hindrance of the said passage. Also we present that there are some trees growing on the banks by the river side with some encroachment upon the said river upon the meadows and pastures of Sir John Philpott, knight, now in the tenure of Thomas Dum[m]er the younger. Also we present a certain encroachment upon the river with some small trees there growing along the banks of the meadows of Sir Edmund Ludlowe, knight, now in the tenure of Thomas Lincke. Also we present

that the passage of the main river is turned out of his [its] ancient course by the erecting and setting ['M.' in left-hand margin] up of one mill called Uppmill being the mill of Mr Bromefeild or of his assigns,⁷⁶ and that there are bays [here meaning dams or obstructions] and banks made which do stop and hinder the old and ancient course of the said River, turning the said river to maintain the said mill, and that the ditch of the said ancient river right against the said banks and bays is encroached upon. And there is [sic] many small trees and withies growing on the said banks and so along the bank's side of the meadows there of Sir Edmund Lodlowe, knight, or of his assigns as we are informed. Also we present that there are some encroachments by reason of the sinking in of the banks into the said river and many small trees, withies and other stuff growing on the banks of the meadows along the said river side belonging to the inhabitants of the tithing of West End [in South Stoneham parish] which do hinder the free passage on the said river. Also we present that on the banks of the meadows of Henry Knowles the younger adjoining to the said river there are small trees growing⁷⁷, being a nuisance to the free passage on the said river as aforesaid. Also we present that the free passage of the said river is much stopped and annoyed with small trees, withies and frith [rough bushland] growing on the banks by the river side upon the coppice called Vocas Coppice,⁷⁸ being the lands of Saint Mary College near Winton [Winchester], now in the tenure of Andrew Hunton within the parish of South Stoneham. Also we present that there are trees, withies and other stuff growing on the banks of one meadow of Mr Wells or of his assigns on the other side of the river against Vocas Wood & Coppice within the Tithing of Eastleigh which do hinder the free passage upon the said river. Also we present that the river is somewhat narrowed by falling in of the banks of the meadow called Allington Common Mead and that there are some trees in the river adjoining to the same meadow.

[fol. 13^r]

Also we present the like annoyance on the banks of the meadow of Sir Thomas Fleming, knight. Also we present the like annoyance

upon the said river by reason of falling into the said river of some banks and of trees and other stuff growing upon the banks of one meadow of Mr Henry Knowles the elder next the meadow of Sir Thomas Flemmyng belonging to Chuknells Farm.⁷⁹ Also we present the like annoyance of some decay of the banks, trees and stuff growing on the said banks along the said river on the meadows of the farmer [that is, lessee] tenants of Bishopstoke on both sides of the said river. Also we present that the trees, willows and other growing stuff on the banks of a pasture of Sir George Pillepott [sic], knight, are an annoyance to the free passage upon the said river. Also we present that the passage upon the said river is annoyed by the growing of trees upon the banks of one pasture ground of Thomas Carpenter in Stoke. ['B.' in left-hand margin] Also we present that there is a low bridge upon the said river at Bishopstoke and diverse stakes standing in the said river near the said bridge to the annoyance of the said passage upon the said river. Also we present that the main river is much impaired and weakened by turning the ancient ['M.' in left-hand margin] course thereof a little above Stoke Church to Stoke Mill there,⁸⁰ and also that there are some small trees on the banks of two closes of the glebe land [land for supporting the priest of the parish] adjoining to the said river which are a nuisance to the passage. Also we present that the river is somewhat impaired by turning part of the ancient river out of its ancient course into a gully or ditch ['M.' in left-hand margin] beginning on the land of Sir George Phillpott leading towards⁸¹ Barton Peverill to his mill there. Also we present that there are small trees growing on the banks of the meadows of the tenants of Stoke on the southeastern side of the said river which are a nuisance to the said passage. Also we present the like growing of trees upon the banks of a meadow of Mr Wells belonging to Boet Farm.⁸² Also we present that there is a little nook of Bishops Coppice called Privet Coppice annoying the passage of the said river with the growing of small trees and bushes there. Also we present that there is a little plot of trees and stuff hindering the passage upon the said river between the meadow of Sir John Seymour and Sir George Philpot, knights. Also we present that the banks of the land called Millhouse Ground has some small trees

and stuff thereupon growing, and that there are some encroachments by sinking down of the banks, there being the land of Sir George Phillpott, knight, or of his Assigns, which are a nuisance to the passage to and fro upon the said river. Also we present the tenants of Brambridge for that there is

