

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Loddon Drainage Association: A landowner controlled local drainage scheme after the Great War

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## Abstract

Government efforts to improve land productivity during 1917–1918 encouraged a wider interest in land drainage schemes. Building on the efforts of the County War Agricultural Executive Committees, new legislation brought local authorities into play to provide governance and direction; a proliferation of local bodies managing drainage schemes ensued, with a common aim that those benefitting from improved drainage should fund these schemes. Government support, in the form of financial assistance, remained firm after the War as such schemes were seen as opportunities to create employment for former servicemen. But in a scheme to clear rivers flowing across north Hampshire, west Surrey, and south Berkshire, landowners pushed back, manoeuvring to gain control of the scheme with the aim of reducing charges on landowners. A successful scheme ensued, managed by a prominent land agent working for one of the largest estate owners, but was marred by disagreement over its finances, scope and benefits.

This paper examines the efforts of three County Councils to coordinate their work to create a new drainage scheme for the River Loddon in north Hampshire, north Surrey, and south Berkshire, immediately after the Great War. Their proposals, welcomed by the central Government, drew opposition from local landowners to an imposed governance under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1918, and political manoeuvring by some of the largest landowners in the area resulted in the Government accepting that landowners could run their own scheme. We examine how this scheme was established, as the Loddon Drainage Association, how it was managed and how local landowners exercised governance. It provides an example of the continuing influence and power of landowners, especially the larger estate owners, in the aftermath of the Great War and may have been typical of the country-wide expansion of local drainage schemes after 1918.<sup>1</sup>

A key issue was the motivation for landowners in seeking to exercise authority over a drainage scheme, with a view to minimising its financial impact whilst maximising its benefits for their landholdings; but it was also a demonstration of landowners' local standing, as figures of power and influence, at a time when some historians regard aristocratic landowners as being in serious decline. The post-War period was marked by increased taxation for landowners and the sale, or partial sale, of many estates; these were times of financial stress for many landowners, although too early to meet Peter Mandler's suggestion that this resulted in the 'abdication of the landed elite from its rural responsibilities'.<sup>2</sup> The role played by the land agents employed by the larger estate owners in the scheme may be viewed as evidence of the landowners' influence, but also as an example of a professional estate manager taking on a greater, higher profile role than might have been expected. Having wrested control of the nascent scheme from the County Councils, how did the landowners manage its work and coordinate amongst themselves? Was the focus chiefly on arterial or river drainage, or was there an intention to undertake some field drainage as well?

Fundamentally, under the leadership of landowners and land agents, did the scheme achieve its aims and what benefits were derived from it?

Land drainage schemes attracted Government interest during the second half of the nineteenth century; the need to improve land and encourage increased agricultural output resulted in legislation, culminating in the Land Drainage Act 1861. The necessity for investment by private landowners was recognised and the Act provided for the establishment of local Drainage Boards, by an order from the Board of Agriculture, provided one-tenth of the landowners affected by flooding in the area petitioned for a scheme, and with the approval of two-thirds of the landowners in the area. Benaiah Adkin describes the importance of land drainage and its history in his work of 1933; in his view, the key objective was 'to remove from the land water which is harmful and in excess of the requirements of human beings, animals, and plants'.<sup>3</sup> The solution to flooding and waterlogging of fields was to ensure the removal of any natural or man-made impediment to the flow of the river; channels should be deepened and widened, obstructions cleared, weeds and rushes removed along with the mud and silt that accumulated around them.<sup>4</sup>

Demands for landowners to maximise the productivity of their agricultural holdings during the second half of the Great War inevitably required the regulatory bodies at County level, the County War Agricultural Executive Committees, to examine ways and means of improving drainage in support of their efforts to increase arable production. Peter Dewey assesses that the 'most important long-term legacy of the [County War Agricultural] Executive Committees was the improvement of drainage'. During 1917 and 1918, utilising the Cultivation of Lands Order 1917, County Executive Committees pushed forward with efforts to clear rivers and watercourses, repairing their banks where possible, with the aim of reducing the flooding of farmland. Under the Order, the cost of such works could be recovered from the owner of the land.<sup>5</sup> Dewey cites several examples of counties where such efforts were made but Hampshire does not appear on the list. A key component of these schemes was the provision of labour from German prisoner of war camps, perceived as a valuable contribution to local authority efforts by central Government. Over 400,000 acres in England and Wales benefitted from these schemes.<sup>6</sup>

