

## Why Doesn't Germany Beck go Straight to the River Ouse?

### And where was the Landing at Landing Lane?

#### Germany Beck

Germany Beck passes under the A19 at Stone Bridge, the eastern section of which is built in thin dressed masonry blocks and may date from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when St Mary's Abbey undertook drainage works to improve the productivity of their land holdings in the area.

From Stone Bridge, it flows for a short distance towards the river Ouse, but soon turns north and runs up the field (pictured below) to connect with the Ings drainage watercourse, where it turns sharply west towards the Ouse and discharges through a flap-valved culvert.



Stone Bridge



Both these stretches of the Beck are shown on the 1852 OS map (below), but the enclosure map of 1759 (below) shows the Beck following a more western route. The Ings drainage watercourse, which is shown on the 1852 map, is missing on the earlier enclosure map.

These differences confirm that significant changes in farming practice occurred after the enclosures, perhaps even suggesting that the pre-enclosure Ings was a single field without some, or any, drainage ditches.

Most of the Toft and Croft strips along Main Street, shown on the enclosure map, extend past the Back Lane to the still existing footpath. It is likely that this had a ditch running closely adjacent to it to collect the water flowing from the village crofts. This would also explain why the enclosure map shows a watercourse continuing east from the intersection with Germany Beck, where there is a brick arched footbridge today, pictured right.



The 1852 map also has an intriguing set of letters A-B-C-D, on part of the route of Germany Beck, with an explanatory note saying, "*The letters ABCD show the line of the Boundary claimed by the Township of Water Fulford*". Point 'D' is at Stone Bridge and 'C' is near the Ouse, at the end of a boundary which probably marks the route of the Beck before improvements were undertaken. Perhaps this is the original route of the Beck as it flowed directly west and into the Ouse, as it would best fit the constraints of the landscape.

The 1852 map shows a long water course running northwards up the length of the Ings. The southern end still exists (right) and joins the diverted route of Germany Beck, where it turns sharply west towards the Ouse.



This watercourse was cut after the enclosures to speed the drainage of the Ings after flooding, but it may also have offered the opportunity to control water levels in the Ings.

If weirs and sluices were installed, it would have been possible to divert water into the Ings watercourse and provide a safely accessible supply of fresh drinking water for cattle and other animals grazing on the Ings. Without this, animals would have to drink from the Ouse, which risks them slipping into the water and drowning.

### **Where was the Landing at Landing Lane?**

Landing Lane turns west off the A19, a short distance south of Stone Bridge, and follows the path of an upside-down V towards the river Ouse (see maps below). This route follows the shape of the higher field on the south side of the Lane, which places it within the area 'claimed' by Water Fulford, but the 1852 OS map also marks the legal boundary between Water Fulford and Gate Fulford as following the southern side of the Lane.

The Water Fulford enclosure map of 1759 shows Landing Lane as part of the Back Lane of the village, turning south to run along the river bank, just as it does today. The map shows the Tofts and Crofts running away from the river bank to an east-west 'Main Street', preserved today as the 'nurses footpath which used to lead to Naburn Hospital. The Tofts on the other side of the street had by then disappeared, although their crofts were shown.

The 1852 OS map shows tracks running both north and south along the river bank from Landing Lane, with the northerly track leading to a marked Wharf. The 1907 OS map does not mention a wharf at this point, but there is a small building



on the river bank adjacent in that area. Today, the stubs of a few timber posts protruding just visibly from the river bed at the point where the wharf used to be.

It is surprising that no maps refer to the substantial southern wharf, as a long length of masonry wall remains visible today (left) along the river bank in front of Water Fulford Hall.

At its northern end (right) a masonry wall with concrete repairs projects up diagonally from the river up the bank in the direction of Landing Lane.

At the middle of the remains of this wall is a relatively modern concrete landing stage (below). This is opposite a gate from the grounds of the Hall, and it has two stone bollards engraved with the letters ONB (Ouse Navigation Board).



In his 1890 'Ouse Bridge to Naburn, William Camidge says 'Fulford has a quay or landing stage for coals, lime, manure, etc, which is approached by a lane by the end of the village and is of great service to the villagers.' Perhaps this is it, as the masonry remains seem somewhat older.



So why was one landing more substantial than the other, and why did one survive and the other disappear?

The long length of the southern length of wharf is on the outside of a sharp bend in the river, where the erosive power of the flow will

scour the bed better than at the northern wharf, meaning that the southern wharf would be more accessible to larger craft.

The substantial length of the southern wharf also allows more craft to use it, which may have been important at busy periods, such as harvest time.

