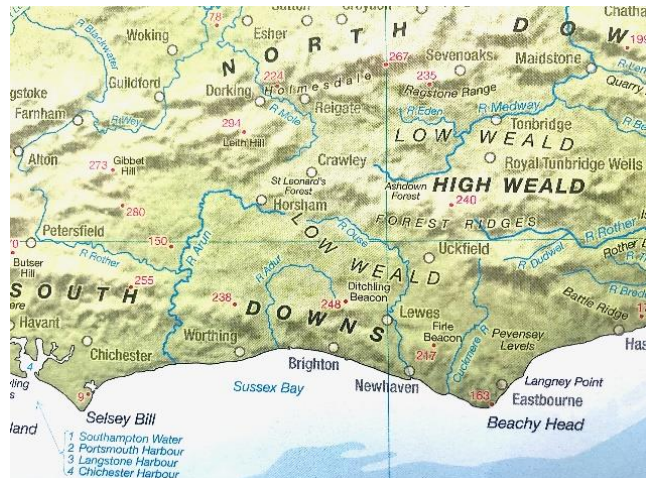


5.8. River Arun

1. Location

The 60-kilometre-long River Arun originates in the Weald of East Sussex, flowing westwards and then south to emerge on the English Channel coast at Littlehampton.



2. Why was the Case Study Site selected?

The Arun is a fast-flowing, lowland river that passes through small towns, villages and outstanding countryside, much of it included within the South Downs National Park. The river follows a tortuous, winding course, with the lowest 41 kilometres being tidal.

The tranquillity of the Arun attracted the attention of many artists, particularly from the mid-nineteenth century, whilst the town of Arundel, with outstanding views of its castle from the River Arun, was one of the most painted views in West Sussex. The combination of these interests, therefore, provide justification for inclusion of the Arun as a case study site.

3. Summary of the Geology, Fluvial Geomorphology and Processes

The River Arun rises 120 metres above sea level in the high Weald of St Leonard's Forest, to the east of Horsham. The river, fed by springs in the Tunbridge Wells sandstone strata, runs westwards before turning south at Buck's Green where more durable rocks give way to the Wealden Clay. From here the Arun meanders through a broad floodplain to Pallingham, the tidal limit, even though its course still has nearly 30 kilometres to run before meeting the sea.

At Pulborough the River Rother, the Arun's main tributary, joins it before the Arun passes through a gap in the South Downs on its route to the sea.

Historically, the river has been altered since the mid-sixteenth century to improve navigation and changes continued to be made up until the early nineteenth century. However, the commercial use of the river, apart from the port of Littlehampton, reduced considerably once the railways arrived.

The mouth of the river has not always been at Littlehampton. Until the late fifteenth century it joined the River Adur at Lancing to the east, before entering the sea. This estuary became blocked with shingle by the eastern sedimentary drift, pushing the Adur towards Shoreham-by-Sea, while the Arun broke out at Worthing, Goring and Ferring at various times, until it formed its present estuary at Littlehampton between 1500 and 1530.

4. How can the Art Imagery inform us of river change?

Like the River Rother that flows into the Arun, the Arun itself, passes through the beautiful countryside of the South Downs National Park, to the historic town of Arundel, before following its meandering course across the low-lying land to the sea at Littlehampton. Re-visiting the locations painted by Victorian and later artists along the route of the Arun, most of these sites are readily identifiable and, because of their natural environments, have, in several cases, shown relatively little change. This is illustrated in, for example, the watercolours by George Arthur Fripp (Figure 8.1) and Harold Sutton Palmer (Figure 8.2) of the river near Pulborough and at Amberley. Arundel Castle was one of the most painted locations in the whole of Sussex and where sequences of images

are available, such as those painted by William Scott in 1820 and Edward Duncan in c.1865 and, later, by the prolific Alfred Robert Quinton, it is possible to examine the extent of physical change on the Arun below the castle. Comparison of these very detailed images, with present day photographs and site inspections, appears to show, again, relatively little change in this outstanding location.

The portrayal of *Littlehampton from the Arun* by Edward Duncan in 1842 illustrates well the natural environment, mud flats and the course of the Arun as it crosses its floodplain towards the port. The lower Arun valley is, today, the subject of careful management on account of the environmental importance of the extensive areas of drained pasture and floodplain, which form outstanding wildlife habitats. The port of Littlehampton itself was painted by A.R. Quinton (Figure 8.15) and contrasts with the busy scene along the waterfront today.