The Land Drainage Act 1918 put these schemes on a more formal footing with better-defined arrangements for the creation of Drainage Boards in areas liable to flooding. After 1919, the new Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries played a formal role in their establishment, having the power to instigate the formation of a new Drainage Board 'without waiting for the consent of owners of two-thirds of the land which might be affected'.<sup>7</sup> Once benefits had been identified, local authorities could then charge an additional rate to the landowner in order to recover costs on behalf of the Drainage Board. This ability to proceed without the consent of the majority of landowners and to levy an additional rate to fund drainage works may have been seen as an additional burden by landowners facing heavy tax demands immediately after the Great War.

John Bowers and John Sheail examine in some detail the national policy for land drainage during the interwar period and its manifestation in the Ouse Drainage Scheme.<sup>8</sup> Both authors focus on the changes brought about by the Land Drainage Act 1918, which Bowers describes as being 'intended to facilitate the formation of drainage districts by altering the conditions of consent. The provisional order setting up the drainage board would be confirmed unless within a prescribed period owner of one-third of the land objected'.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the Council would play a role in collecting an increased rate payment from beneficiaries of the scheme to underpin its delivery. Bowers refers to this as 'the basic principle of finance for land drainage, and a hallowed one, . . . the cost of works should be borne by the owners of the land which benefitted. Since the owners saw little or no benefit from arterial drainage, they resisted the expenditure'.<sup>10</sup> But there were additional factors in play after 1918; drainage schemes could be promoted by the Government because ostensibly they provided additional benefits, such as employing former servicemen, but at the cost of Government grants, and hence, the taxpayer rather than rate payers were funding the schemes – up to 75 per cent of the cost.<sup>11</sup>

In his study of the Ouse Drainage Board, established in 1920, Sheail focuses on the need to organise drainage on a catchment basis and he recognises the important role the County War Agricultural Executive Committees (WAEC) played in creating the Ouse Drainage Board. At the instigation of their County WAECs, seven of the nine County Councils in the Ouse catchment area petitioned for what proved to be the first Provisional Order under the 1918 Act, to create a single Drainage Board for the River Ouse and its tributaries.<sup>12</sup> Sheail also notes the proposal for the 'Board to categorise its expenditure, each category being apportioned according to the benefit to be derived from the different areas and sub-areas'.<sup>13</sup> This was a model proposed for other new drainage boards but it was criticised by landowners as it enabled local authorities to recover costs via an additional rate. Although the overarching concept was welcomed, the rating provisions for the Ouse Drainage Board were fiercely contested, with its commissioning order being debated in both Houses of Parliament.<sup>14</sup>

The Land Drainage Act 1918 sought to modernise the terms of the 1861 Act, and, critically, it provided for the Board of Agriculture (subsequently the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries from the end of 1919) to act unilaterally in instigating a scheme. The latter reflected Wartime concerns that landowners were not doing sufficient to bring into cultivation all of the land necessary to meet food production needs. Sheail claims that fifty new drainage districts were established in the wake of the 1918 Act, with 652 drainage schemes promoted by the Ministry during the early 1920s.<sup>15</sup>

Francis Floud examines land drainage issues largely from the standpoint of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. His tone is positive when describing the investment in improving land drainage, although his estimate of the amount of funding the Ministry provided for land drainage in the 1920s, at £850,000, is considerably less than that identified by John Bowers in his examination of land drainage efforts during the interwar period. Bowers estimates that £2,148,000 was spent by the Ministry on drainage schemes (with some sea defence works included) during 1919–1925.<sup>16</sup> Both Floud and Bowers stress that these works were for arterial drainage, chiefly rivers, and not for field drainage. The difference was important: arterial drainage improvements increased the capacity of rivers to accommodate field drainage and thereby reduce the incidence of flooding, but this in itself did not encourage landowners or farmers to invest in greater field drainage. Bowers concludes that during the interwar period, 'economic conditions were not favourable to field drainage and little was carried out'.<sup>17</sup>

What Sheail describes as a post-War 'piecemeal approach' with local interests challenging efforts to impose administrative frameworks, came to a head in 1927; the Government set up a Royal Commission on Land Drainage to examine the proliferation of drainage bodies. The Commission's recommendations were accepted by the Government in the Land Drainage Act 1930, which established forty-seven new Catchment Boards and empowered County Councils to collect a general rate to fund land drainage schemes, although in reality Government grants funded the bulk of the works. Unregulated bodies such as the Loddon Drainage Association would not have been permitted to exist under the terms of the 1930 Act.<sup>18</sup>