Perhaps their separate existence may originate in the rivalries between the two manors, reflected in the note on the 1852 OS map about Water Fulford's claim to the boundary marked by the Letters ABCD. The A-B-C section claims the northern wharf as part of Water Fulford's property, so perhaps it pre-dates the southern wharf, or maybe it was always a secondary landing point and fell out of use after the better southern wharf was built in masonry.

Study of the Key family archives, held by Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society, may shed more light on this. Similarly, the Ouse Navigation archives held by York Explore may also be illuminating.



Christopher Rainger  
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Footpath running the length of the Ings

Post-1759 enclosure watercourse running the length of the Ings

Stubs of remaining timber piles on site of small wharf

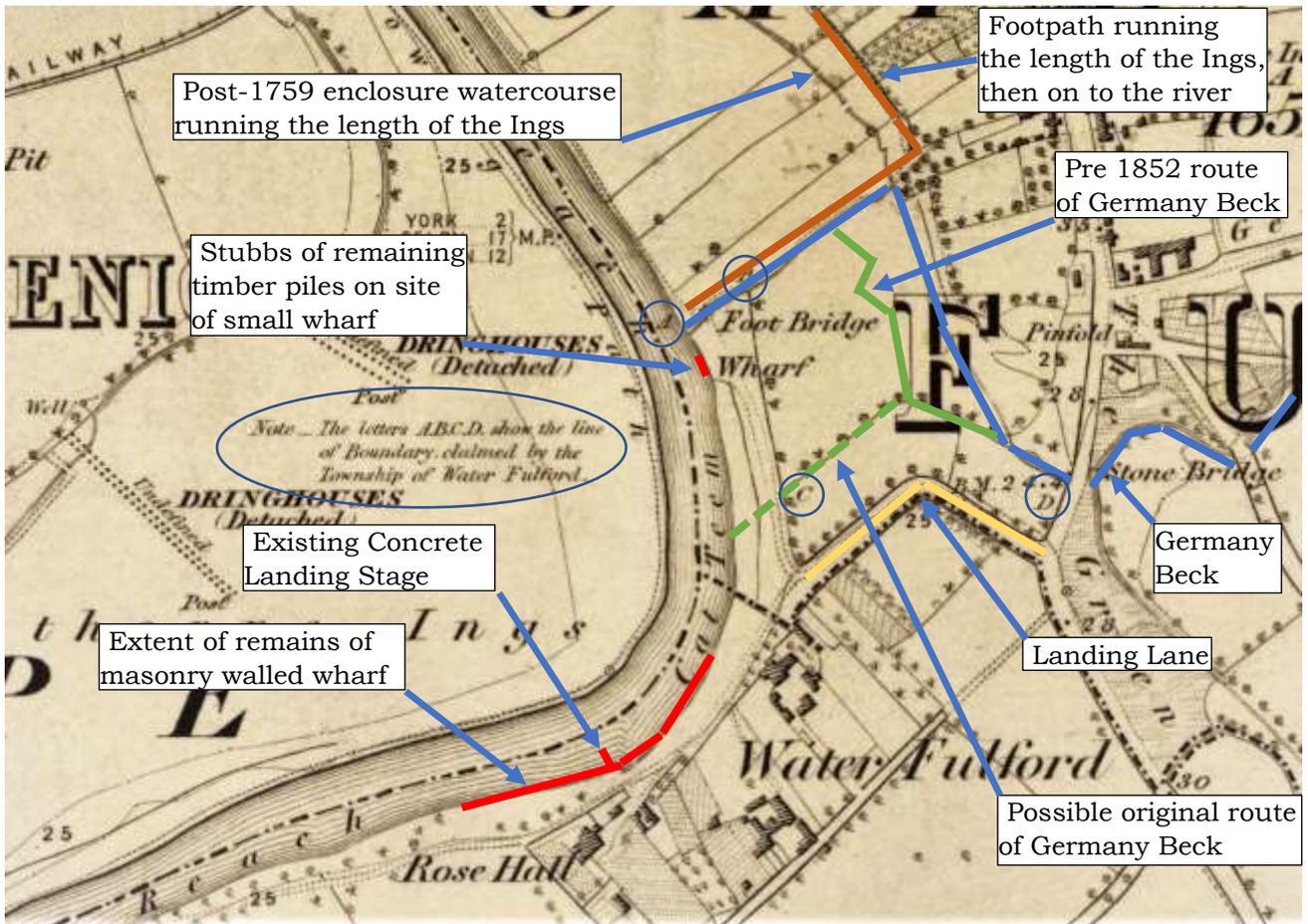
Extent of remains of masonry walled wharf