[fol. 13^v]

growing upon the banks of the meadows unto them belonging small trees, frith and stuff which do hinder the said passage upon the said river. Also we present that there is a ['B' in left-hand margin] bridge called High Bridge very low athwart the said river, which is a hindrance to the said passage. Also we present that the banks of Otterbourne common meadows are sunk in some places whereby the said river is impaired. Also we present that the main river is altogether turned from its ancient course to maintain ['M' in left-hand margin] a mill at Brambridge belonging to Mr Wells, and that a short cut may be made a little above the said mill along a certain gully issuing from the said river now maintaining the said mill by the meadow now in the use of Mr Downes of Otterbourne and some others, which cut will contain twenty lugs⁸³ in length or thereabouts, which cut will very little hinder the said mill and nothing at all the occupiers of the meadow there adjoining. Also we present that there is a weir athwart the said main river now somewhat decayed heretofore maintained by Sir John Seymour or his ancestors which is a nuisance to the said passage. Also we present that there are trees and bushes growing on the banks of the said river, as well on ['R.' in left-hand margin] Twyford side as on the manor of Compton. Also we present that there are rails athwart the said main river betwixt Compton manor and Twyford tenants, which is [sic] a stop to the said free passage. Also ['B' in left-hand margin] we present that there is a low bridge upon the main river at Twyford leading from the housing of one Gilbert Beare into a pasture of the said Gilbert in the western side of the said River being a nuisance. Also we present that there are small trees growing and banks sunk and decayed upon both sides

of the said river, the lands belonging to the tenants of Twyford as we are informed. Also [there is] one other bridge ['B' in left-hand margin] upon the said River leading from Twyford into the common pasture of Twyford being a nuisance to the said passage. Also we present that there are small trees growing upon the banks belonging to Twyford tenants on the eastern side of the said river with some banks sunk into ['B' in left-hand margin] the said river and also one little bridge from Twyford to the mill there called Twyford Mill. Also we present one great dam made at ['D' in left-hand margin] Twyford upon the said river which does cause the ancient river to run out of its former course to maintain Twyford Mill, being the mill of Sir John Seymour as we are informed; also an encroachment with small trees upon the banks near the said mill. Also we present that the bank along the river by the common meadows of Compton are in some places sunk whereby the ancient course of the said river is somewhat straitened [narrowed]. Also we present that part of the ancient river is turned out of its ancient course in a ditch leading towards Shawford.⁸⁴ Also we present that the banks in Sir George Phillpott's mead⁸⁵ are in some places sunk into the said river, there somewhat narrowing the said river. Also we present that there are trees growing on the banks of the meadows of the tenants of Twyford

[fol. 14^r]

on the eastern side of the said River and some banks decayed and sunk into the said river there and also small trees and decayed banks on the western side of the said river of the meadows belonging to the ['fB' in the left-hand margin] tenants of Compton. Also we present that there is a foot bridge athwart the said river leading to Saint Cross Mill and also rails set up in the said river and also on both sides of the said river banks sunk and decayed, and also one tree growing upon the bank's side being on the meadow of William Badger, now in the tenure of one Robert Stevens. Also we present that there is one little island belonging to the Hospital of Saint Cross much encroached upon the said river with some trees and decayed banks. Also

that⁸⁶ there are small trees growing and banks sunk on the banks of the meadows belonging to Barton Farm hindering the passage on the said river. Also we present that there is one bay with ['D' (for 'dam') in left-hand margin] piles newly made a little above Saint Cross athwart the said main River, turning the whole course of the same river out of its ancient course towards Saint Cross Mill, much annoying the free passage on the said river. Also we present that there are banks decayed and trees growing upon the banks of one meadow called Cripstead Mead⁸⁷ near unto South Mills,⁸⁸ and also decayed banks and small trees growing on the banks of Barton Meadows which do hinder the free passage on the said river. ['B' in left-hand margin] Also we present that there is one low bridge called Barton Bridge athwart the main river leading to South Mills annoying the said passage. Also we present that the banks of Mr Child's mead⁸⁹ above South Mills are somewhat decayed and sunk with small trees there annoying. Also we present that upon the banks of the College Meadows from Mr Child's mead up to Blackbridge there are small trees growing and some banks sunk into the main river being a nuisance. Also we present the like offence on the other side of the River on the banks of the meadows ['B' in left-hand margin] called Bishops Meadows. Also we present that there is one bridge called ['M:' in left-hand margin] Blackbridge athwart the said river and also one mill called Seagrove Mill⁹⁰ upon the river and the banks decayed by the river's side to the eastern gate [of] the city of Winchester. Also we present that part of Seagrove Mill aforesaid has been lately erected and that there are there ['3.fB' in left-hand margin] three foot bridges athwart the main river between the said mill and the said eastern gate of the City of Winchester and also some encroachment of little⁹¹ buildings upon the said river between the said mill and the gate ['2 Iland' written in the left-hand margin] aforesaid and also two little islands upon the said river a little above the mill pond, all which are a nuisance. Also we verily believe that if the said river be made navigable that it will not be prejudicial or hurtful either to the College or Wolvesey, the Lord Bishop's house, by any overflowing of waters or rising of springs for that the watercourse will be a great deal lower than

either of the said places,⁹² but we rather think by means thereof it will be exceeding[ly] profitable unto the said places. Also we do think and verily believe if his Majesty please to give leave that some few shelves and banks being removed out of the said river and the said

[fol. 14^v]

banks of the said river freed from trees, bushes and other stuff and frith before presented and the Banks which are sunk being cast up and the said river scoured and certain cuts being made besides the mills standing upon the said river,⁹³ whereby a free passage may be had from the sea to the City of Winchester that it will be a most famous and profitable river. And that it will in time not only be very profitable to all the neighbour shires and borderers thereupon adjoining, but also will bring by reason of continual trading thereupon an unspeakable good and benefit, as well [as] to the City of Winchester as to the whole country. Also we do also certify that the said river is already for the⁹⁴ most part of a sufficient depth and breadth to carry any reasonable vessel, boat or barge, and the banks of the said river for the most part are very sufficient, and so like ever to continue, for the most part of the said river runs calm and smooth.⁹⁵

[The following is added in a different, at times scribbled, hand; it has very strong similarities in particular to the hand putting the letters in the left-hand margins of the previous folios, especially the capital 'M' for 'Mills']

The impediments⁹⁶

.