Figure 8.1 (above): *On the Arun* by George Arthur Fripp. Watercolour. c.1865. This detailed view by Fripp shows the river in Pre-Raphaelite detail. Courtesy: Government Art Collection.

Figure 8.2 (below): *The Arun near Amberley* by Harold Sutton Palmer. Watercolour. c.1913. Sutton Palmer was one of the finest river painters and illustrated *The Rivers and Streams of England* (1813) with seventy-five detailed views such as this.





Figure 8.3 (above) shows the Arun south of Pulborough in a landscape setting similar to that painted by G. A. Fripp in Figure 8.1.

Courtesy: Nigel Cox, Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 8.4 (below) is of the Arun at Houghton near Amberley and is close to the location painted by H. S. Palmer in Figure 8.2.

Courtesy: Peter Trimming, Wikimedia Commons.



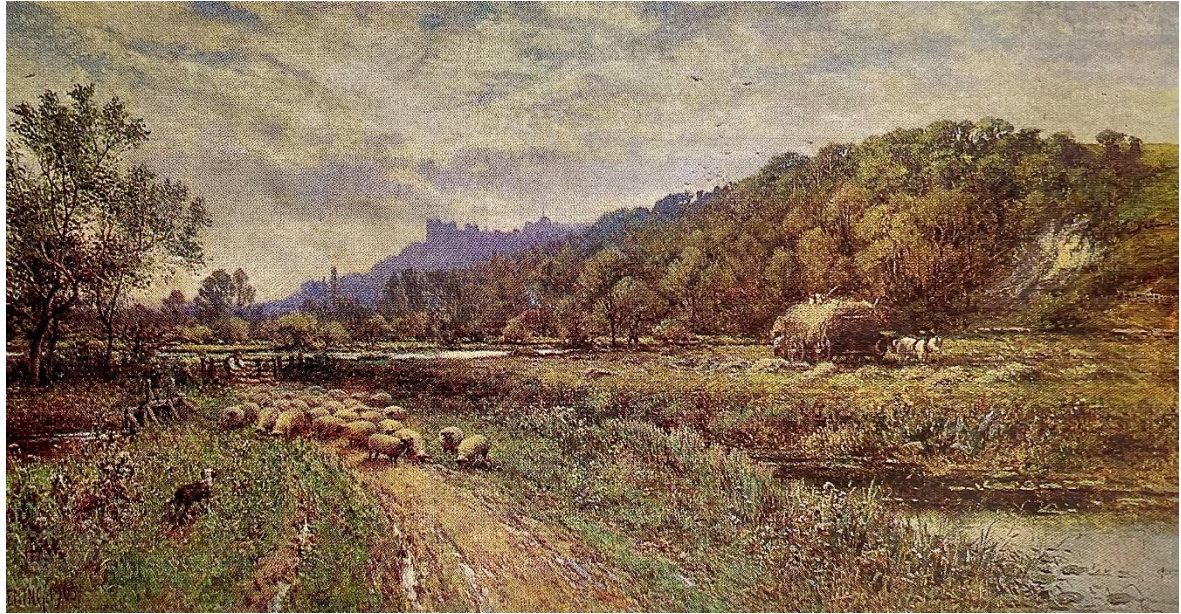


Figure 8.5 (above): *A Distant View of Arundel Castle* by Alfred Augustus Glendening painted in oils in 1905. The view shows a scene by the River Arun with sheep grazing and haymaking in progress. Such views illustrate the natural environment of the river banks in detail.

Courtesy: Sotheby's.

Figure 8.6 (below): *A Bright Day on the Arun near Amberly* by Jose Weiss. Oil. c.1910.

Courtesy: Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne/Bridgeman Images.





Figure 8.7: *Arundel Castle from the River* by William Scott. Watercolour. c.1820. This highly-detailed early watercolour describes exactly the river conditions, the environment more widely and the Castle's architecture at that time.

Courtesy: Royal Collections Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022.

Figure 8.8: *Arundel Castle from the River* by Edward Duncan. Watercolour. c.1865. The river environment shows little change over sixty years compared to Scott's view above. Sequences of such detailed artworks allow processes of river change, or lack of change, to be assessed.

