

# An earlier location of Sheep Wash Stanch on the Little Ouse

The remains of Sheepwash Stanch can still be seen on the south bank of the Little Ouse at grid reference TL 7582 8698. This location cannot be accessed directly though it can be viewed from the path<sup>1</sup> that runs along the north bank of the river from Brandon Stanch all the way to Hockwold and Lakenheath.

The remains are of masonry, principally brick, and appear to be of one of the bankside piers.



Figure 1: Map showing location of existing remains and possible site of former stanch.



Figure 2: Remains of Sheepwash Stanch as viewed from the north bank of the Little Ouse.  
Photograph taken February 14th 2019

Two 19<sup>th</sup> century 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps available from the National Library of Scotland<sup>2</sup> mark the location of the stanch and show two piers or islands midstream but no further details of construction or which channel may be weir, sluice or clough, which may contain a lift gate. It is important to note that these maps show the railway line, constructed by the Eastern Counties Railway from Newport in Essex to Brandon in 1845 and, as can be seen from the location map, this passes close to the bend in the river where the stanch was located.

Two other 19<sup>th</sup> century maps are of interest as they show the stanch and river in the years before the construction of the railway: Brandon Town Council have a copy of the Brandon parish/tithe map of 1838 though now rather fragile. Suffolk Record Office have a copy of this though catalogued as *Map of Wangford Hall Estate near Brandon*<sup>3</sup> Below is overlaid a sketch map on OpenStreetMap as used for the Location map

- 1 Bridleway, Weeting-with-Broomhill BR13 and Hockwold-Cum-Wilton BR3 <https://maps.norfolk.gov.uk/highways/#>
- 2 1881 survey <https://maps.nls.uk/view/114496987#zoom=6&lat=7767&lon=10438&layers=BT> and 1903 revision <https://maps.nls.uk/view/120854387#zoom=6&lat=7890&lon=10244&layers=BT>
- 3 West Suffolk Record Office Reference: M547/26

above.

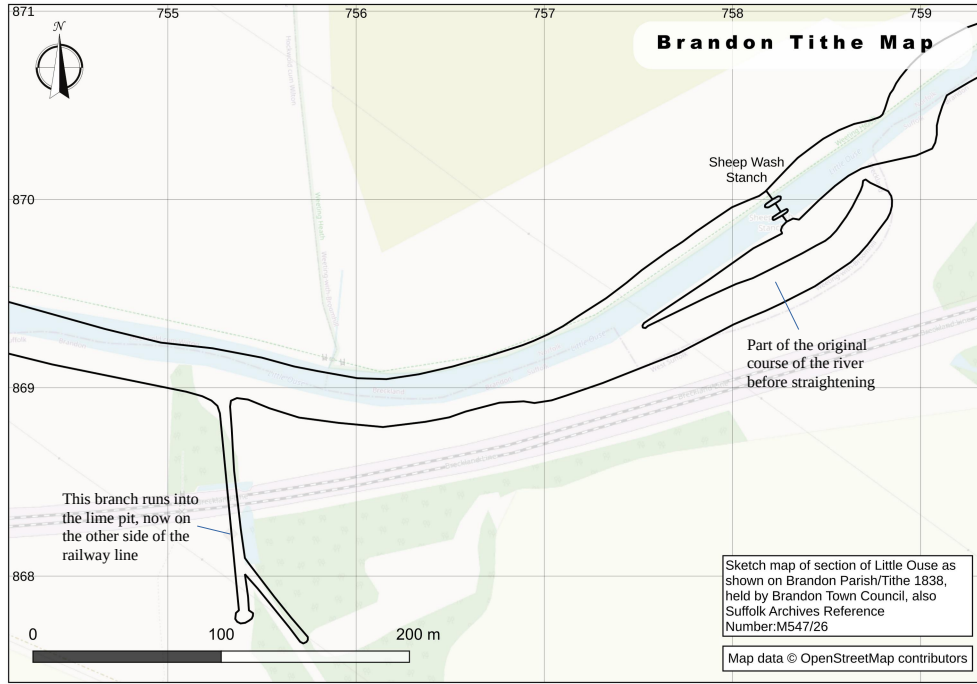


Figure 3: Rough sketch map of section of Brandon Tithe map, 1838.