While this paper focuses on the role played by landowners in taking control of a local scheme, the evidence points to a significant role played by their land agents throughout. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, contemporary observers noted that 'estate management has become a profession' and the land agent a 'first rate man of business'.<sup>19</sup> The term 'agent' came to refer to educated, professional men who moved in landowner circles and bore the full financial, administrative and legal responsibilities of estate management, a burden that increased significantly as the profession moved into the twentieth century when 'the running of estates had become a complicated and multi-faceted affair'.<sup>20</sup>

Examining the role of land agents in Staffordshire during the nineteenth century, Cathal Rogers argues that there were wide variations in structures and levels of responsibility, but overall, land agents had significant authority and autonomy. Crucially, Rogers identifies that decision-making did not require the landowner's input.<sup>21</sup> Penelope Corfield concurs, viewing the land agent's

ability to exercise responsibilities unsupervised as a key milestone in the development of the profession.<sup>22</sup> Eric Richards argues that land agents were not just managers but ‘technicians and propagandists for the ways of improvement’.<sup>23</sup> A key theme of Tindley *et alii* is that the land agent was a significant figure, wielding real power as an authoritative leader within a community, but also having reputational power, exercised on behalf of his employer. Critically, the land agent’s network of fellow agents, locally and regionally, and others in local social and business circles, provided the agent with a cadre of other professionals who were partners and allies.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of the Loddon Drainage Association, the Duke of Wellington’s land agent, George North, was a key figure; as the Duke’s agent, he was well known locally and was a much respected figure.<sup>25</sup> As George North would demonstrate, land agents were confident in their engagement with and management of other professionals, such as solicitors, architects, and engineers, who serviced the estate’s needs and would play important roles in the work of a drainage board.

But why did the Duke of Wellington, the largest landowner in north Hampshire, not chair the new drainage association himself? Did the Duke’s attitude towards the new scheme echo Peter Mandler’s view that great estate owners stepped back and hid away during the interwar period, avoiding additional responsibilities while struggling to come to terms with the change occurring around them?<sup>26</sup> After the Great War, the Duke was less focused on local administrative activity in north Hampshire and declined to get involved with new groups and committees set up to campaign on specific issues. Increasingly during the late 1920s and early 1930s, much of this work was delegated to his land agent, North, who found himself representing the Duke on a variety of committees ranging from town planning to drainage schemes.<sup>27</sup>

### The River Loddon and its tributaries: county council planning for a drainage scheme

The River Loddon rises in Basingstoke, Hampshire, fed from chalk springs, and flows north for 28 miles to meet the Thames at Wargrave in Berkshire. For much of its course, the chalk lies beneath a layer of London clay. The Loddon has two principal tributaries: the River Whitewater, which rises between Greywell and South Warnborough in Hampshire, flowing north to meet the Loddon at Swallowfield; and the River Blackwater which rises in Aldershot, Hampshire, flowing northwards for 20 miles to join the Whitewater near Eversley. For much of its length, the Blackwater forms the county boundary between Hampshire, Surrey, and Berkshire. The River Loddon and its tributaries drain an area of around 400 square miles.<sup>28</sup> (See Map 1 at Annex A).

The course of the River Loddon was flanked by some of the largest estates in Hampshire, with the Duke of Wellington at Stratfield Saye and Lord Bolton at Hackwood Park, Basingstoke, owning large stretches of the river.<sup>29</sup> Other smaller estate owners possessed landholdings along the banks of the Whitewater and the Blackwater, along with a large number of smaller, owner occupiers; from the headwaters to the outskirts of Reading, there were estimated to be in excess of a hundred landowners.<sup>30</sup> There were numerous man-made obstacles on the Loddon and its tributaries, ranging from fish weirs, dams, and pedestrian bridges to large bridges for major road crossings and several railway bridges carrying Great Western Railway traffic between Reading and Basingstoke and Aldershot, and the London and South West Railway line from London to Basingstoke.

