

WELCOME TO THE Free Landing

PICNIC AREA AND WILDLIFE SITE

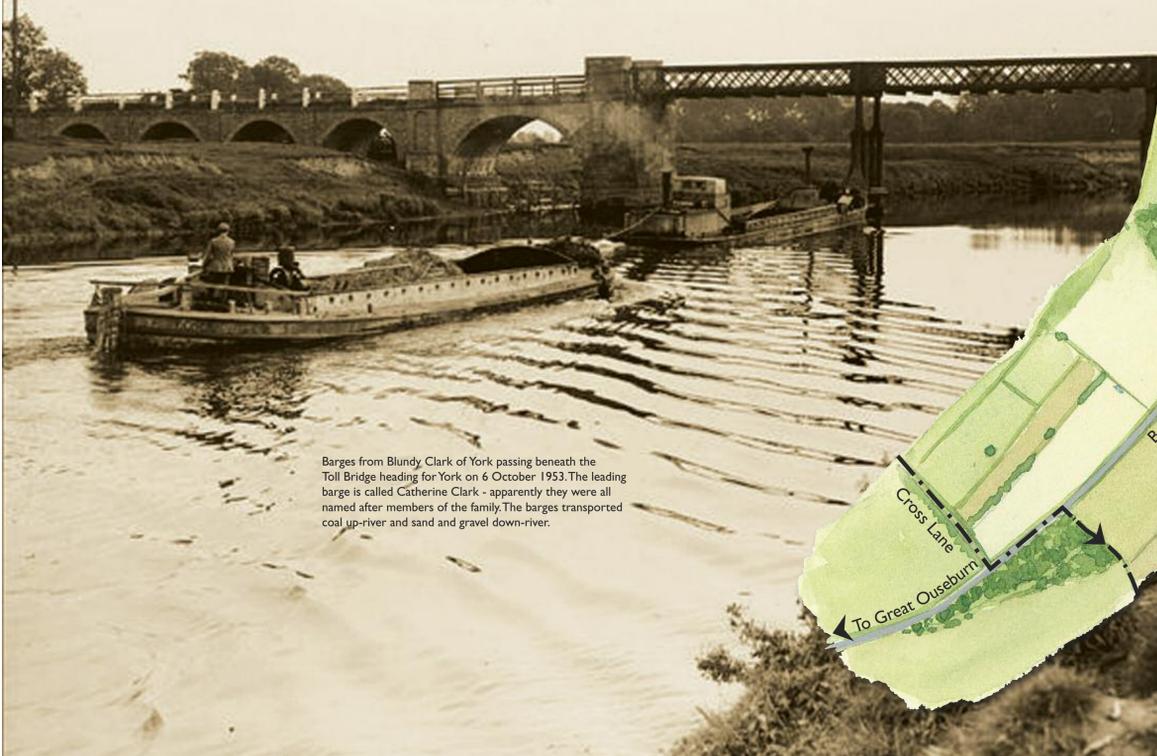


Male banded demoiselle - you might spot these striking damselflies by the river in summer