Norfolk Historic Map Explorer<sup>4</sup> has georeferenced tithe maps of Weeting and Hockwold parishes including the river. A similar sketch below:

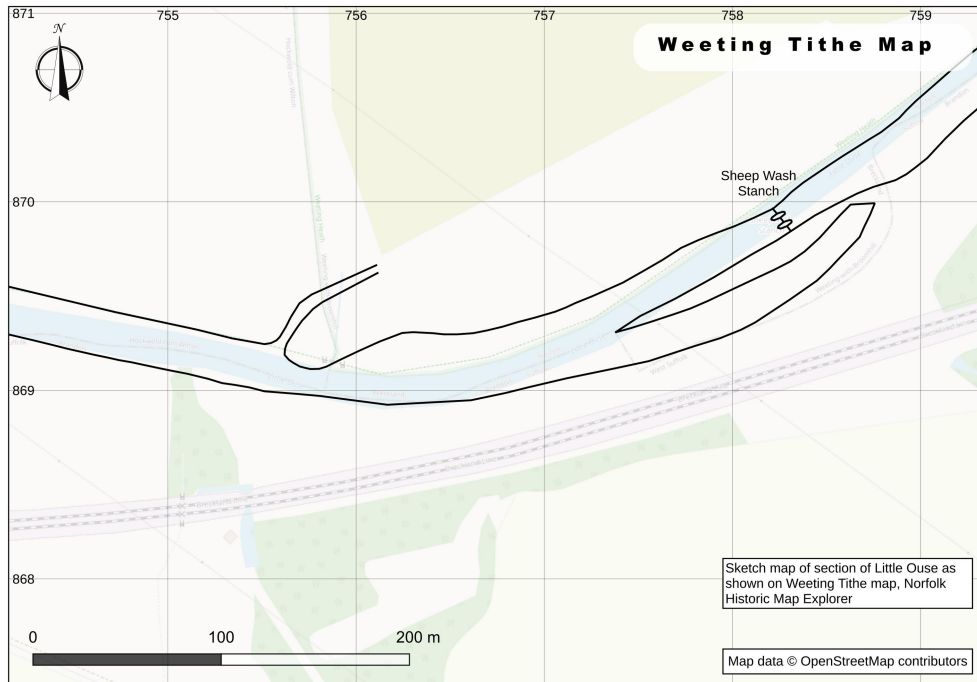


Figure 4: Rough sketch map of section of Weeting Tithe map, 1845

Both these maps show a dead-end arm of the river south of the stanch and it can be seen that this arm runs close to the line of the Norfolk - Suffolk County boundary where it deviates from the current course of the river.

An earlier map, the Brandon Inclosure map of 1807,<sup>5</sup> shows the river before it was straightened with the stanch

<sup>4</sup> <https://norfolkcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b3536317056c428ab9e08fe674f31a43>

<sup>5</sup> West Suffolk Record Office Reference Number: BA500/F/5/1/8

located further downstream, very close to the arm that runs south into the lime pit.

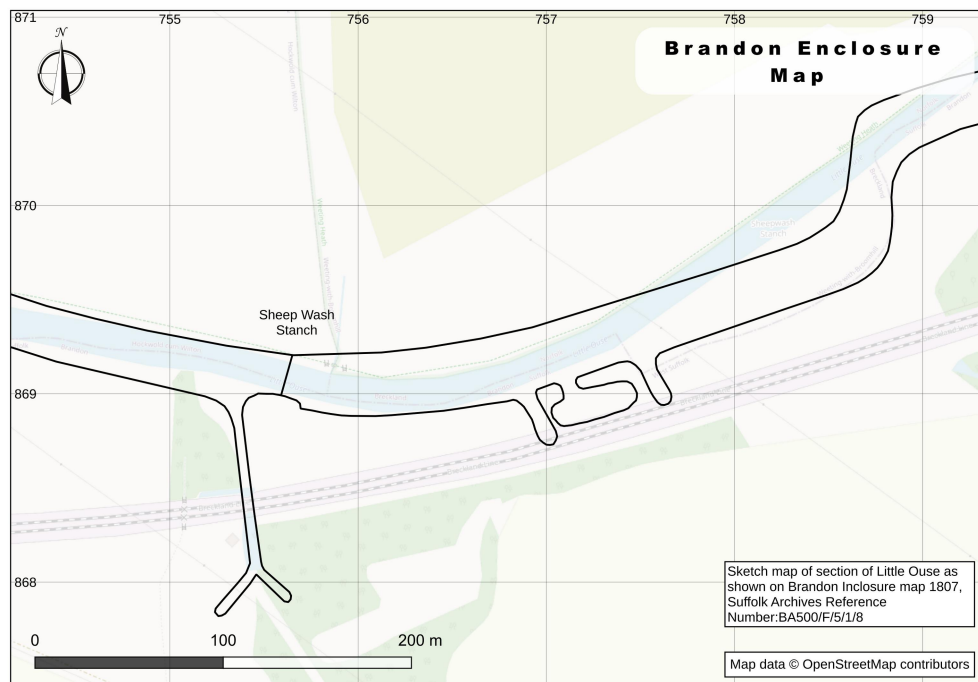


Figure 5: Sketch map of section of Brandon Enclosure map showing the river following the county boundary and the

The deviation of the boundary and remains of the original course in the later maps suggest that this section of the river was straightened and the stanch rebuilt on the new, straight cut, and that this occurred sometime between the creation of the Brandon Enclosure map and the tithe maps of the mentioned parishes.

A closer look at the Norfolk Historic Map Explorer at this point shows what may be the stanch in this earlier location on both the Hockwold parish tithe and enclosure maps.

Andy Carter - 7 Feb 2024