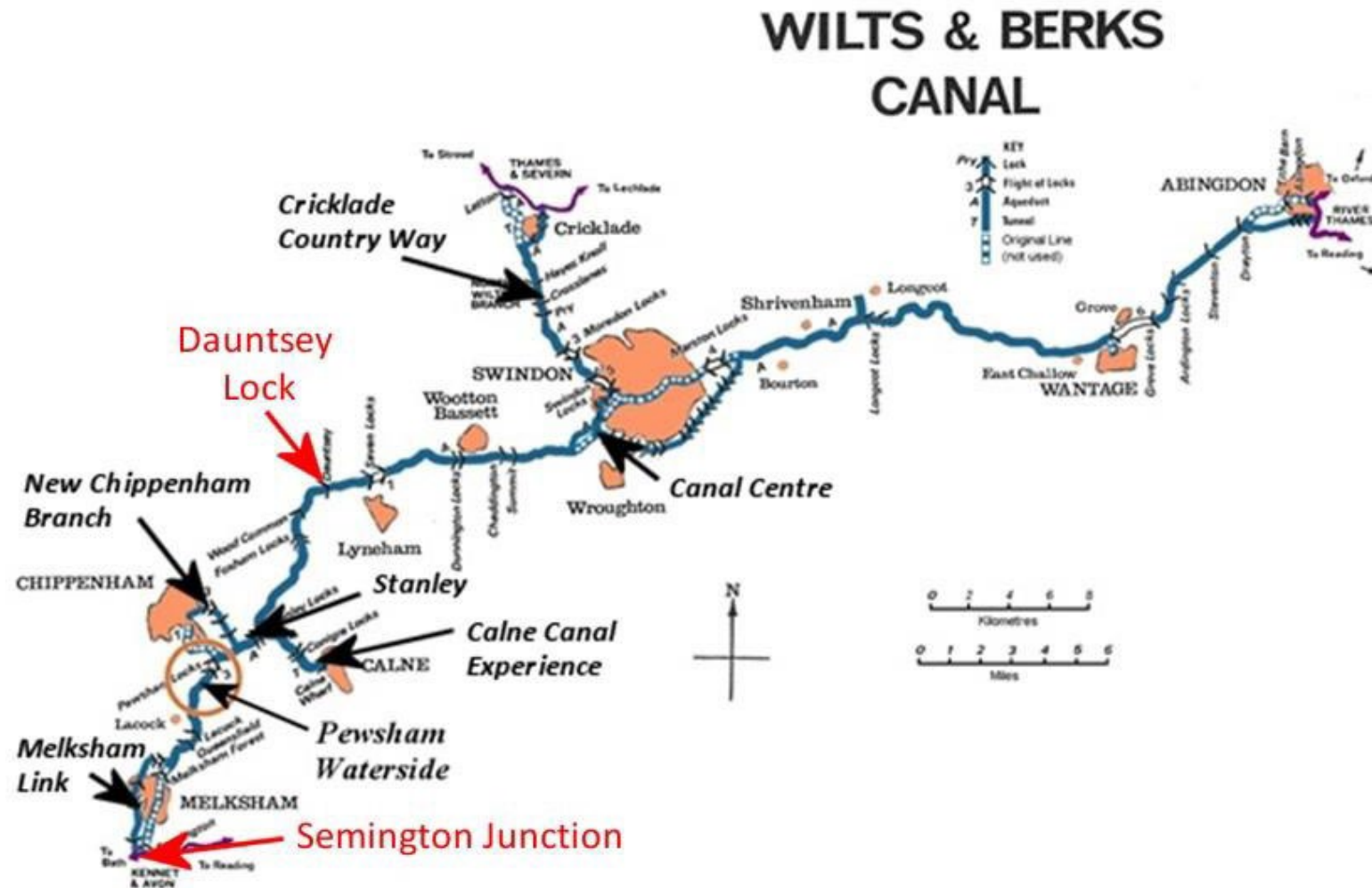


# Heritage Survey of the Wilts & Berks Canal

John Henn April 26<sup>th</sup> 2023 revised May 8<sup>th</sup> 2023

This document is the first stage of an investigation to see how the Wilts & Berks Canal fits into the (heritage) landscape. It covers the Calne Community Area.