Concerns about the River Loddon had been expressed during the late nineteenth century, not so much regarding the risk of flooding but the use of the river for the disposal of farmyard and stable drainage. Sanitary inspectors working for the Thames Conservancy frequently reported on the poor state of the River Loddon, and the Duke of Wellington was threatened with fines unless drainage from Stratfield Saye was prevented from entering the Loddon.<sup>31</sup> But during the Great War, complaints about the drainage of the River Loddon and its tributaries emerged as landowners and farmers strove to increase the area of cultivable land as required under Wartime regulations. Frequent flooding and waterlogging of fields along the course of the Loddon reduced the ability of farmers to bring all of the land under cultivation.

As early as 1917, the Berkshire War Agricultural Executive Committee (WAEC) had concerns about the state of the River Blackwater and the need to clear obstructions from it to improve drainage. The Committee questioned whether this was necessary, or achievable, as the cultivation of the land through which it flowed was not required for the 1918 harvest and the WAEC deemed that no inspection was necessary.<sup>32</sup> But the following Spring, reports were received that the land was waterlogged and this encouraged the WAEC to consider whether land drainage was necessary; as the Blackwater flowed from Hampshire to join the Loddon in Berkshire, the decision was taken to consult the Hampshire WAEC.<sup>33</sup> The latter responded that they had similar concerns about the River Loddon and intended to make use of German prisoners of war to undertake clearance work.<sup>34</sup>

The Hampshire WAEC already had some experience of planning for this type of scheme, having worked in cooperation with the Dorset WAEC to develop proposals to improve drainage on the rivers Avon and Stour in the west of the County. The joint report on this scheme, produced by C H J Clayton, Chief Engineer to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, was shared with the Berkshire WAEC. The report was dated 5 April 1918, and two important points emerge from it. Firstly, while clearing obstructions from the River Avon might reduce the risk of flooding, it would be unlikely to negate the degree of waterlogging on low-lying lands and Clayton concluded that 'no portion of the affected areas would be likely to become cultivable'. Secondly, in considering the complexity of issues involved in a drainage scheme for the two rivers, Clayton determined that it would be 'too large and too valuable to be entrusted to spasmodic arrangements of a voluntary character'.<sup>35</sup>

Undeterred, WAEC officials from Berkshire and Hampshire pressed ahead with plans for a meeting in Camberley on 5 June 1918 to discuss a proposal for a drainage board for the River Blackwater; an official from Surrey County Council was invited as the east bank of the river bounded that County. The outcome of that meeting was a decision to proceed with a meeting of surveyors, to gather expert opinion.<sup>36</sup> On 17 June, Drainage Inspectors from the three Counties met to discuss options; they noted that a new Drainage Board could be established under a Cultivation of Lands Order pending Royal assent for the new Land Drainage Act (1918). Part Two of the Act would give a new Drainage Board greater authority to recover the cost of works by charging the owners of the lands benefitting from any improvements.<sup>37</sup>

On 9 August 1918, C H J Clayton reported his inspection of the Rivers Loddon and Blackwater undertaken on 6–8 August. He made some critical comments about the terrain and the state of the rivers. Clayton assessed that from Wargrave (on the Thames) to Swallowfield, the confluence of the two rivers (the Blackwater and the Loddon), the river valley was very flat with an average width of one mile; above Swallowfield, the river valleys narrowed to an average of a quarter of a mile. Clayton estimated that around 12,000 acres of grassland were susceptible to flooding along the length of the two river systems but the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the rivers 'are more or less permanently waterlogged'.

Another major concern was the section of the Loddon from Wargrave to Twyford which flooded not only from its own waters but also from the Thames. Clayton estimated that 2000 of the 12,000 acres above were affected by Thames flooding and commented that this was too big a problem to be considered within a Loddon drainage scheme. Clayton described the Loddon above Swallowfield as being 'in great need of clearance. The bed is mostly of chalk or gravel and there is very little sludge, but the islands, ceases [sic], reed beds and in-growth form serious obstructions to the flow of water'. This was particularly noticeable in Stratfield Saye Park (the Duke of Wellington) and from Sherfield to Old Basing (Lord Bolton's estate).<sup>38</sup>

The River Blackwater from Swallowfield to Aldershot was described by Clayton as 'unspeakably bad', the channel being choked with reeds and weeds, bushes and trees. The River Whitewater was in better condition, benefitting from a narrower valley and better run-off than the others, but was still in need of clearance works. Clayton concluded that 'the extent and value of the injured lands and the certainty that they could be redeemed for agriculture by the application of modern



Table 1. Formula for cost recovery across the five areas of the Loddon Drainage Scheme