Landing Lane

Germany Beck passing under Stone bridge

**Fulford Ings and Water Fulford Detail from the 1852 Ordnance Survey Map**

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**Landing Lane, Germany Beck and Water Fulford Detail from the 1852 Ordnance Survey Map**

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Old St Oswald's Church

Footpath running the length of the Ings,

River Ouse

Germany Beck

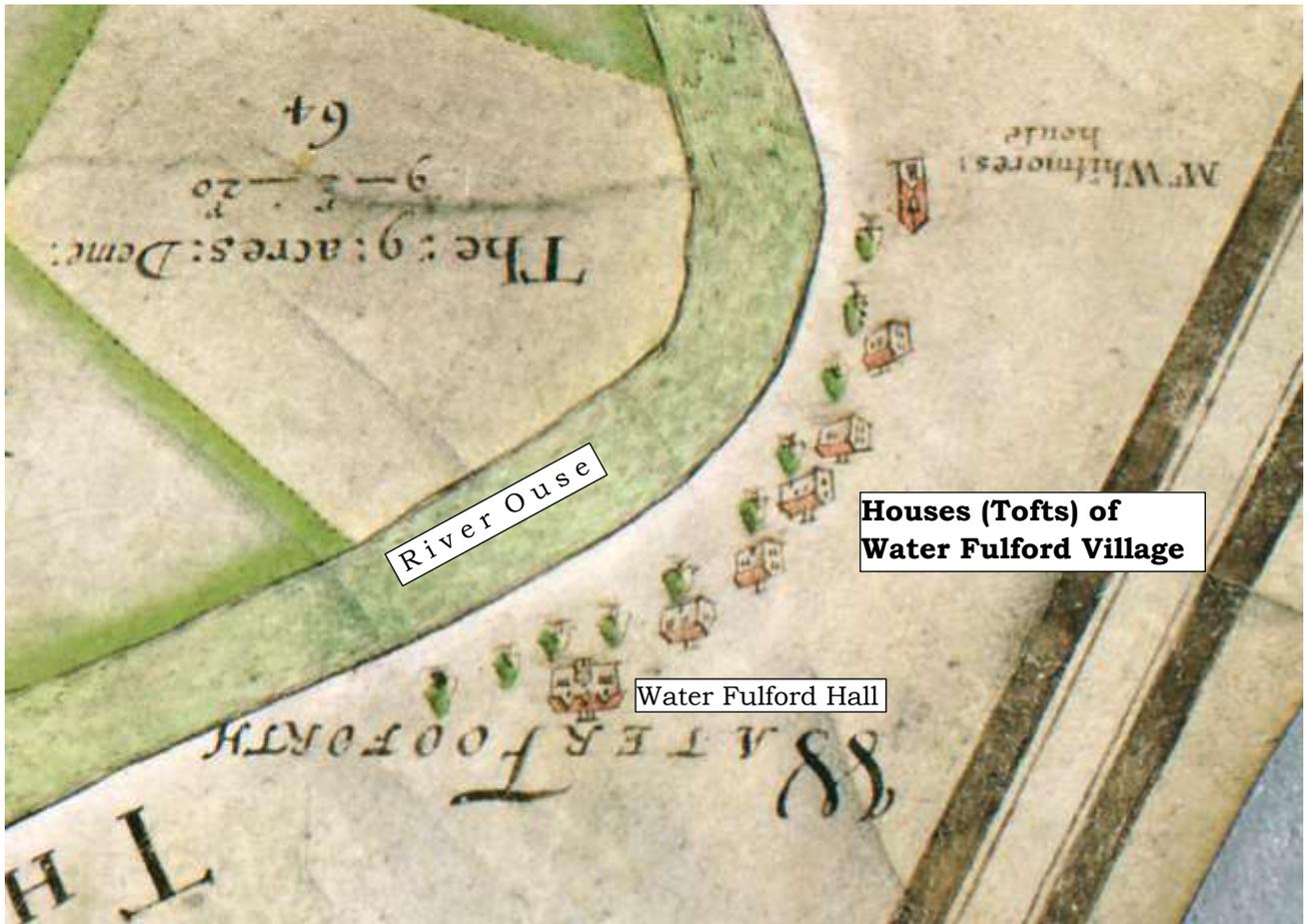
Stone Bridge

Boundary between Water Fulford & Gate Fulford

Detail from the Enclosure Map of 1759 Copyright York Explore







**Detail Showing Water Fulford on Samuell Parsons'  
1624 Map of Dringhouses**

**(It's upside down because Parsons drew his map looking at Dringhouses from York)**

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