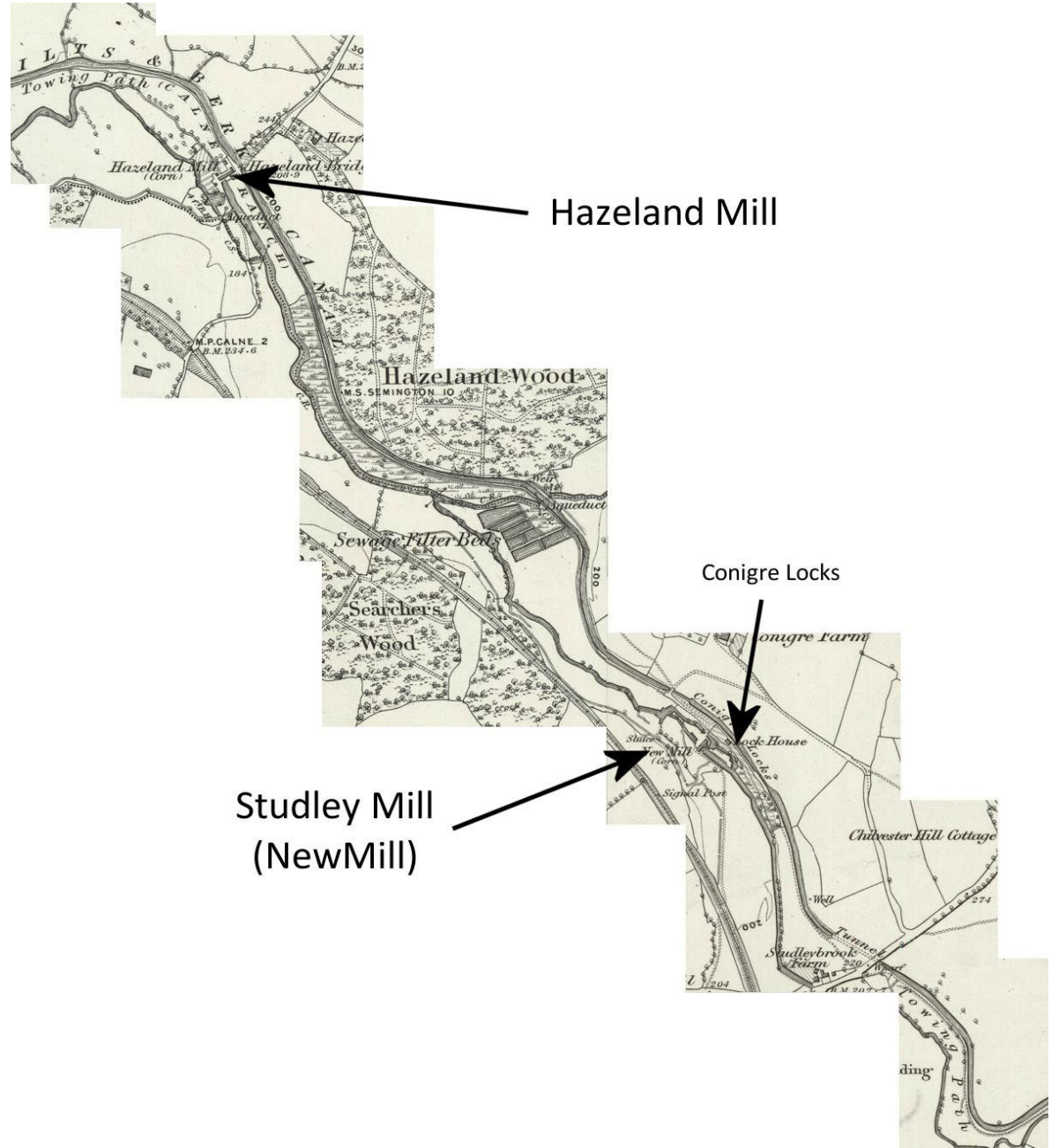


It does not look at the infrastructure of the canal (locks bridges etc.). This will be for another document.

