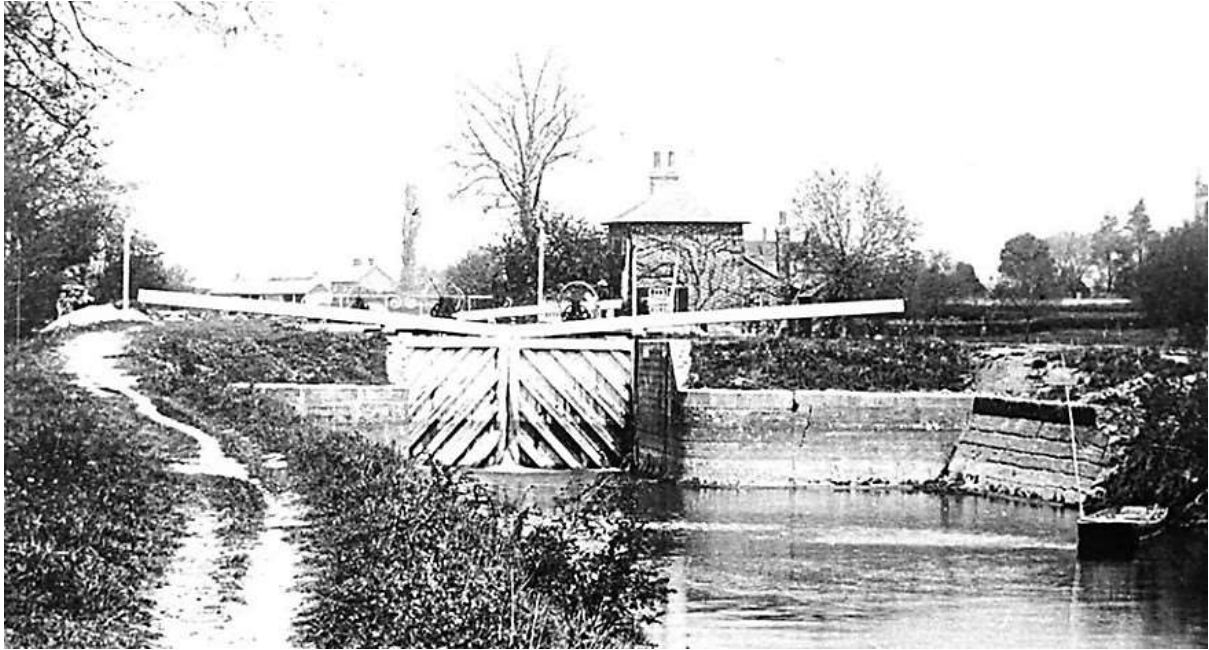


History of Benson lock

Benson Lock is one of the oldest locks on the River Thames. Its history goes back to the late 1300s, when a mill and weir were recorded. In 1788, the first pound lock was built of timber and in turn this was converted to a stone lock in 1870. There used to be several ferries operating here in different periods, one of which transported horses across the river.



An old photograph of the lock house which was replaced in 1913.

In November 1910, the Benson lock-keeper's wage was 9s 6d weekly. In October 1822, Robert Green was recorded as lock keeper at a wage of 36s. monthly. In November 1840, Rd. Jarrard or Garratt was keeping the lock and his wage was raised the following August from 30s. to 42s. monthly.

In 1846, the Lord Mayor commented on his journey along the River Thames,

"The only incident of regret was the loss of time at Benson Lock, occasioned by both towing horses falling into the river from which they were extricated with immense difficulty."

The weir owners this year were named as Green and Brown.

In March 1853, the wage was reduced from £44. 8s. to £38. 8s. annually. The next year Garratt was deprived of his monthly wage, stated as 42s. and was granted the pleasure tolls and use of the house on condition of continuing his duties.

A *Times* correspondent in August 1865 said, “ *Benson lock house was deserted and shut up; the handle hid away and a great rent all down the upper gates, so that this lock detained us more than 40 minutes*”

A year later in October 1866, **John Whiteman** was keeper at 52s. monthly. In September 1869, 7s. 6d. was added to his wage, being deducted at Bell Weir. John drowned in April 1887 and his son, Henry took over at a wage of 65s. monthly.