Location of works	Proportion in which rates shall be levied in the several areas benefitted (where 1 is the highest rate per acre or in the £).				
	Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D	Area E
Area C	–	$\frac{2}{3}$	1	$\frac{1}{3}$	–
Area E	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	1

RBA, C/CL/G1/115/15, Berkshire County Council, Drainage of lands, draft order for River Loddon Drainage Board, undated.

methods fully warrant the establishment of a drainage board having jurisdiction over the three valleys'.<sup>39</sup> In response to Clayton's report, the Surrey WAEC hosted a conference of officials from the three Counties on 23 October to recommend a way forward. Not surprisingly, they commended the report and stated that 'the establishment of a Drainage Board is the first step to any solution of the problem'.<sup>40</sup> But before the County Councils could propose a way forward, the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries intervened.

On the basis of Clayton's report, the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries seized the initiative to establish a new Drainage Board for the River Loddon and its tributaries and sought the agreement of all three County Councils.<sup>41</sup> All three must have concurred as a month later the Board wrote to the Agricultural Executive Committees (AEC) of all three Counties, (the AECs having replaced the Wartime bodies), to report that a draft order to establish the new drainage board was in hand.<sup>42</sup> But by June 1919, the order had not been completed and no further action had been undertaken by the three Councils. On 25 June, the Board wrote to the Berkshire AEC suggesting that works could be undertaken on a voluntary basis with landowners advancing funds to facilitate projects pending the sign-off of the order. The idea that local landowners would fund works on a voluntary basis was unlikely to be accepted and at a subsequent meeting, the Berkshire AEC recorded that 'the suggestion was not considered feasible'.<sup>43</sup>

Shortly after, a draft order for the establishment of the River Loddon Drainage Board was circulated. It specified the three valleys area as identified in Map 1 at Annex A. The order set out the composition of the Board: sixteen members would be drawn from the five areas specified – A (three), B or C (four), D (three), and E (six). These individuals were either landowners (or their representatives) who possessed not less than 10 acres or, if a tenant, not less than 20 acres. In addition, there would be five Council representatives, two each from Berkshire and Hampshire County Councils and one from Surrey County Council. The order also offered a methodology for the defrayal of expenses by demanding an increased rate payment from those benefitting from the works, as defined in Table 1.<sup>44</sup>

The scheme for cost recovery via rate payments was not dissimilar to that devised for the Ouse Drainage Board. In the Loddon's case, clearance work on the stretch of the River Blackwater above Swallowfield to the confluence with the River Whitewater (Area C) would obviously be of greatest benefit to landowners in that area, but landowners on the upper reaches of both rivers would also derive benefit from improved flows and reduced flooding, hence the charge against Areas B and D. The benefits of the scheme might be obvious but would the funding model be accepted by those owning lands along the Loddon and its tributaries?

Landowners organise in response to proposals for a Drainage Board

Local landowners along the banks of the River Loddon were not slow in organising themselves in response to the Board's proposals. In 1920, in an undated circular, Llewellyn Llewellyn, land agent for Lord Bolton at Hackwood Park, Basingstoke, was provided with details of proposals for the formation of a River Loddon Drainage Board. Llewellyn, on behalf of Lord Bolton, was invited to

object to the proposal on the grounds of necessity, cost, and the likelihood that the potential benefits were not justified. Lord Bolton, who owned 1150 acres bordering the River Loddon and its tributaries, signed the petition. On the reverse of the document, Llewellyn jotted some notes which may have formed the draft of a letter sent in support of the petition; he sought clarity as to the nature of the intended works, which lands might benefit from improved drainage and the potential impact of any works on fish stocks.<sup>45</sup>

These were key issues for Llewellyn, and presumably for Lord Bolton, his employer, and Llewellyn raised these points on several occasions. The final point regarding fish stocks was an important issue; the River Loddon was much sought after for its fishing and its fish stocks were maintained by several of the larger estate owners along its banks. The Duke of Wellington employed a Water Bailiff on the Stratfield Saye estate who, amongst other duties, managed a trout hatchery and arranged for periodic restocking of the Duke's stretch of the river. In addition, he protected the Duke's fishing rights and drove off any unauthorised fisherman observed on the banks.<sup>46</sup>