## Studley Mill

There may have been a fulling mill at Studley in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and one is recorded in 1602 driven either by the Marden or Whetham Stream but the site is unknown.

A grist mill known as Hassell's Mill on the Marden east of Norley House in late 17<sup>th</sup> century was replaced by New Mill on or near the same site in 1728 and was used for grinding corn until the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was demolished in 1962.



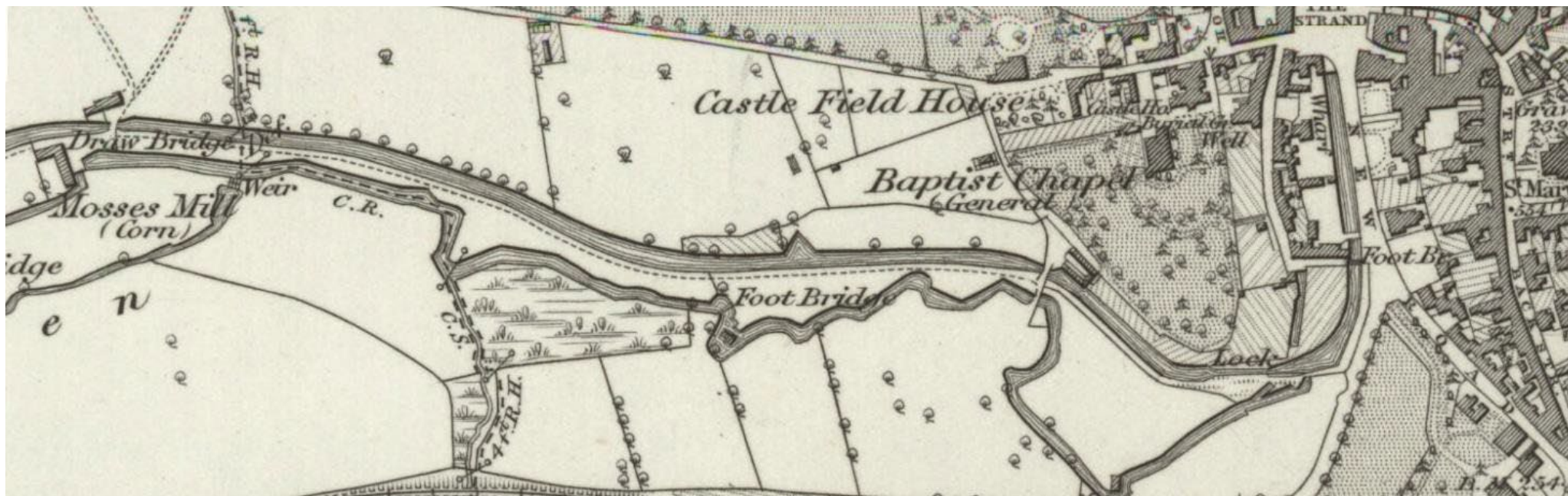


## Moss's Mill

Situated south of Berhills Farm, Moss's Mill was the property of the lord of Studley Manor from the mid. 17<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps earlier and was used for fulling.