Mills—6

Bridges—8

Weirs—1

Rails—2

Dams—3

Footbridges—4

Islands—2.

Buildings. Besides many trees and river banks sunk in many places.⁹⁷

[In the opposite, otherwise blank folio (15^r) there is printed in pencil in a seemingly twentieth-century hand: 'This writing is similar to that of Sir Hy [Henry] Whithed.']

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TNA – The National Archive

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Authors: This article was completed and submitted before the death of the eminent medievalist, John Langdon, and has therefore had to be carried through the press by others. John Langdon, formerly Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta, Canada; James White, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

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Notes

- 1 We are extremely grateful to Sarah Lewin, principal archivist at the Hampshire Record Office (hereafter HRO), who directed one of us (Langdon) to the survey (HRO 36M70/8, fols 11^r–14^r) and its accompanying map (HRO 102M71/P1) during the summer of 2013. The folios of the written survey are in fact unnumbered in the larger volume in which it exists, but the nearest preceding folio is given as ‘10’ (written over ‘9’ struck out). Accordingly we have numbered the following four folios of the survey in its entirety as fols 11^r–14^r, following the HRO’s catalogue.

This research is part of a larger study, with Langdon as principal investigator, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (project no. 435–2013–0542), concerning the Statute of Sewers (1532) and its impact upon English river environments, for which support the authors are very grateful. John Hare and Stephen Gadd have also been exceedingly generous in their help and advice.
- 2 This speaks to the very vexed question as to how much of an Itchen navigation to Winchester existed in earlier times. The more recent literature suggests that some navigation on the Itchen did exist in the early Middle Ages, up to about the 1270s (Bond, ‘Canal Construction’, 179–80), but that even this might have been limited in its extent, perhaps reaching upstream from the Channel only to a ‘stathe’ (quay) at Bishopstoke (Currie, ‘Early Management’, 252), some seven miles south of Winchester.
- 3 The National Archives, Kew, London (hereafter TNA), PRO 30/24/30. We are very grateful for Stephen Gadd for informing us of this document and providing photographs of it. From careful examination of the internal content of this undated document, he attributes it to c.1675–6.
- 4 The six watermills in the summary are seemingly those indicated by an ‘M’ in the left-hand margin of the text as the survey progressed upstream, these being Wood Mill (in Bitterne), Uppmill, Stoke Mill, Barton Peverill Mill, the mill at Brambridge, and Seagrove Mill (fols 12^r, 12^r, 13^r (bis), 13^r and 14^r respectively), but fails to indicate directly in these marginal notations Twyford mill (13^v), the mill at St. Cross Hospital (14^r) and South Mills (14^r), the first two of which have a marginal notation of ‘D’ (for ‘dam’) at or near them and the third ‘B’ (for bridge). Finally, the mill at Shawford (shown clearly on the 1618–19 map) was only indicated in the written survey as ‘a ditch [that is, a mill-leat] leading towards Shawford’ (fol. 13^v).
- 5 The mention of natural islands, especially near Winchester (fol. 14^r), created a similar ‘braided’ effect, where the volume of water was clearly divided among two, three or more channels: for the hydrological implications of this, see Rhodes, ‘Identifying Human Modification’.
- 6 Conflicting demands over water among mills and any future navigation, or other unnamed ‘waterings’ (for irrigation?), were also a constant theme in the c.1675–6 survey for the Avon: TNA PRO 30/24/30, fols 61^v–62^v. For the critical nature of water availability and management on the Itchen itself, albeit for a later period, see Course, ‘Itchen Navigation’, 119–20.
- 7 The ‘low’ bridges were Mansbridge and the bridges at Bishopstoke and Barton Bridge (fols 12^r, 13^r and 14^r), while High Bridge was ‘very low athwart the river’ (fol. 13^v). Less specifically, the bridge from Twyford was called a ‘nuisance’ (fol. 14^r).
- 8 These were of indeterminate construction. Only one bridge (at Ringwood) was recorded