Precisely who was taking the lead in organising opposition to the scheme was unclear as Edward Ellis Morrhall, the Organising Secretary of the Berkshire National Farmers Union, wrote to Llewellyn in June 1920 about the proposal for a Loddon Drainage Board. Morrhall warned that if the Ministry issued an order for the creation of a Drainage Board then 'certain rates would be levied' on landowners bordering the drainage scheme area to recover costs. Morrhall went on to explain that he was organising a meeting of all the interested parties to consider the draft scheme; the meeting was scheduled for 3 July at the meeting rooms of the Reading Chamber of Commerce in Friar Street, Reading.<sup>47</sup>

Although Morrhall was organising the event and was probably acting in the interests of the owner occupiers and tenant farmers along the banks of the Loddon, it was clear that George North was playing a leading role in marshalling opposition to the draft order; an early sign that the larger estate owners intended to take control of developments. North's extensive range of contacts included George Franklin Simmons, a senior partner in Simmons and Sons, Chartered Surveyors, Auctioneers, and Valuers in Reading. Simmons was a tenant of the Stratfield Saye estate, renting one of the larger properties close to Stratfield Saye House and a short walk from North's home; Simmons and Sons had been contracted to auction timber from the estate for many years. During July 1920, Simmons and his staff contacted many of their clients who owned land along the banks of the Loddon to encourage them to sign the petition opposing the proposed drainage order: these included the owners of large estates in Swallowfield in Berkshire and at Elvetham, Dogmersfield, and Bramshill in Hampshire.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time as the Committee met, North's name had already been put forward by Hampshire County Council as one of their representatives on the proposed Drainage Board to be created by the order. North's name was one of the eight names offered by Hampshire AEC and Berkshire offered another eight to bring the number up to 16. All 16 names were included in the schedule attached to the draft order.<sup>49</sup> Whilst organising opposition to the scheme, North maintained his role within the County Councils' structure for the oversight of the scheme. On 4 May, the Ministry issued public notices in local newspapers advertising their intent to issue an order to create the River Loddon Drainage Board and requesting any public objections to this course of action.<sup>50</sup>

In June 1920, the Ministry of Agriculture wrote to the secretary of the Berkshire AEC to report that there had been sufficient public interest, including petitions objecting to the creation of the proposed drainage board, and that the Ministry had decided to hold a public enquiry into the proposal. An eminent King's Counsel, Mr Edwin Max Konstam, CBE, KC, had been approached to chair the enquiry and proposed to do so in Reading on 23 and 24 July 1920.<sup>51</sup> Those objecting to the enquiry, organised and led by George North's representative Committee, engaged the services of Brain and Brain, Solicitors of 156 Friar Street, Reading, to represent their interests at the public enquiry.

In early July, a Committee was established by North to examine a Loddon drainage scheme; Llewellyn was co-opted as a member. A sub-committee had been formed to conduct an interview with a Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Board of Regulation official to establish the exact details of the proposed scheme, prior to the public enquiry to be held in Reading. Shortly after this, North wrote to landowners bordering the River Loddon asking them to provide a schedule of the lands likely to be included in the scheme. North also asked Llewellyn to persuade Lord Bolton to send a letter objecting to the scheme; North suggested grounds on which Bolton could voice an objection: 'it is an inappropriate moment to ask landowners to pay more rates'. A subsequent circular included maps on which landowners were requested to mark their holdings.<sup>52</sup> A few days before the public enquiry held its hearing, the representative Committee of Owners and Occupiers led by North, sought to drum up support and encouraged those with an interest in the proposed scheme to attend the hearing at the Shire Hall, Reading on 23 July 1920.<sup>53</sup>

Nearly three weeks after Konstam spent a day hearing objections to the proposed drainage board, the Ministry of Agriculture wrote to Brain and Brain. Having seen Konstam's report, the Ministry recognised that 'there is a general feeling that the establishment of a drainage board is not desirable at present, and that it will be possible to secure the carrying out of all necessary works by voluntary cooperation among the persons interested'. The Ministry had decided not to proceed with the draft order, provided a local committee was set up to 'secure the necessary cooperation' but the Ministry wished to be kept informed of developments.<sup>54</sup> The way was open for the landowners to take control.