Courtesy: Fine Art Photographic Library.





Figures 8.9 (above) and 8.10 (below) show present-day views replicating the scenes painted by Scott and Duncan in Figures 8.7 and 8.8. Overall, the beauty of the river and the Castle seem relatively unchanged.

Courtesy: Figure 8.9: Peter Trimming, Geograph Images; Figure 8.10: Shutterstock Images.





Figures 8.11-8.13: The prolific watercolour postcard artist, Alfred Robert Quinton, produced over 4,000 images such as these between 1900-1934. The frequently revisited popular touristic sites and natural beauty spots, such as the River Arun and Arundel Castle.

High highly-detailed watercolours provide a comprehensive record of England's landscapes over the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Courtesy: Salmon's





Figure 8.14 (above): *Littlehampton from the Arun* by Edward Duncan. Watercolour. 1842. Duncan portrays the river's lower reaches in fine detail in this watercolour.

Courtesy: The Warden and Scholars of Winchester's College/WatercolourWorld.

Figure 8.15 (below): *The Pier and Harbour at Littlehampton* by Alfred Robert Quinton. Watercolour. 1920.

Courtesy: Salmon's.



The Lower Arun River Valley today.

The Lower Arun Valley extends from where the river leaves the downland at Arundel; its extensive drained floodplain pastures merge with the Coastal Plain. Stretches of the tidal river are contained by high banks engineered to control flooding, with suburban and urban fringe development visible over a distance. The river reaches the sea at Littlehampton, flanked by wharves, jetties, moorings, a golf course and sand dunes.

Key Characteristics:

- Extensive areas of drained pasture and floodplain.
- Wide wandering river course throughout, with meanders increasing in size to the south. Tidal character up to Pallington Lock.
- Stretches of engineered concrete river banks.
- Very shallow valley sides, consisting of slightly undulating farmland or the urban edge of the coastal development, in particular Littlehampton.
- Little riverside vegetation.
- Prominent railway on embankment.
- Extensive high-level views onto the area.
- Key close dramatic views of Arundel (castle, Roman Catholic cathedral, parish church, clustered hillside housing) from the south.
- Seaward views from elevated positions.
- Long views of river valley towards the Chalk Downs and Arundel from the south.