- as being of stone in the c.1675–6 survey, while a wooden cart bridge, seemingly with arches, was mentioned for Ibsley: TNA PRO 30/24/30, fol. 61^v (both cases). The reference to a pier for Mr. Compton's bridge, south of Ringwood, suggests a bridge with stone piers and a timber deck (fol. 61^v). Bridges with some amount of timber in them continued to the eighteenth century: Harrison, *Bridges*, 145–6.
- 9 Downton Bridge, where the arches were described as 'to [too] narrow and to low': TNA PRO 30/24/30, fol. 61^r.
 - 10 The numbers are minima, rounded down to the nearest five, since there are a few ambiguous cases.
 - 11 Course, 'Itchen Navigation', 116, 121, 123.
 - 12 This was probably the earlier 'Segrim's Mill' that specialized in grinding wheat in Winchester in the Middle Ages: Keene, *Survey*, i, 62; Langdon, *Mills*, 95–6, 229.
 - 13 23 Henry VIII, ch. 5 ('A generall Acte concernynge Commissions of Sewers to be directed in all parts within this Realme'): *Statutes of the Realm* [henceforward *SR*], iii, 368–72.
 - 14 *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, x, 92 (in no. 254, about quarter-way through a long list of 'Remembrances'). The date of the note is not provided, but given its position in *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII* it is likely from early February, 1532, somewhat before the April 10–May 14, 1532, session of parliament from which the Statute of Sewers was issued (Lehmberg, *Reformation Parliament*, 145–59, esp. 155–6). At the very least, this reminder indicates Cromwell's strong conviction on the matter.
 - 15 That is, the well-known ch. 33 in the 1215 Magna Carta (ch. 23 in the 1225 version): 'Henceforth all fish-weirs (*kidelli*) shall be completely removed from the Thames and Medway and throughout all England, except on the sea coast.' Holt, *Magna Carta*, 458–61, 507. Langdon is currently in the process of constructing a more detailed account of this political and legislative history, which, in addition to Magna Carta, saw major legislation to clear rivers for navigation and other purposes from sessions of parliament in 1351, 1371, 1397–8 (renewed in 1399 by Henry IV), and 1472–5: *SR*, i, 315–16, 393; ii, 109–10 (1 Henry IV version, 115–16), 439–42. The last is difficult to time exactly, because it was part of Edward IV's lengthy parliament from 6 October, 1472 – 14 March, 1475. Although it appears from *The Statutes of the Realm* that the commission of sewers legislation falls under 12 Edward IV (1272–3), its equivalent on the parliamentary rolls, with the king's approval, only latterly occurred on the roll for June 1474–March, 1475: *Parliamentary Rolls*, xiv, 327–30. Rosemary Horrox in her introduction to this volume of the *Parliamentary Rolls* indicates that the legislation was in effect from at least July, 1474 (*ibid.*, 10). We have cautiously adopted the lengthier span of the entire parliament (1472–5) for dating this sewers legislation. In any case, all these efforts from 1351 onwards were seemingly to little effect in clearing obstructions from rivers until 1532.
 - 16 As reported in a letter of 19 November, 1535, from John Husee in London to Lord Lisle, concerning the (in the end unsuccessful) attempts to save Lady Lisle's weir, for a fish pond, on the Taw at Umberleigh, Devon, from destruction: 'As the King sends all suits touching weirs to Mr. Secretary, [Husee] has not spoken to him of my Lady's. The King is very earnest in it, for he has lost more than 500 marks yearly by such weirs and mills as have been pulled down. Mr. Secretary also will show no favor. Various suits have been made for the bp. of Winchester's weirs in Hampton and those in Christchurch; but all shall be pulled down, although the said weirs have stood since 500 years before the Conquest.': *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, ix, 285.
 - 17 The last (as found by Langdon so far) occurred at or near Lugwardine, Herefordshire, in 1539: *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, xiv (pt. 2), 20. The number of known uprootings of weir and other 'obstruction' sites in rivers, as currently elucidated from the *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII* and manorial accounts for 1532 and after, as so far identified by Langdon, stands at just over twenty, with an estimate that there were probably in excess of a hundred such demolitions over England as a whole. Rivers indicated as receiving serious attention in correspondence from 1535 to 1538 include the Severn, the Exe, the Wye, the Usk, the Teme, the Lugg, the Hampshire/Wiltshire Avon and the Itchen (*Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, ix, 40, 128, 166; x, 24), while others like the Thames and the Medway received some attention at least (*Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, ix, 170; xiii (pt. 1), 5). Counties specified included Wiltshire, Somerset, Lancashire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Devonshire (*Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, ix, 123, 128, 130, 170; x, 168).
 - 18 This was likely a complicated matter, since many 'commissioners' were clearly in conflict of interest, the bishop of Winchester being one of