### Landowners establish a new Drainage Association

Forewarned of what Konstam would recommend, North led the way in planning for a new Drainage Association. He already knew that the Ministry was likely to shift its position; three days after the hearing, North reported that Konstam intended to recommend to Ministers that they defer confirmation of the draft order and thereby give landowners 'an opportunity of taking concerted measures to keep the water courses free from obstructions'.<sup>55</sup> North wrote to landowners explaining that his Committee would meet on 31 July 1920 to draw up plans for their own drainage scheme and would provide Ministers 'with a copy of the proposals in due course, including the steps to be taken respecting the natural channels, bye-passes [sic], mill-dams and artificial drains'.<sup>56</sup>

Later in 1920, North, probably with the assistance of the Duke of Wellington, approached Lord Wolmer, Conservative MP for Aldershot; the River Blackwater, a Loddon tributary, rose in his constituency.<sup>57</sup> North sought Wolmer's assistance in introducing a deputation from the Loddon Drainage Association to Ministers at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Wolmer agreed to do this at his meeting with North on 21 December and North wrote to his fellow land agents to encourage them to get their employers signed up to the programme of works.<sup>58</sup> The deputation was received by Ministers on 22 January 1921, and North was pleased to inform Llewellyn that the meeting went well and 'it is settled that we are to go on with the Scheme on the voluntary basis'.<sup>59</sup>

Steps were taken immediately to formalise the arrangements for the new Association, with North as its first Chairman, and details were clearly set out in a Loddon Drainage Association Rules booklet, probably published in early 1921.<sup>60</sup> Individual members would be responsible for works along stretches of the rivers abutting lands they owned or occupied. The booklet states that 'members shall not be required to undertake emergency works' but without suggesting who would be responsible for such matters.<sup>61</sup> Membership dues were subscription-based at a rate per acre for each landowner or occupier within the drainage scheme area but not more than 6d per acre. There was nothing in the Association's rule book which suggested that County Councils or other local authorities were represented on the Management Committee. The organisation of the five drainage districts covered by the scheme are described in Annex A and Map 1.



### Delivery of the new drainage projects

The organisation of a programme of works would involve close liaison with the local authorities and landowners, and played strongly to the talents of the land agent. But the volume of work in which North was involved at the Duke's Stratfield Saye estate in the early 1920s necessitated the recruitment of another professional to manage projects on a daily basis. North selected Owen Goddard, who was reporting to him on a regular basis by the end of February 1921. By May 1921, Owen Goddard had assumed the position of secretary to the Management Committee of the Association and Morrhall ceased to appear in correspondence.<sup>62</sup> Goddard was the postmaster in the small village of Finchampstead, Berkshire, but by profession he was an architect, responsible for drawing up the plans for some of the newer buildings in the village, including its Memorial Hall constructed after the Great War, and for works at the War Office site at Arborfield, including a recreation facility at the Army Remount Depot.<sup>63</sup>

Planning for works along the Rivers Loddon and Blackwater was well advanced by April 1921 although Goddard admitted to North that no money had been collected from owners and tenants and Goddard sought the Management Committee's assistance in acquiring funds.<sup>64</sup> Work slowed during the summer months as many farmers were preoccupied with getting in the harvest and Goddard was facing some difficulties with getting costs settled for work on stretches of the River Blackwater; more challenging circumstances on some stretches threatened to drive up clearance costs to £200 per mile compared to £80 per mile on easier sections of the river.<sup>65</sup> But funding was forthcoming, as Goddard reported, chiefly from local authorities, with £200 being negotiated from Frimley District Council and lesser sums from District Councils in Hampshire.<sup>66</sup>

Much of Goddard's time was spent liaising with local Councils and visiting locations to observe clearance work underway, although day-to-day management of labour gangs was undertaken by a Clerk of Works who may have been a local authority employee. Some estate owners offered manpower while the War Office, owner of large tracts of riverbank in Aldershot, provided horsepower as well, until the horse team were required for military exercises.<sup>67</sup> Throughout, Goddard ensured that Captain John C A Roseveare, Chief Engineer for Land Drainage at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, was kept informed of progress and in addition, he arranged that he and North should meet the Directors of Agriculture for the Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire County Councils for the same purpose.<sup>68</sup>

In February 1921, North wrote to Llewellyn to let him know that a Ministry of Agriculture Engineer would be inspecting works on 22 February, chiefly the stretch of the River Loddon on which Llewellyn had already commenced work. These inspections seem to have occurred every six months as Roseveare visited again in October 1921; Goddard repeated his request that Llewellyn circulate a report of works done in his area in advance of the visit.<sup>69</sup> One point of interest within Llewellyn's correspondence is the position with regard to employing ex-servicemen in order to meet the Ministry of Agriculture's stipulation that, in order to qualify for the grant, 75 per cent of men working on drainage schemes should be unemployed ex-servicemen. In December 1922, Llewellyn was exploring an offer of help from the British Legion in Basingstoke to provide him with the manpower he was seeking.<sup>70</sup> This suggests that Llewellyn was overseeing the organisation and direction of the works himself for Lord Bolton's stretch of the Loddon.