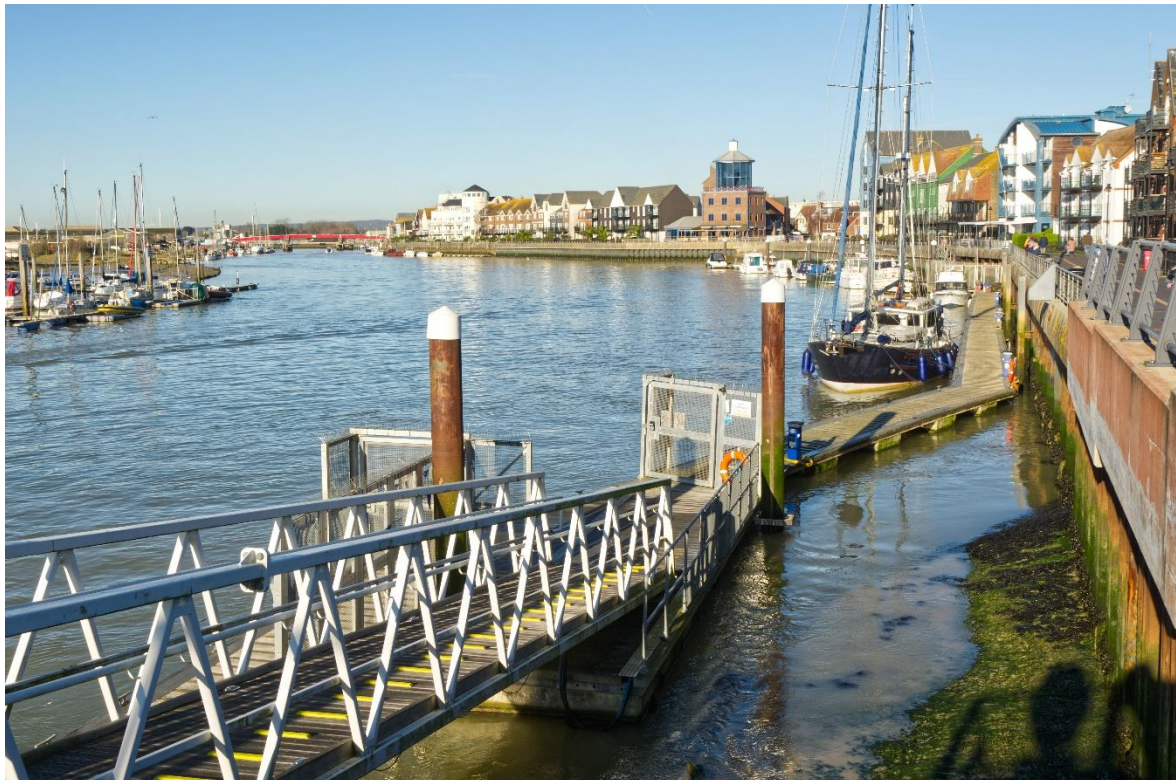


Figure 8.16 (above): The port of Littlehampton where the River Arun meets the English Channel.

Courtesy: Shutterstock Images.

5. What are the key issues that can be learnt from this Study Area?

The fact that, for much of its course, the Arun flows through a National Park and areas designated for their landscape and environmental importance, together with development being mainly limited to small communities along its course, have all contributed to the preservation of the environment and, in locations such as this, the evidence of very little change over time is positive and suggests careful planning and management through the river valley over the decades.

The many views of Arundel Castle demonstrate the importance of artworks illustrating cultural heritage along riverside locations such as this. The availability of high-quality images in full colour, dating back to the 1820s, offer the potential for engagement with stakeholders who wish to understand more about river management and change from physical, environmental and cultural heritage perspectives.



Figure 8.17: Myles Birket Foster

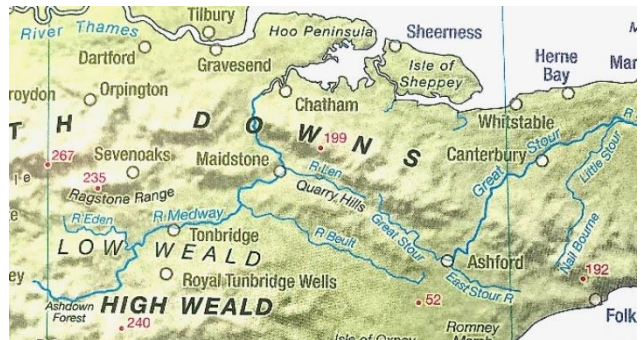
Harvesting by the River Arun near Amberley

Watercolour. c.1870

5.9. River Medway

1. Location

The Medway rises in the high Weald of East Sussex before flowing in a north-easterly direction towards the Thames Estuary where it discharges at Sheerness, a total distance of 113 kilometres.



2. Why was the Case Study Site selected?

After the River Thames, the Medway has the second largest river catchment in southern England and flows through scenery of outstanding landscape significance, before passing through heavily developed and industrialised areas on its course towards the Thames Estuary. The artworks illustrate the extent of change, although the centres of historic towns and some of the picturesque villages remain largely unaltered since painted by artists in the nineteenth century. In the 18th century Samuel Ireland published an illustrated book about his journey along the river and the transformation over time compared since his early river views were drawn is striking (Ireland, 1793¹; Addey & Hunt, 1998²). The diverse range of river environments, combined with the range of artworks produced over time provide several examples that illustrate the concept of the study.

3. Summary of the Geology, Fluvial Geomorphology and Processes

The Medway originates within clays and sandstones of the Cretaceous Wealden Group, before traversing the chalk northwards into the sands and silty clays of the wider Thames Basin. Initially, the river passes through predominantly rural areas, but flowing through the major towns of Tonbridge, Maidstone and Medway. After initially following a course from west to east it turns north, cutting through the North Downs at the Medway Gap, a valley close to the town of Rochester, before opening out to the sea. From the mid-eighteenth century the course of the river was improved for commercial reasons, allowing shipping to reach as far as Tonbridge and, later, to Leigh; along the course of the river there are eleven locks.

Above the town of Tonbridge, the Medway has been subject to extensive flooding over the centuries, partly on account of the number of tributaries that enter the river along this frontage. Despite flood defence measures, including the construction of a flood barrier near Leigh to protect Tonbridge, it was still affected by serious flooding during the winter of 2013/14.