- the most obvious for Hampshire, since he stood to (and eventually did) lose a lot from the river clearances.
- 19 *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, viii, 48–9.
 - 20 *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, ix, 190; *Lisle Letters*, ii, 599.
 - 21 The relevant part of the letter is as follows: ‘They [the citizens of Winchester] are still more satisfied that the King has written to his Commissioners for due execution of the statutes of sewers, of which some part is exercised, and for other parts Master Pares, my lord of Winchester’s treasurer, plainly told the Commissioners they should do what pleased them, but he would have no meddling therewith, on behalf of the Bishop. My lord of Bangor and the other Commissioners have been at Wood Mills, which you saw, and had a great part of it pulled down. Much of the waterworks yet stands to the hindrance of the stream, although a penalty of 100l. was laid upon Thos. Fysshier, farmer thereof, “for the doing thereof, which is not yet done.” On Monday next the Commissioners are appointed to be there for further execution of the same. The streams are already greatly improved, and as far as they may run the lands of the abbot of Netley which were drowned are now perfectly dried, and the rivers are full of salmon kyppers. Many persons are therefore coming to inhabit the said city, and so a number of people will be employed. And though some of those who have executed the statute have been sore threatened by the great lords and their officers in these parts yet the King’s commandment shall be fulfilled. Winchester, 10 Jan.’: *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, x, 24. ‘My lord of Bangor’. This was John Capon (Salcot) bishop of Bangor and, for our purposes, more significantly Abbot of Hyde, Winchester.
 - 22 HRO 11M59 B1/244; the folios are unnumbered, but look under the ‘Defective Rents’ (*Defectus Redditus*) sections of the Twyford (for Brambridge Mill and Twyford Mill) and Bitterne (for Woodmill) accounts.
 - 23 The Statute of Sewers, like previous legislation, added insult to injury by requiring that holders of ‘obstructions’ in rivers remove them at their own cost: *SR*, i, 393 (1371); ii, 110 (1397–8), 441–2 (1472–5); iii, 370 top (1532).
 - 24 *...diversis hominibus conductis & laboratis circa disruptionem, eradicationem & assportationem diversos postos and stock’ molendini domini ibidem vocatis Wodmyll...: HRO 11M59 B1/244* (among ‘allowances’ recorded at the very end of the Bitterne account). The apostrophe after *stock* in the quote indicates the abbreviation mark and the uncertainty as to how it should be extended here, either singular or plural. We think the singular *stockum* is more likely (and hence we have used the singular ‘stock’ in the translation above) as a generalized term encompassing the hurdles, faggots, stones, turves, etc., that were placed between and around the posts to give a weir or dam its essential ability to block a stream or river, as discussed below.
 - 25 Thomas Fisher, the ‘farmer’ or lessee of Woodmill, also bore a share of the destruction costs, but was seemingly delinquent in the matter: see note 21 above.
 - 26 The bishop’s annual accounts normally ran from Michaelmas (September 29), the notional end of the harvest, to the following Michaelmas.
 - 27 The nearest preceding set of accounts is that for 1533–4, which show rents being received from all three mill sites: HRO 11M59 B1/243.
 - 28 A particularly fine example of this traditional way of constructing – or repairing a major break in – a dam is given for the watermill at Nottingham Castle, mostly over the course of Easter to November, 1313, where the ramming of piles, followed by the application of hurdles (*claiæ*), faggots (bundles of wood or thorns; the cutting down of *spinas* for the faggots was mentioned on at least one occasion) and then the liberal addition of turves and broken stone is detailed: TNA E 101/478/1, ms 1–2. Elements of this sort of construction can be seen in an archaeological setting in Clay and Salisbury, ‘Norman Mill Dam’, esp. 282–4, 286–9.
 - 29 As Walter Stonor wrote to Cromwell on 2 October, 1535, while uprooting weirs in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, ‘I beg I may be excused from plucking up every weir, for every owner who ought to pluck them up at his own charge now waits to have it done at the charge of the county.’: *Letters and Papers...of Henry VIII*, ix, 170. The mysterious engines (‘jynns’) also mentioned in the letter – seemingly winches or cranes of some sort, which were operated from boats to lift the piles – give some sense of the trickiness of the operation. The abnormally wet weather in late 1535 also encouraged footdragging, as many weir-holders used the difficult climatic conditions as an excuse to delay the uprooting of their weirs, etc.: e.g., see the examples provided by the editor of the *Lisle Papers: Lisle Papers*, ii, 622–3.
 - 30 At the time the bishop – Stephen Gardiner – was at loggerheads with Cromwell, so his objections to the tearing out of his mills may