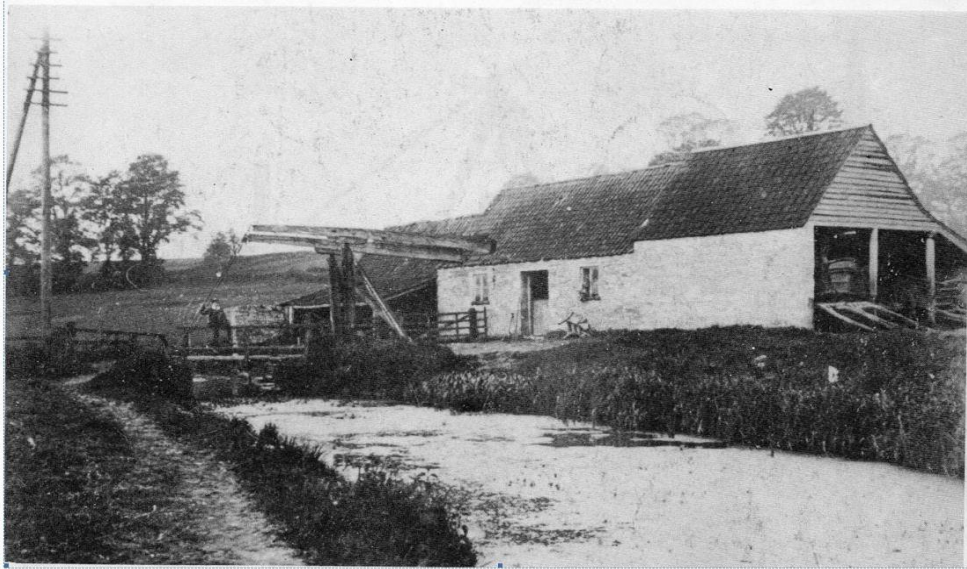
We know it was occupied by Thomas Hale, a drugget maker in 1735 because there is a lease agreement letting the partial use of the mill to another drugget maker. The document grants the use of "two tucking or fulling mills, part of Moss's Mill, Calne, for the tucking, fulling and braying of 20 pieces of drugget every week in the year."

The use of two drying racks was also included. The rent was 10p for each full batch of cloth plus two pieces of each variety produced.



It was operating as a grist mill in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in 1761 was said to contain two flour mills.

It was rebuilt as a corn mill in the early 1820s, but a directory of 1822 records that part of the mill was occupied by William Gatehouse, a list maker. List is a term to describe the selvage of cloth, but there is no indication of what Gatehouse produced. It was often used to make slippers.



Stable Block 1905 showing lift bridge.

The stable block was part of the mill complex and would be used as part of the interpretation of the mill. Part of the building could be turned into stables.

It is suggested that the Stable block could also be used as an information centre and class room for wildlife and ecology. The stable block would complement the educational aspects of Moss's Mill.

The stable block rebuilding would be done in close collaboration with the Wildlife Trusts.

Moss' Mill continued to operate as a corn mill run for some years by Keevil and Sons, millers and corn and cake merchants, until it burned down in a fierce fire in 1962.



Moss's Mill Burning in 1962



Site of Moss's Mill



It is proposed that the mill could be rebuilt with a multi-functional working waterwheel:

1) Turn a grind stone to produce flour

2) Generate electricity

The ground floor of the “mill” building could be set out as a “hands on” class room. Children could be involved in making flour and baking.

Possible educational themes:

- The history of various and different types of mills around Calne; flour production and weaving.
- Sustainable Energy

The upper floor will set up for accommodation of large Groups

The mill rebuilding would be done in close collaboration with Calne Heritage Centre.

An exhibition area next to mill could also have narrowboat exhibits and possibly a floating classroom.

Possible themes: Living on a narrowboat, Education for families on working boats.

### Town Mill (Now Calne Town Hall)

Located in the centre of Calne, Port Mill was probably held with Calne manor by Fulk de Cantelo as early as 1199. It was certainly part of Calne manor from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. In 1651 it incorporated a grist and a malt mill.

The old building was demolished around 1806 and a new one constructed adjacent to the original site. It became one element in a group of two storeyed buildings on the site, the principal one having five bays on its north front and a large carriage arch spanning the width of two bays.

This building was bought from the lord of the manor, Lord Lansdowne by the Borough in 1884 to provide a site for the new Town Hall which opened two years later.