4. How can the Art Imagery inform us of river change?

Through art, this case study illustrates change along the varied course of the Medway between 1793 and the present day. The early engravings by Samuel Ireland in his book *Picturesque Views of the River Medway* (Ireland, 1793¹), although somewhat picturesque, show key features of the river along its route. These can be compared with the watercolours produced by Alfred Robert Quinton between 1900 and 1930, and the more recent watercolours by the distinguished architect and artist, David Addey, who retraced Ireland's journey down the Medway in 1998 (Addey & Hunt, 1998²). Combined with the present-day views, the sequences of images, drawn from seven locations along the river, depict modest changes in the upper and middle reaches. The lower reaches approaching the Thames Estuary become increasingly industrialised and apart from Rochester and Chatham were less painted.

Ireland's early views and Quinton's watercolours depict the natural state of the Medway, for example in Figure 9.1 outside Tonbridge, whilst, in Figure 9.11, also by Quinton, details of the river water management structures are clearly depicted. One of the most picturesque small towns along

the Medway, Aylesford, was illustrated extensively on account of its scenic location and elegant architecture bordering the river. Comparing the watercolour by Harold Sutton Palmer (Figure 9.22) with the present-day view (Figure 9.23) there appears to be very little change to the course of the river through the town or to its cultural heritage over time.

Figures 9.24-9.26 illustrate the grand architecture of Rochester. The extensive landscape by James Baker Pyne is taken from the edge of the river looking across towards Rochester Castle; the nature of the riverbank can be seen there at Low Water with primitive timber defences in the foreground. Lining the far bank below the castle prominent Georgian mansions are now defended by substantial river defence walls. The Medway, therefore, illustrates how art may be applied to illustrate the extent of change over the last two centuries.



Figure 9.1 (left): This watercolour by A. R. Quinton, c.1920, shows a scene on the River Medway with the town of Tonbridge in the distance. The view shows signs of scour and a bank collapse on the right side. There are still beautiful stretches of river scenery along this part of the Medway.

Courtesy: Salmon's.



Figure 9.2 (left): This early print is by Samuel Ireland from his *Picturesque Views of the River Medway* (Ireland, 1793). The bridge was replaced in 1889 with cast iron instead of the stone arches.



Figure 9.3 (left): The present-day bridge over the Medway at Tonbridge can be seen in this watercolour by the distinguished architect and artist, David Addey. He traced Ireland's journey painting the updated scenes such as this view (Addey, 1998). Addey's artworks contribute to several sequences of image that trace changes along the course of the Medway over the last 230 years.



Figure 9.4 (left): The present-day view of the bridge in the town centre.

Courtesy: © N. Chadwick, Geograph Images.

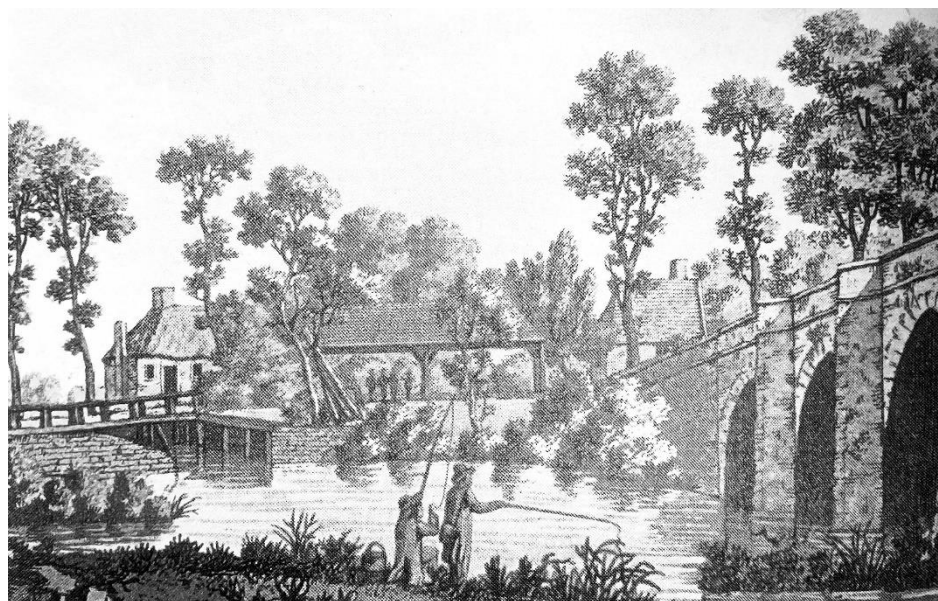


Figure 9.5 (left): This view by Samuel Ireland (1793) shows Twyford Bridge, down-river from Tonbridge. The sinuous loop of the Medway here allowed a navigation canal to be cut thus saving the narrow historic bridge from demolition and widening for river traffic.