- have counted for far less than they would have normally: Rosen, 'Economic and social aspects', 196.
- 31 These were also recorded in the 'Defective rents' section for Bitterne: HRO 11M59 B1/244. It seems likely that these fisheries were downstream from Woodmill in the Itchen estuary.
- 32 For example, some uprooting of Woodmill apparently still had to be done by early January, 1536, according to the letter from the Winchester worthies to Cromwell.
- 33 E.g., 'Though there are "such commodities [that is, fish in the river] as hath not been seen by any man being now alive," there is one great mischief, *i.e.*, that the country, perceiving the abundance of salmons now in the river by reason of practising the statute, "there escapeth neither day nor night but they lie upon the river, and every man is a fisher." Not only those who have land by the banks but those who live by labour, yea, and men dwelling 20 miles off, resort hither to fishing, being well furnished with instruments necessary, and well weaponed if any man say them nay': *Letters and Papers... of Henry VIII*, xiii, 458. Rosen, 'Economic and social aspects', 196, looking at the original (TNA SP 1/133, fols 178–9) upon which this *Letters and Papers* extract was based felt that the bit on the original manuscript that read 'already many high and sundry commodities do daily and hourly arrive' (this is not in the *Letters and Papers* summary) indicated some degree of an incipient or restored navigation, but this may depend upon the interpretation of 'commodities', which Rosen seems to take here as general goods, while the document otherwise indicates solely fish. In contrast, though, concerning work on the Hampshire/Wiltshire Avon, at least one letter sent to Cromwell – by Peter Philpot in November, 1535 – was categorical in indicating that the work was to improve navigation, including, after a brief reporting on the progress in uprooting 'mills, weirs and fishgarths' on the river, a promise of a scouring of 'shelves' from the riverbed and clearing of trees from riverbanks, to be undertaken by the various riparian landholders, 'so that a boat may have free passage': *Letters and Papers... of Henry VIII*, ix, 286.
- 34 HRO 11M59 B1/249, in the Bitterne account under the section headed 'Farm of mill and fishery' (*Firma molendini & piscariae*), even though there was no mill in operation at the time. By 1579–80 Francis, or perhaps a relative also named Henry Francis, still held it (HRO 11M59 B1/281, fol. 20^r), while in 1600–1 it was now in the hands of John Knight for the same 40s. per year (HRO 11M59 B1/299, fol. 28^r). How the bishop obtained the authority to create this river-long fishery is unclear and certainly worthy of further investigation.
- 35 *Letters and Papers... of Henry VIII*, xiii, 458.
- 36 2 & 3 Philip and Mary, ch. 14 (SR, iv (pt 2), 288–9).
- 37 *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1560–3*, 623. The licence is also mentioned in Rosen, 'Economic and Social Aspects', 156. We are grateful to John Hare for directing us to Rosen's very useful PhD thesis.
- 38 HRO 11M59 B1/274, fols 32^v, 34^v. The steadiness in rents for the mill (see note 40 below) suggests that the mill was built in one go, weirs and all, with the consequence that the 'not very ancient' weirs mentioned in the 1618 survey would be 45–50 years old by then, long enough, but likely still in living memory of at least a few at the time.
- 39 HRO 11M59 B1/273 (again see in the Defective Rents section of the Bitterne account).
- 40 For example (in cases where the folios of the particular sets of accounts are numbered and so the reader can find them more easily), in 1579–80 Henry Ugtred held Woodmill for the same £13 6s. 8d. as earlier for the marquess of Winchester: HRO 11M59 B1/281, fol. 20^r, while in 1600–1 it was held for a slightly reduced £13 per year by John Knight (who also held the Itchen fishery: see note 34 above): HRO 11M59 B1/299, fol. 28^r.
- 41 *Victoria County History* [hereafter *VCH*], *Hampshire*, iii, 340.
- 42 HRO 11M59 B1/273, fol. 11^r.
- 43 In addition to the Hereford petition and Marquess of Winchester's licence above appealing for the rebuilding of mills on the basis of local or regional need, one, for example, should query, except for, say, mercantile elites and inland water transporters, whether the bulk of either urban and rural populations would ever have welcomed the loss of access to water-powered milling in their neighbourhoods occasioned or threatened by the Statute. For this point concerning the strong popular demand for water- and wind-powered milling, although for an earlier period, see Langdon, 'Lordship and Peasant Consumerism'. Southampton, it appears, was also stridently opposed to navigation on the Itchen, because it threatened the employment of its sizable ranks of carters: Rosen, 'Winchester in Transition', 152, 161. The