A drawing of the Calne Town Mill which once stood on the site of the Town Hall

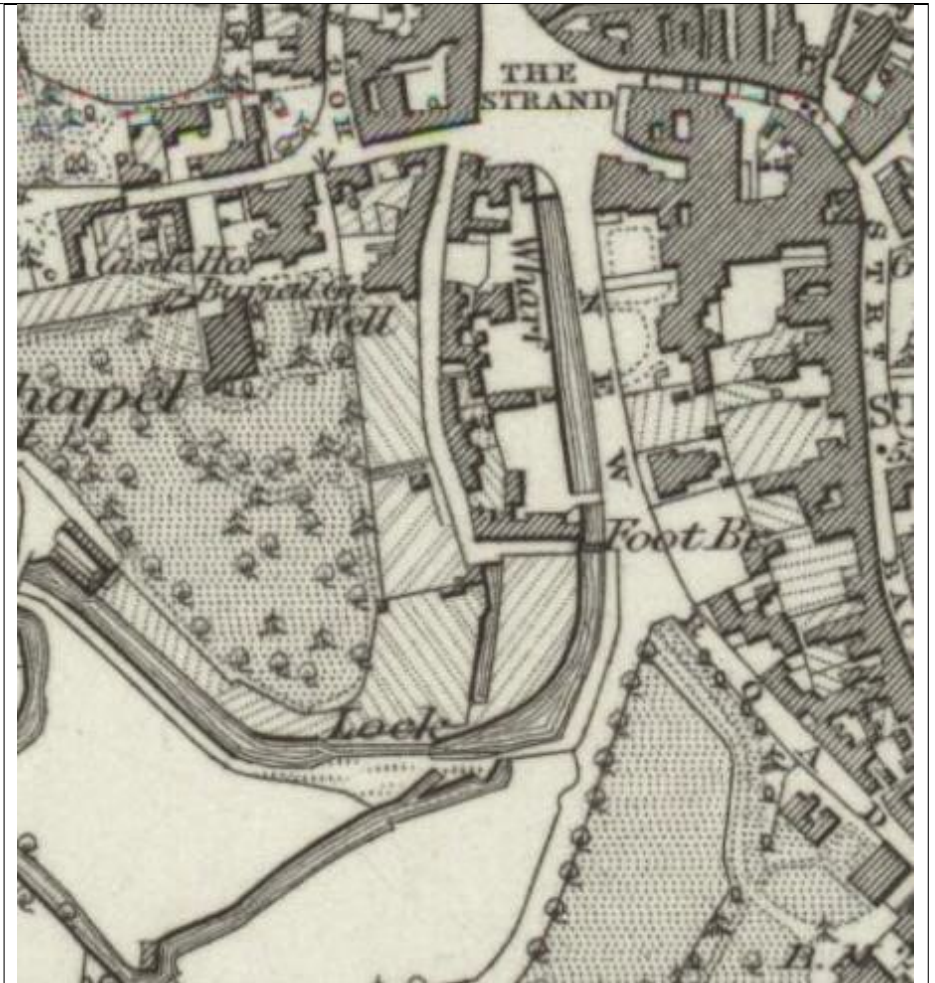
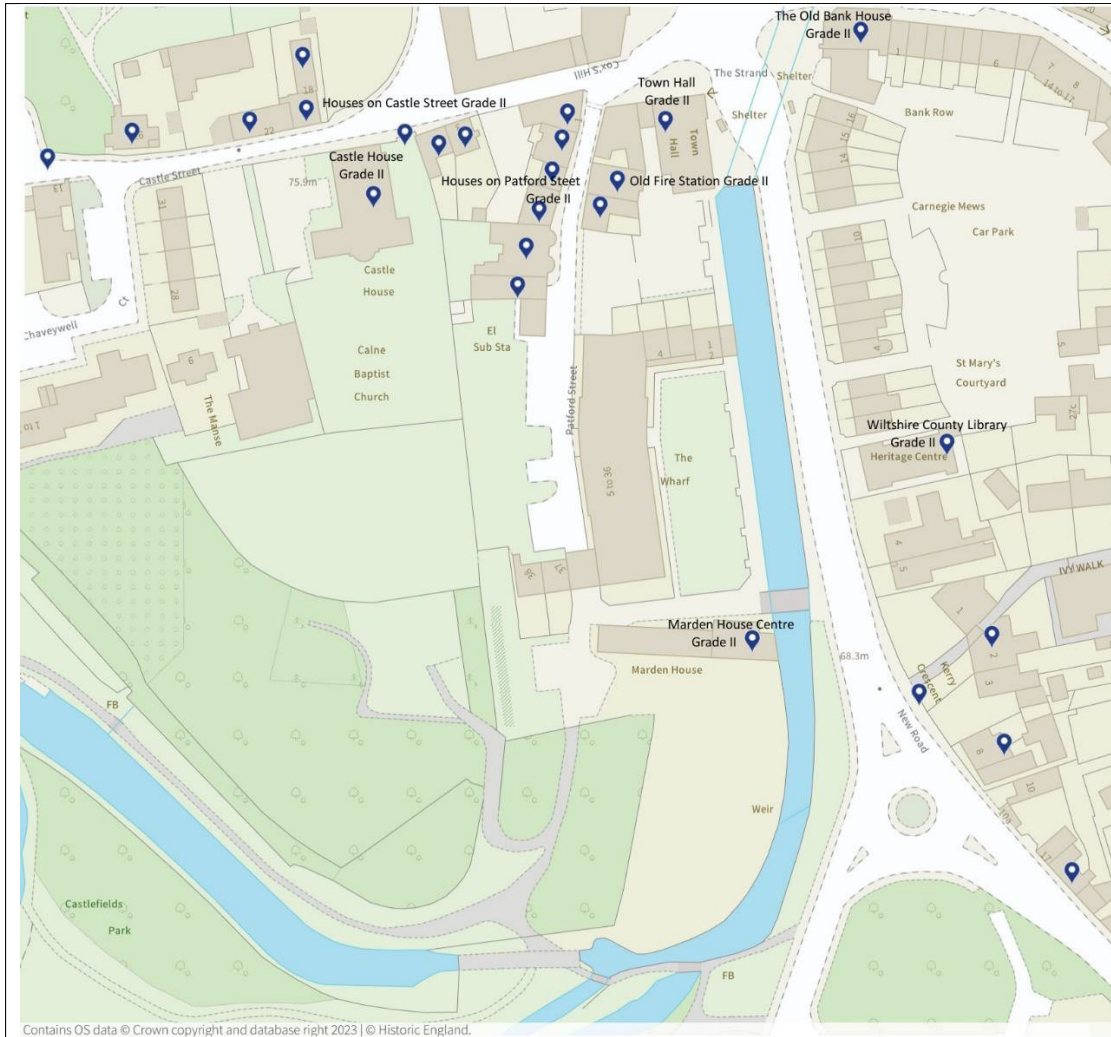
## Calne

