

In the two hundred years that the Basin has existed, the Howse family have been the longest continuous residents. From 1875 when Alfred first moved in until his daughter eventually sold the cottage in 1957.

Alfred Howse was born in 1854 and became the junction keeper at Latton c1875. He married Ann Prudence Smith, who was "in service" locally, and they produced a family of eight daughters and three sons, all raised in the small basin cottage. Alfred was not "just a lock keeper" but a man of many talents. He was a prize winning gardener, a musician (he played the concertina), a parish councillor, secretary of a benefit society and a singer of folksongs. His brother John was, at one time, a Thames and Severn Canal lock keeper and went on to become the landlord of the Good Intent public house at Cerny Wick.

It became a custom for Alfred's family to gather at the Basin on bank holidays. There were so many of them that sleeping arrangements were 'interesting'; some would be in the house, others in the barn or in the open under the stars. These were the days when families made their own entertainment, fancy dress and sing-songs featured a great deal. Apart from bicycles, the main form of transportation around Latton was the donkey cart. Members of the family lived at the Basin until the 1950s.

Three of Alfred's brothers served in the army during the Crimea war—only one returned. Another three of his brothers (including John the landlord of the Good Intent in Cerny Wick) were prosecuted in 1865 for rioting in Cricklade. Life at the Basin and its surrounds is a fascinating glimpse of a way of life long since gone.



Alfred's family homemade entertainment

The objects of the Charity are:-

For the public benefit to maintain, repair and preserve the canal at Latton Basin, and in particular, but not exclusively, to clear and reinstate the towpath and canal bed between the Basin and the River Thames as a public amenity. To advance public education in the history and use of the canal at Latton Basin.



Please join us...

...you'll be very welcome. Whether as an 'armchair' friend or an active volunteer. We have no joining fees (although a donation is always acceptable).

Volunteers...

...no experience necessary - just enthusiasm and a sense of humour. If you would like to visit then come along and meet us on a workparty day. Register your support by using our contact form, or visit..

Website:- www.lattonbasin.info

Email:- contact@lattonbasin.info

A Registered Charity No: 1192965



LATTON BASIN RESTORATION



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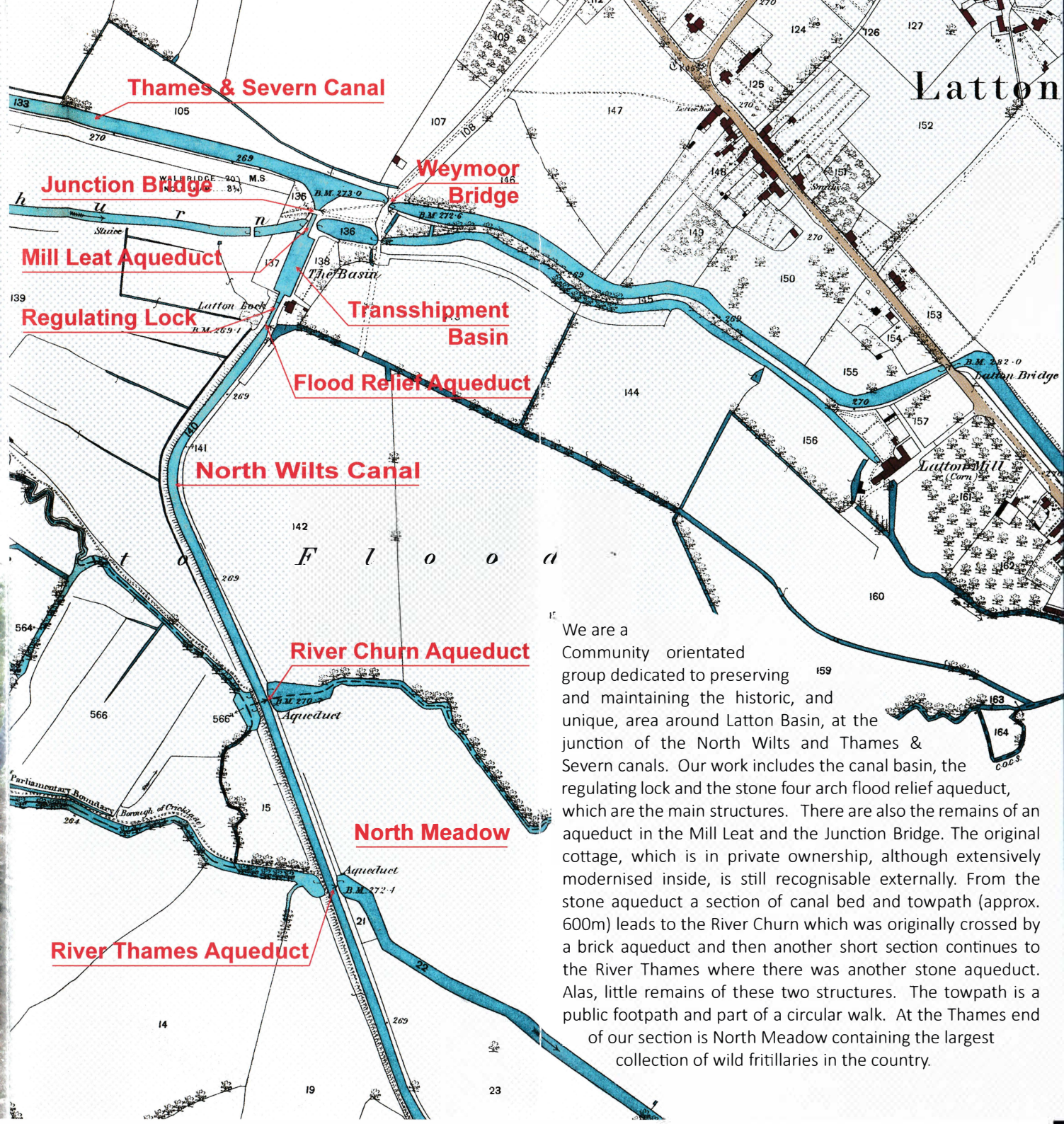
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The North Wilts Canal was opened in 1819 connecting the Thames & Severn and Wilts & Berks canals, providing a bypass of the difficult Upper Thames navigation. The North Wilts Canal reached Latton on an embankment which terminated at the entrance to a basin that had been constructed by the Thames & Severn. Here the narrow boats would tranship their cargoes into the shorter, wider boats that would take them on westward. This was necessary because the lock dimensions of the canals differed. Eventually the Thames & Severn locks were lengthened, which enabled the narrowboats to make through journeys, and effectively rendered the basin redundant.

Around 1823 a regulating lock was built into the embankment adjacent to the toll house. Although theoretically there was no difference in the water levels of the two canals, the Thames and Severn was very 'leaky', and our assumption is that this lock was to prevent valuable water being lost from the Coate Reservoir in Swindon.



 employees on bonding day help rebuild regulating lock



We are a Community orientated group dedicated to preserving and maintaining the historic, and unique, area around Latton Basin, at the junction of the North Wilts and Thames & Severn canals. Our work includes the canal basin, the regulating lock and the stone four arch flood relief aqueduct, which are the main structures. There are also the remains of an aqueduct in the Mill Leat and the Junction Bridge. The original cottage, which is in private ownership, although extensively modernised inside, is still recognisable externally. From the stone aqueduct a section of canal bed and towpath (approx. 600m) leads to the River Churn which was originally crossed by a brick aqueduct and then another short section continues to the River Thames where there was another stone aqueduct. Alas, little remains of these two structures. The towpath is a public footpath and part of a circular walk. At the Thames end of our section is North Meadow containing the largest collection of wild fritillaries in the country.