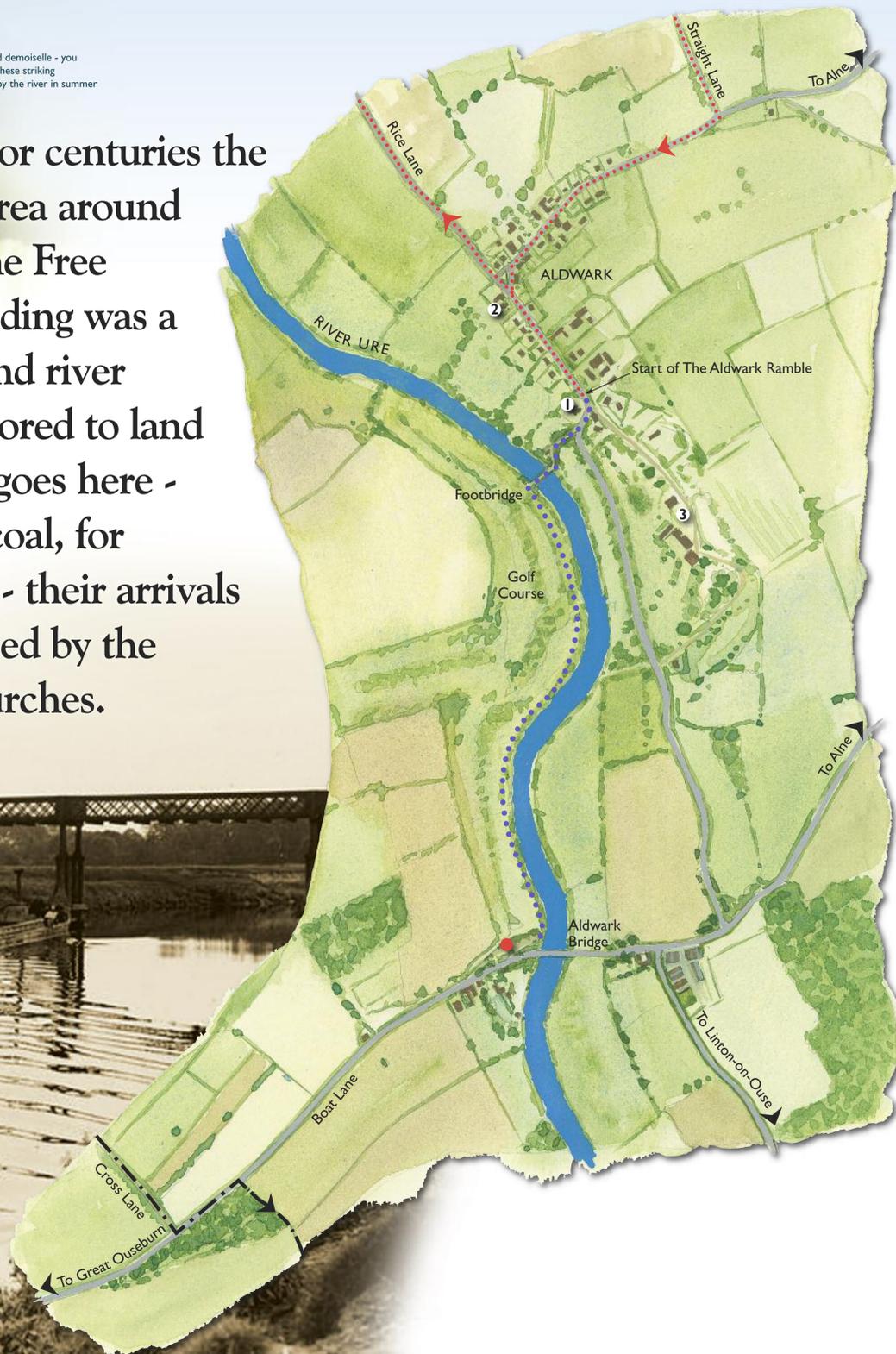
For centuries the area around the Free Landing was a vital transport hub for road and river traffic. Commercial boats moored to land their cargoes here - such as coal, for example - their arrivals announced by the local churches.



The pretty St Stephen's Church in Aldwark village

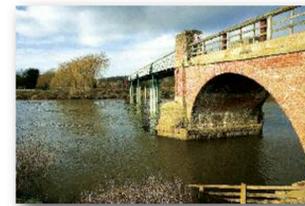


Barges from Blundy Clark of York passing beneath the Toll Bridge heading for York on 6 October 1953. The leading barge is called Catherine Clark - apparently they were all named after members of the family. The barges transported coal up-river and sand and gravel down-river.



There has been a river crossing here for hundreds of years - the area was once called Rudford Wath, wath meaning a fordable stream - and a ferry once ran between the banks.

However, it was dangerous and unreliable in winter weather, and in 1772 an Act of Parliament was granted to John Thompson of nearby Kirby Hall to build a bridge.