Figure 9.6 (left): David Addey's watercolour of Twyford (1998) shows the weir on the left replacing the earlier structure depicted by Ireland above. The longest tributary of the Medway, the River Beault, joins at nearby Yalding amongst low-lying water meadows at The Lees.



Figure 9.7 (left): Twyford Bridge is one of three such historic structures in the parish of Yalding. Here the Medway can be seen in full flow after heavy rain in January 2020.

Courtesy: © Marathon, Creative Commons Licence.

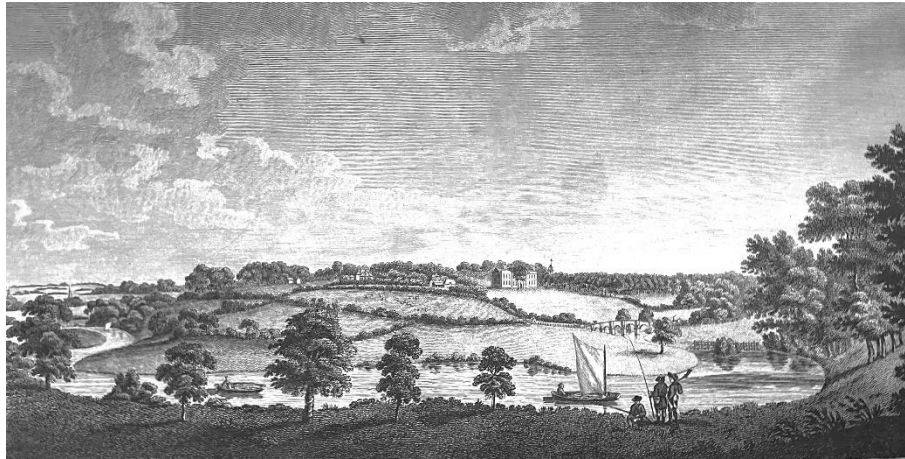


Figure 9.8 (above): Teston House and the River Medway, a copperplate engraving by R. Godfrey, 1780. The Grade I Listed bridge can be seen spanning the river.



Figure 9.9 (above) and Figure 9.10 (left) show the Medway depicted in watercolour by David Addey in 1998 and the present-day photograph.

In the eighteenth century the river here was prone to significant flooding leading to bridge modifications.

Today flooding is controlled by both lock sluices and the flood barrier at Haysden Park, Tonbridge.

Image © N. Zhadwick, Creative Commons Licence.



Figure 9.11 (left): The riverbanks for a 4-kilometre stretch between Maidstone and Allington are green and beautiful despite the M20 traffic crossing it. This watercolour by A. R. Quinton, c.1925, shows the scene at East Farleigh slightly upstream and the various river management measures in place at that time.