In the 10th century and possibly earlier Calne was a locally prominent settlement. It stood on a large estate of the king and had an early church. The pattern of streets in Calne in the Middle Ages had almost certainly changed little by the mid-18th century. It was an early borough and market town and from the 16th century to the 20th derived its prosperity from cloth making and food processing

In 1801-2 the Wilts. & Berks. canal was extended to the Town mill at the east end of Cox's Hill from a basin 200 m. south of the mill. The extension was achieved by canalising the Marden. A wharf was built on the west side of that stretch of the canal and, 120 m. south of the mill, a building was erected incorporating a wharfinger's house and what was probably warehousing. Unusually for Calne, the house is of sandstone; its front range has a three bayed ashlar façade with a fluted frieze similar to that of Castle House. The building was in use as a community centre in 1999 (Marden House). About 1806 a new mill was built near the existing mill, which was demolished

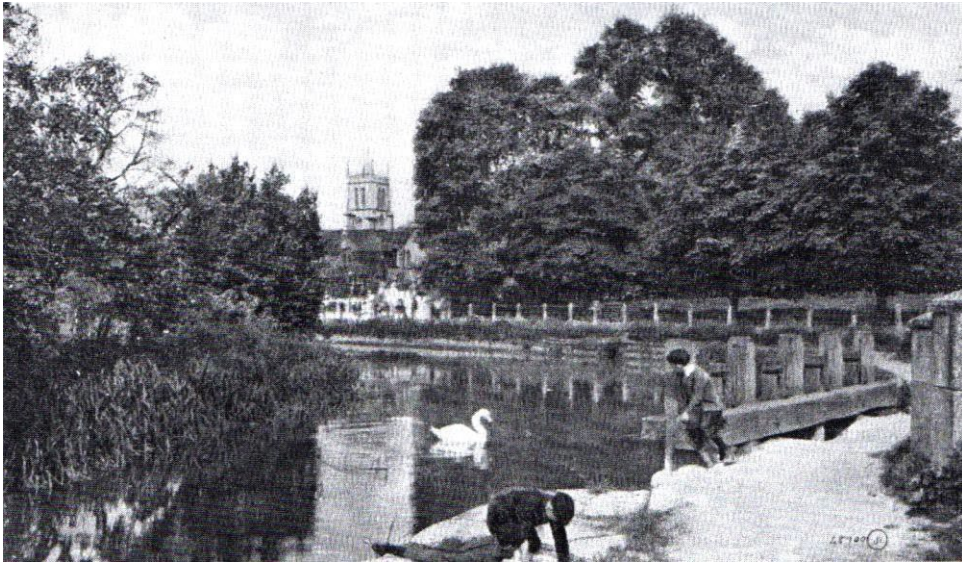
When the wharf was built the bridge over the Marden linking Patford Street and Patford Lane was replaced by a new bridge, on the same site or nearby, near the wharfinger's house, and in 1801 a new road was built along the east bank of the canalized river.

Between Port bridge and the Town mill there was a pool in the Marden to serve the mill, and from the 17th century or earlier the adjoining land was called the Strand. From c. 1801 the Marden fed the mill and the canal through a long and narrow pond across the Strand, where there was a place for horses to be washed and watered. The water was confined to vaulted culverts between 1840 and 1843, and the Strand, which from about then was used as a market place, became a town square. The Town mill was demolished in 1884, and a new town hall, completed in 1886, was built on the site of the mill.



There are no plans to reinstate Calne Wharf. Navigation will terminate in Castle Park





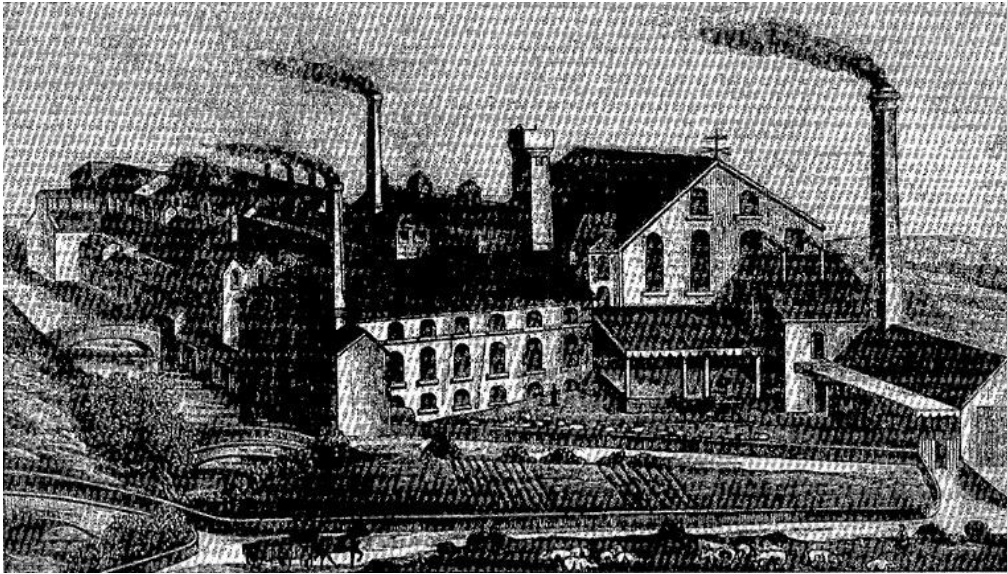
The hatches where the canal joined the river. The final lock in Castle Park raises the water level to allow boats to use Calne Wharf.



Looking up the Marden showing the town Hall and Harris' 1920 factory. The wharf is covered with ramshackle buildings.



## Harris Bacon Factory Calne



Harris' bacon factory in 1887

Source History online



Taken in 1984 Source Flickr

You can see the county library building in the foreground.