- huge amount of cart travel from earlier times out of Southampton is clear from a recent examination of the city's fifteenth-century brokerage books (*English Inland Trade*, ed. by Hicks); for the ubiquity of such traffic between the port and Winchester, see especially Harwood, 'Southampton's Trading Partners: Winchester'.
- 44 As in the case of the Hampshire/Wiltshire Avon: see note 33 above.
- 45 Upmill, identified as the next mill upstream from Woodmill in the 1618 survey, seems from the language describing it to have been a relatively new addition to the river valley: 'Also we present that the passage of the main river is turned out of his [its] ancient course by the erecting and setting up of one mill called Uppmill being the mill of Mr Bromfeild or of his assigns,...' (fol. 12^v). It is this mill that was later called 'Gater's Mill' in the nineteenth century, after its lessee, Edward Gater (Currie, 'Early Water Management', 249).
- 46 E.g., Jones, 'River Navigation'; Langdon, 'Inland Water Transport – View from Mills'; Blair, 'Introduction', esp. 11–13; Bond, 'Canal Construction', 175–6, 179–80, 205.
- 47 The c.1675–6 Avon survey was even more placating in its language: e.g., 'It is not conceived that the deepening or opening the said gravells [of the Avon] wil make any considerable alteration in the superfities [sic; 'superfluities' meant] of the water for that the water may wel be little enlarged but onely contracted to a narrower and deeper channel so as al [all] interests depending upon it wil continue the same as before.'; TNA PRO 30/24/30, fol. 61^r.
- 48 For one exception along the Hampshire/Wiltshire Avon, see note 33 above, but its reliance on probably very reluctant riparian landholders to implement navigational improvements effectively and consistently was clearly a dubious assumption.
- 49 The granting of monopolies was particularly important in eventually developing the Itchen for navigation: Course, *Itchen Navigation*, 6–7; for the development of other, often parliamentary, mechanisms for overriding private concerns for the public good, see Willan, *River Navigation*, esp. ch. II.
- 50 Course, *Itchen Navigation*.
- 51 For the establishment of juries of presentment from earlier times of the sort that were most likely involved in the 1618 survey, see Masschaele, *Jury, State, and Society*, esp. 46–59.
- 52 This and what follows on More comes from: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604–1629/member/more-john-i-1561–1620> (accessed Dec. 7, 2015).
- 53 Whithed served in many official capacities, including member of parliament, until his death in 1629: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604–1629/member/whithed-sir-henry-1574–1629> (accessed March 5, 2015).
- 54 For the generally lower status orientation of jurors, albeit for an earlier period, see Masschaele, *Jury, State and Society*, ch. 5.
- 55 This point is debatable, since, for example, the bishop of Winchester and Sir John Seymour both appear among the forty-one commissioners and were also notable landholders on the relevant stretch of river.
- 56 E.g., *Handbook of Dates*, 12–13; for examples see Tables 2 and 3 (pp.10–11), which show clearly the association between 'Modern Years' and 'Annunciation (conventional)' datings.
- 57 There is a very curious character, partly blotted out, immediately after the '7' in '1617'. This looks to have been inserted afterwards, probably by the primary writer judging from the script, and eventually fashioned somewhat clumsily into a superscripted 'o' indicating *septimo*, a form of the Latin 'seven' commonly used in medieval and early modern England and which was often alluded to with a superscripted 'o' at the end of any number ending in '7'. (This is much more clearly seen at the very top of fol. 12^r in the '27^o' written in by the tertiary writer, although he does not do it for '1617' here.) However, it might just possibly that the addition by the primary writer was originally meant as a different letter or number. There are a number of candidates here, but one with particular relevance would be an '8', which was then somewhat clumsily altered by one of the writers into the superscripted 'o'. If an '8' were initially meant, it might indicate something like '1617/8' was being entertained, a sort of hybrid dating that became increasingly common over the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as English writers attempted to navigate between Julian and Gregorian calendars with their different starts to the year: *Handbook of Dates*, 13.
- 58 Only with the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1752 was the 1 January start to the year accepted unequivocally in England and Wales: *Handbook of Dates*, 13, 18.
- 59 That is, at the spot where 'of Winchester' was written; if the date had been written first it would have been difficult to place the 'of' while retaining the overall left-hand alignment of the introduction.

- 60 Such as the messy rubbing out at the top of 12^r, or inappropriate choices of words, such as 'County', seemingly quickly struck out, instead of 'tenure', as if the primary writer had momentarily lost his train of thought (fol. 12^v near bottom).
- 61 Another copy of the survey exists in the Bodleian Library (Bodl. MS. Top. Hants. c. 5, pp. 71–81, Rosen, 'Economic and social aspects', 196, n. 7), which we are investigating. In any case, we think this version of the HRO 1618 survey, with its accompanying map being in the same archive, is the better choice for presentation in this article. See below*.
- 62 The closing remarks of the survey, asking for permission to amend the river as the commissioners laid out, are addressed to 'his Ma[jesty]' (fol. 14^r). Rosen, 'Winchester in Transition', 152, notes the attempts by Winchester to mount several bills in the 1620s concerning navigation to the town, apparently all blocked by the city of Southampton; see also note 43 above.
- 63 Particularly the Thames up to Oxford, where legislation in 1605–6 and 1624 laid the framework for the Burcot-Oxford Commission that eventually established regular navigation to the city of Oxford in 1635: 3 James I, ch. 20 and 21 James I, ch. 32, in *SR*, iv (pt. 2), 1095–6, 1245–6; for the eventual completion of this navigation, see Thacker, *Thames Highway*, 72; *VCH, Oxfordshire*, iv, 291–3.
- 64 Course, *Itchen Navigation*, 6–7.
- 65 Thus, in what must be a minimal indication of local influence, Sirs John Seymour, Henry Wallop, Benjamin Tichborne, Thomas Fleming, Charles Montague, Richard Gifford, John Powlett, Thomas Billson and John Mo[o]re were all members of parliament at some point in their lives: as taken from the online History of Parliament: www.historyofparliamentonline.org (accessed online on several occasions in early 2015). The names also included nine people who were also mayors of Winchester at one time or other (including those who would be in future): John Hare, personal communication.
- 66 As shown in the 'photoshopped' version of the map, with comments and extracts from the written survey placed as applicable, by one of us (White).
- 67 See above for the dating.
- 68 This is likely from the middle English 'got(e)' or 'goute', denoting a stream of water (or blood) as through a narrow restriction or channel: [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED19129&egs=all&eg-](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED19129&egs=all&eg-display=compact)display=compact (University of Michigan online Middle English Dictionary, accessed February 25, 2015). We are very grateful to Stephen Gadd for directing us to this reference.
- 69 See note 57 above..
- 70 This introductory paragraph is indented further left than from what follows in the text.
- 71 This and the other left-hand marginal notations below seem to have been in the same hand as that making the summary of obstructions on fol. 14^r, which we have called here the 'tertiary hand' (see introductory remarks to the survey above).
- 72 'Wode m[ell?]' appears faintly by the representation of a building on what remains of the left-hand border of the 1618–19 map (a small part of this left-hand border has been sliced away from the top corner and a larger portion from the bottom). There is no indication of the complicated water control system that the two weirs would likely entail: for these, see Roberts, 'Salmon Fishery at Woodmill', 32–3, esp. Figure 1 (p. 33).
- 73 It would seem likely that 'upon' was also meant to be here, as in the construction at the bottom of fol. 13^r.
- 74 Although it is very faint, 'S[ir] Henry Whithede knight' can be made out on the 1618–19 map on the northerly side of the Itchen (the map shows the river flowing very nearly east-west at this point) with the bishop's land on the other, southerly bank.
- 75 The large number of 'minims' (repeated strokes) for making the 'u' and the two 'm's here, eight in all (these minims could also stand for other letters like 'i', 'v' and 'w') plus the abbreviation mark at the end (so that it appears only as 'Dumm' with the abbreviation mark at the end) makes it hard to determine this name with confidence, but Course, *Itchen Navigation*, 117, mentions a Thomas Dummer of Cranbury (seemingly for 1767), so we have adopted that as the most likely; the name appears again on fol. 12^v, but here with a missing 'm' indicated by the abbreviation mark. Clearly Dummer in Bod. MS.Top.Hants.C.5, 75.
- 76 A building labeled as 'up mell' is shown on the 1618–19 map for the south-eastern – or left-hand, as it flowed towards the Channel – side of the Itchen. The building is further (but faintly) identified as a mill by a crude representation of a waterwheel (essentially a small 'o' with four or five tiny spokes radiating from it). The lands on either bank, as per the map, belonged respectively to 'M[r] Brome feild' and 'S[ir]