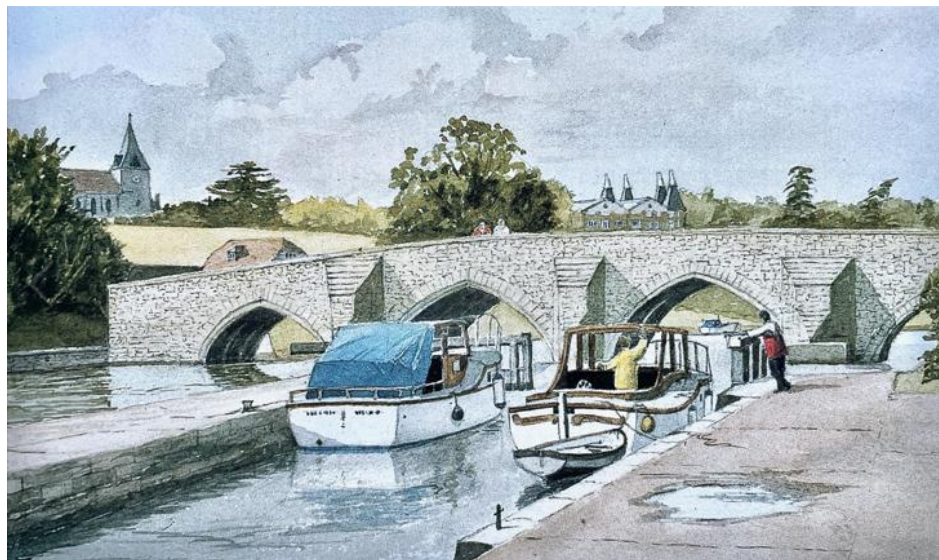


Figure 9.12 (left): The ancient bridge (1384) at East Farleigh is depicted in David Addey's watercolour here in 1998.



Figure 9.13 (left) shows the elaborate lock at East Farleigh.

Courtesy: © Chris Whippet, Creative Commons Licence.



Figures 9.14-9.16 (top left and left) shows two watercolours by A. R. Quinton painted in c.1920 and the view above by E. W. Haslehust, c.1913. Described as the most beautiful town on the Medway, this part of the river has retained its cultural heritage.
A. R. Quinton images courtesy: Salmon's.



Figure 9.17 (left): The present-day view taken from the same location.
Courtesy: © Rodney Burton, Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 9.18 (top): The ancient village of Aylesford was visited by artists since the early nineteenth century. This engraving shows the village in 1810.

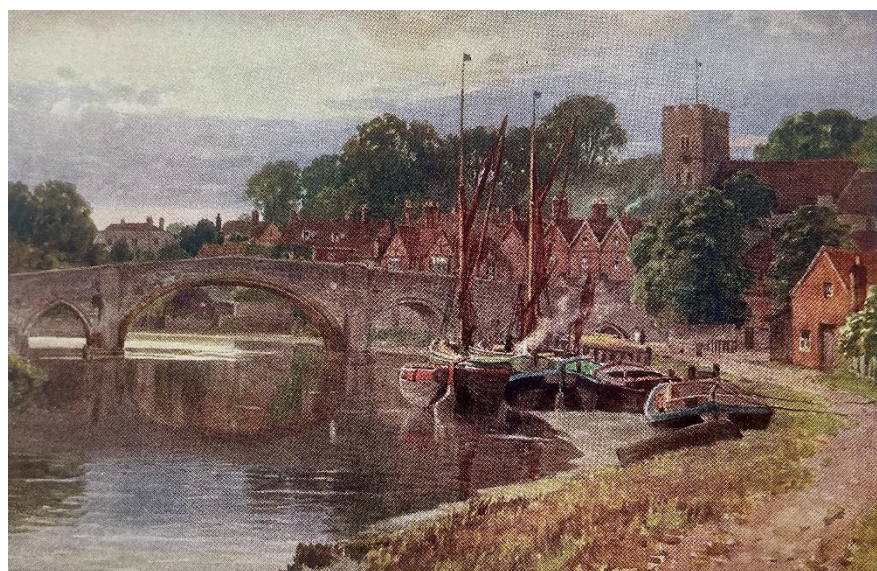


Figure 9.19 (left): The town was depicted by A. R. Quinton a century later in this watercolour which shows the natural unmanaged riverbanks.

Courtesy: Salmon's.