Thompson agreed on condition that the bridge remained in private hands - and today Aldwark Bridge remains one of only eight privately-owned toll-crossings in the country.

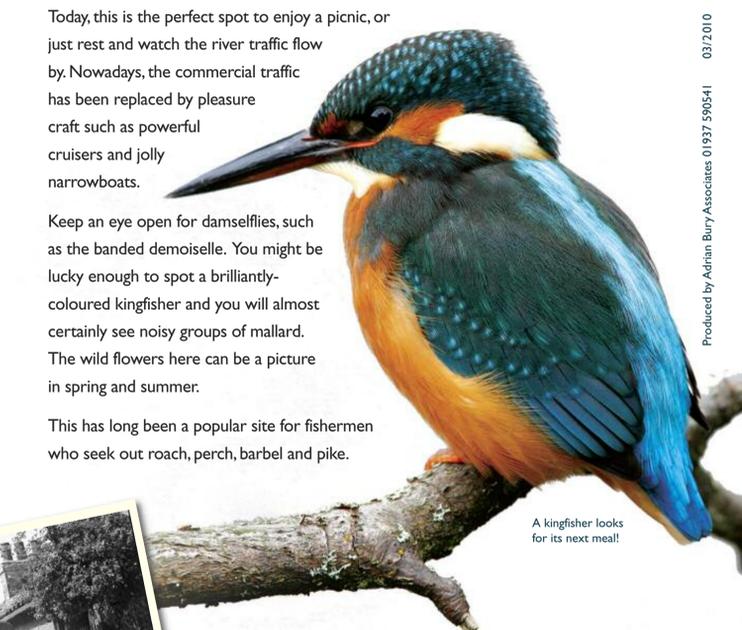
The sturdy iron crossing you see today was opened on 6 April 1877 two years after the first bridge, designed by Harewood House architect John Carr, fell into the water.

Serene as the scene is today, this was the site of a tragedy when, in 1810, young men stood on the bridge to watch ice floes speeding beneath on flood water. In their excitement, they raced from one side of the bridge to the other - tragically the railing gave way and 12 fell into the water. Only one body was ever found.

Tom Coupland opens the Toll Bridge foot gate for pedestrians around 1950



An old postcard of the Tollhouse



A kingfisher looks for its next meal!

Today, this is the perfect spot to enjoy a picnic, or just rest and watch the river traffic flow by. Nowadays, the commercial traffic has been replaced by pleasure craft such as powerful cruisers and jolly narrowboats.

Keep an eye open for damselflies, such as the banded demoiselle. You might be lucky enough to spot a brilliantly-coloured kingfisher and you will almost certainly see noisy groups of mallard. The wild flowers here can be a picture in spring and summer.

This has long been a popular site for fishermen who seek out roach, perch, barbel and pike.

- Key**
- You are here
 - OS Map Explorer 299 covers the area.
 - The Aldwark Link
A short level walk of around one mile return. Takes about 40 minutes at a steady pace. Beware of flying golf balls when on the golf course.
 - The Aldwark Ramble
This Ure Walk Through Time of just under four miles takes about 2 hours.
 - — — The Bronte Trail (from Great Ouseburn)
Another of the Ure Walks Through Time which starts at the interpretation panel on the Village Hall, Great Ouseburn. A warm welcome awaits you at The Crown Inn!
- 1 St Stephen's Church
 - 2 The Aldwark Arms
 - 3 Aldwark Manor

ROAMING ON THE RIVERSIDE

The Aldwark Link is a gentle walk on level ground that follows the banks of the Ure and takes you across a footbridge to the attractive village of Aldwark - where The Aldwark Arms or Aldwark Manor make perfect spots to take some refreshment.

If you still have time and energy to spare, you can take the Aldwark Ramble, one in a series of the celebrated Ure Walks Through Time, which starts at the interpretation panel in front of St Stephen's Church. It's a delightful circular route, rich in wildlife possibilities and open countryside views.



Produced by Adrian Bury Associates 01937 590541 03/2010



Great Ouseburn Parish Council
www.great-ouseburn.co.uk