- Edmond Ludlow knight', although from the map alone one could not tell that Bromefeild was the holder of the mill. It is this mill that later became named 'Gater's Mill' in the nineteenth century, after its lessee, Edward Gater: Currie, 'Early Water Management', 249.
- 77 The word 'goinge' was added immediately afterwards here, presumably by mistake. We have omitted it.
- 78 This is likely the present-day Vocus Copse on the east side of the Itchen.
- 79 Probably Chickenhall Farm in North Stoneham parish. Chicknell Farm in Bod.MS.Top. Hants.C.5.
- 80 The effect of this manipulation of the river is very clearly shown on the 1618–19 map.
- 81 The phrase 'leadinge towards' was repeated on the MS by error.
- 82 Boyatt Farm, at this time a manor of the Wells family in the parish of Otterbourne.
- 83 Each lug was equal to a rod or perch; at a standard 16½ feet per perch or rod 20 lugs would equal 330 feet.
- 84 To the mill there through a fairly lengthy mill-leat, as shown on the 1618–19 map.
- 85 The last four letters of what looks to have been 'meadowes' have been blotted out here, leaving 'mead', which would not be wholly inappropriate, so we have left it in this shortened form.
- 86 The words 'we present' were crossed out before 'that', as if the person doing the strikeouts wished to have this sentence attached more strongly to the previous one.
- 87 Presumably near or at the current Cripstead Lane, about 150 metres north of Saint Cross Hospital.
- 88 Shown as Barton Mill on the 1618–19 map.
- 89 This is rendered here and again a little below as 'Mr Childe his meade', which we have rendered more simply as 'Mr Child's mead'.
- 90 See note 12 above concerning the identification of Seagrove Mill.
- 91 The small word here is not easy to decipher, but it appears to be 'lit' with an abbreviation mark.
- 92 That is, Winchester College and/or Wolvesey Palace.
- 93 A short word after 'river' exists, which looks to be 'fre', perhaps a too-early insertion of 'free' that was not crossed out.
- 94 There is a single 's' here between 'the' and 'most', which is difficult to comprehend, perhaps a too-early start of 'sufficient' that was never struck out.
- 95 This last clause is given very confusingly as 'for [perhaps meant to be struck out; the word is very smudged] that the for moste parte of the said river runneth calme and smoothe.' We have given what seems the most logical interpretation, although others might be possible, such as 'for that the foremost part of the river runs calm and smooth'.
- 96 The numbers given below do largely correspond to the number of times that 'M', 'B', etc. appear in the left-hand margins of the text. As discussed in the introduction, however, this was particularly illusory in the case of mills, where the survey indicates there were, in fact, ten powered by the river instead of the six in the list.
- 97 This last line was seemingly in the same hand as for the list as a whole, but very hurried.

*A second version of the presentments is to be found in the Bodleian Library Oxford (Bod. MS.Hants.C.5, with a photocopy in HRO WK1/13/1 and a transcript HRO WK1/13/2). This consists of a collection of contemporary texts on parchment by John Trussell. There are minor variations between the two versions as in the location of the lists of people and in the names of a few of those involved. But the presentments seem identical. In one place a gap left for the name of a tenant (at Stonyfield Mead, f. 12r) is found in both versions. It should provide a useful reference in any disputed readings of the current text.

Trussell, an antiquarian and future mayor of Winchester seems to have been an important figure in Winchester and in the recording of the proceedings. He retained an enthusiasm for river navigation on the Itchen, as seen in his *The origin of cities*, c.1640, and seems to have been the origin of the myth of a canal from Alresford to the sea. (HRO W/K1/11/1, p 100-1; Roberts, 'Alresford Pond', 134-5).