It was founded by Sarah Harris in 1770, but by then pigs were already being imported in from Ireland and surrounding farms. She ran her butcher's shop on Butchers Row and from there the company grew over 200 years.

In 1856 there was an experimental ice-house built at the back of a High Street shop with ice from Norway brought in on barges up the Wilts & Berks Canal.

By 1863, the business had grown so much that the railway came to Calne and stayed open for 102 years until 1965. It was built almost opposite the entrance to the factory and provided useful import and export of Harris' products.

At its peak the C&T Harris factory employed 2,000 people, processing 5,000 pigs a week, producing 100 tonnes of pies, sausages and cooked meats. The Harris brand remained strong by changing hands and merging with other companies, surviving until 1982. It was demolished in 1984. After its demolition the site was redeveloped, incorporating a new library, shops and houses. The name lives on in street names, public buildings and a recreation ground gifted to the town.

# Chippenham Calne Railway Line

(Source Wikipedia)

The **Chippenham and Calne line** was a five mile long single-track branch railway line that ran along the valley of the River Marden from Chippenham on the Great Western Main Line to Calne, via two intermediate halts, Stanley Bridge Halt and Black Dog Halt. The railway was built by the Calne Railway Company and opened in 1863, the line was sold in 1892 to the Great Western Railway company

- Stanley Bridge Halt opened 3 April 1905.
- Black Dog Halt: opened early on as a private station for the Bowood Estate of the Marquess of Lansdowne; a temporary platform there had been opened for a fete in 1870 and the station itself seemed to follow soon after; in April 1898 the GWR asked to erect a sign marked *Black Dog Station*, but this was refused; it was finally made a public station on 15 September 1952

The immediate result was an opening to a goods train on 29 October 1863; live pigs for Harris's factory were a major part of the load. Opening to passengers took place on 3 November 1863

From 1900 to the 1930s the line handled much passenger and freight traffic, making Calne one of the busiest stations in Wiltshire. During the Second World War there was heavy passenger traffic for the RAF establishments at Lyneham, Compton Bassett and Yatesbury, which continued into the early 1950s

With the increase in road vehicle usage throughout the 20th century, use of the line by passengers and for freight purposes declined steadily, and in the 1960s it was clear that the future of the line was doubtful. Freight traffic had disappeared by the time the last passenger train ran on 18 September 1965. The track was lifted in 1967. Much of the line is now a cycle path. It is part of Sustrans National Cycle Route no. 403.



Steampicturelibrary.com

Calne Station



Black Dog Halt, now on a cycle path



# Bowood House

## **Bowood House and Gardens** (Source Wikipedia)

**Bowood** is a Grade I listed Georgian country house in Wiltshire, England, that has been owned for more than 250 years by the Fitzmaurice family. The house, with interiors by Robert Adam, stands in extensive grounds which include a garden designed by Lancelot "Capability" Brown. It is adjacent to the village of Derry Hill, halfway between Calne and Chippenham. The greater part of the house was demolished in 1956.

The remaining house is still large, and the front wing is open to the public with rooms, paintings and sculpture on display. One of the rooms was the laboratory of Joseph Priestley, who discovered oxygen there on 1 August 1774.

Since 1754 the estate has been the seat of the Earls of Shelburne, created Marquess of Lansdowne in 1784.

There are 100 acres of beautiful parkland, designed by 'Capability' Brown, offering a lake, arboretum, pinetum and cascade. Perfect for walks and exploring. Bowood House hosts a wealth of unique items from Queen Victoria's wedding chair to Napoleon's death mask and an extensive art collection.

During the spring (late April to early June) visit the stunning Rhododendron Walks, this woodland oasis offers breathtaking vistas of colour covering over 60 acres.

There are attractive circular walks through the grounds and including the canal and railway.



Bowood House as it stands





Charles Barry designed the new entrance at Derry Hill, now called the Golden Gates, which was primarily erected to provide a grand approach from the new train station at Chippenham, which opened in 1841.



3rd Marquess of Lansdowne (1780-1863) restored Bowood Park. He introduced new features such as the Pinetum, designed by his agent and head gardener John Spencer, and the Rhododendron Woodland Gardens.