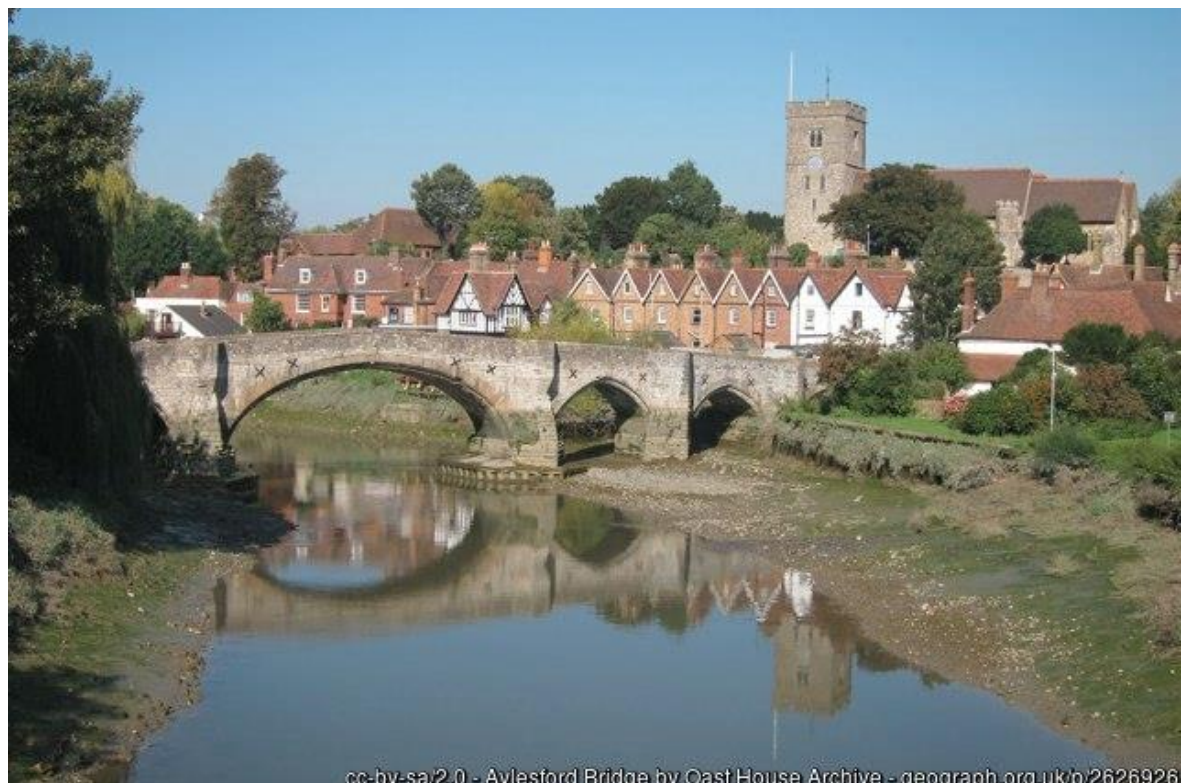


Figure 9.20 (left) shows the scene in 1998, a watercolour by David Addey. As the Medway flows towards Rochester and the Thames the river sides become more intensively developed and urbanised.



Figures 9.21 (above) and 9.22 (below) show views of the pretty riverside town of Aylesford in the middle reaches of the Medway. The watercolour was painted by the fine painter of river watercolours, Harold Sutton Palmer, in 1919. The present-day view is shown below.

Courtesy: Oast House Archive/Geograph Images.



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Aylesford Bridge by Oast House Archive - [geograph.org.uk/b/2626926](https://www.geograph.org.uk/b/2626926)



Figures 9.23-9.25 show the historic town of Rochester, which was much painted on account of its historic bridge and castle. The view (top) shows the waterfront painted by James Baker Pyne, painted in about 1860 (courtesy Fine Art Photo Library) with David Addey's 1998 watercolour (centre). The present-day view (bottom) shows the grand architectural heritage.

Courtesy: Shutterstock Images.



5. What are the key issues that can be learnt from this Study Area?

The early tour down the river by Samuel Ireland provides an important insight to conditions before the Medway became significantly industrialised. His series of engravings show the ways that the river was utilised and accessed in the late eighteenth century. The artist, David Addey, was invited to illustrate a book that retraced Ireland's journey, producing similar snapshots in watercolour, in the late 1990s. These two approaches depicting the Medway, separated by over 200 years, show how many of the historic crossing points, mainly beautiful stone bridges, still exist today, and they also illustrate how flood waters along the Medway have been gradually controlled more effectively through the series of weirs, whilst alterations and diversions to the river have improved accessibility for commerce over that period. The present-day images allow easy reference to the current situation and show, in particular, from the sites selected for this case study how much of the waterside architecture has been well preserved.

6. References

1. Ireland, S. 1793. *Picturesque Views of the River Medway*. London.
2. Addey, D. & Hunt, S. 1998. *The Medway – Sketches along the River Based on Samuel Ireland's Picturesque Views of the River Medway (1793)*. ISBN: 1-902320-06-9. Prospero Books.



Figure 9.26: John F. Salmon

Rochester on the Medway

1859

Courtesy: Derek Newman Fine Art.