Text display panel 1

Tales from the River

& other waters of the Brecks & Fen Edge

Project Aims/Objectives

This project aims to uncover a wide range of local stories about

the Brecks Fen Edge and rivers including oral histories, memories, myths

and legends.

It will celebrate how people engaged with the rivers and how they have

been used for recreation activities in the past. Young people and adults

will be supported to tell their stories, and these will be brought to life

through exhibitions, films and story telling.

Ford at Houghton Lane, North Pickenham, c 1934. Thanks to Swaffham Museum

Cock-up bridge, Burwell, possibly 1940s?

Some memories ...

“That brings back so many memories of my childhood, particularly the late 1940s. Groups of us

lads would ride our bikes down there, or walk right along the river bank from the village. Many

of us learned to swim there, as I did when I was about seven. We had such fun, especially when

some of the village girls joined us. The favourite activity for us all was jumping from the highest

part of the structure.”

“This picture makes me think of my father throwing my brother in the river at 7 to get him to

swim. We use to picnic there.”

Comments on a Facebook post about the bridge

Project Summary

The project will involve young people and adults in gathering and

celebrating stories and folklore about river recreation (especially

swimming and other watery activities) in the Brecks’ rivers in the past

using research, oral history and gathering a variety of media, including

photos, films and maps.

This will all be compiled and presented in a variety of ways, including

an exhibition, a film and storytelling, online, and archived.

Oxborough Ferry, c1910, postcard

Heritage project in the Brecks & Fen Edge

Tales from the River is one of a wider set of projects, The Brecks Fen Edge

and Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER, https://brecks.org/bfer/),

supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund

(https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/)

See the BFER website, https://tinyurl.com/BFERprojTR, and a detailed

outline on project lead's website, https://tinyurl.com/OSBprojTR

Project area and context

The stories we uncover and collect will be shared with wider audiences to

celebrate the heritage and traditions in the distant and recent past, so we

can understand and build up a history of these activities in the area and

connect the past with the present and future of river recreation.

The area for the project is the rivers of the Brecks area and the edge of the

Fens. See the BFER map.

Project updates

As the project develops we

will share photos, updates,

extracts from interviews and

videos, to show the

fascinating information we

gather. See websites, social

media, and newsletters.

The river at Thetford in summer, possibly 1970s

Watery activities

Those of interest include outdoor

swimming, dipping, jumping,

diving, paddling, playing in water,

picnicking, boating, canoeing,

kayaking, fishing, walking, running,

camping, contemplation and art.

Wenceslaus Hollar, Compleat Angler, Wikimedia