

Any 'fen settlements' of the lower river must have relied on rigorous drainage. Further upstream Cawood seems to have become a small port by late Saxon times. It was engaged in some ship-building and enjoyed prosperity before Selby gained importance.

Medieval River Trade. The Ouse, as a tidal river, was held by the common lawyers to be a public thoroughfare under royal protection, so it was illegal to obstruct it by damming, tapping its power by watermills, or by exploiting fisheries. Sometimes fishery rights were granted to powerful monasteries.

There were periodic wars on fishgaiths because of the great hazard they presented to the all-important navigation. Full conservancy of the Ouse was placed into the Corporation's hands in 1462. The situation was 'delicate' as prominent clergy were the owners of the timber and wicket fishgaiths set transversely in the river. The corporation successfully removed some of these obstructions, but a list of owners in 1484 included the Archbishop of York, the Prior of Drax, the Bishop of Durham and notable gentry. The final clearance only came after the suppression of the monasteries.

York's city walls (timber in the main until 13<sup>th</sup> C.) were later made in stone, as were the great churches of the vale. In York, and the Ouse valley generally the stone was magnesium limestone from the Tadcaster region. Shipment would be via the lower Wharfe, or Cawood. From the north Pennine lead was shipped from