In November 1921, Goddard wrote to the Berkshire County Council Director of Agriculture, Mr P H Phipps, outlining plans for a cleansing scheme along the River Blackwater from its source near Aldershot to New Mill, Finchampstead. With an estimated cost of £3100, the Ministry of Agriculture had agreed to pay for 65 per cent of the cost; County and Rural District Councils had agreed to contribute small sums and landowners would cover the remainder through a charge of 5s per chain of river frontage they owned.<sup>71</sup> Two days later, Phipps informed the Berkshire AEC that he had interviewed George North about this scheme and had agreed to support the Loddon Drainage Association's funding requests to the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>72</sup>

But the Ministry had doubts that the Loddon Drainage Association possessed the means to undertake works in advance of reimbursement by the Ministry and sought some reassurance from Berkshire County Council that the Association or its members could guarantee the 35 per cent of funds required to match Ministry grants. If that could be confirmed, then the Ministry would be prepared to treat the Association as a Drainage Authority.<sup>73</sup> Two weeks later, Owen Goddard confirmed to Berkshire County Council that the Association had received guarantees for £1000 from its members and was confident that it could proceed with the clearance of the River Blackwater in the new year.<sup>74</sup> In addition, Wokingham Borough Council offered £250 to guarantee works to clear the Emm Brook and the Barkham Brook, tributaries of the River Blackwater.<sup>75</sup> Goddard pressed ahead with work schemes on both the Loddon and the Blackwater during the early spring of 1922. A further grant of £100 from the Ministry for the Blackwater works meant that by March 1922 there were two gangs of men working on the Blackwater, with a third about to start near Yateley in Hampshire, and a large gang had completed work on the River Loddon up to Sandford Mill by mid-May. Goddard was able to report good progress to North.<sup>76</sup>

No correspondence has survived for 1923 but material dating from 1924 indicates that the key issue, and chief obstacle to progress, appeared to be the funding arrangements. Llewellyn was quibbling over payments and precisely what works had been achieved. In undated notes on some of the circulars from the Association, but from context around January 1924, schemes for works on the River Loddon were funded on a ratio of £3 from the Government out of every £4 spent (a ratio of three to one) with landowners or occupiers paying the remaining £1; in some circumstances the landowners could be asked to pay in advance or to at least guarantee that the necessary funds would be available once the works were completed.<sup>77</sup> In March 1925, Lord Bolton was asked to pay £100, or guarantee that payment, for works to clear the River Loddon at Barton's Mill near Old Basing; on completion the Government would pay £300 of the estimated £400 cost.<sup>78</sup> Llewellyn may have challenged the scope of works undertaken as a letter from Goddard a year later rejected some claims made by Llewellyn: the drainage of moorland had never been in scope but the works had cleared fallen trees, reeds and mud from the Loddon and some side ditches had been cleared as well.<sup>79</sup>

The argument about what the works had or had not achieved continued into the following month. Llewellyn may have made some serious criticisms of the Association's methods or Goddard's behaviour, bringing a firm response in late April 1926. Having complained about the cutting and removal of trees on the river banks on Lord Bolton's lands, Goddard responded:

Primarily all the Drainage Schemes undertaken by this Association were for the improvement of agricultural land, for which purpose alone the Government Grants were made, and one of the greater causes of obstruction has been fallen timber and pollards, and it has been found imperative not only to remove these from the streams, but also to take down such as threatened to stultify the work by falling immediately afterwards.<sup>80</sup>

This matter was not resolved until August 1926 when Llewellyn, on behalf of Lord Bolton, paid the final sum outstanding from the commitment to fund works in 1925. The Association may have closed down shortly after and the file contains no further correspondence after this last letter from Goddard.<sup>81</sup> Unlike many other small, local drainage schemes, this Association appears to have had a very short lifespan; was it too short for it to have achieved a great deal?

### **A limited effort but to some degree successful as a drainage scheme**

It is difficult to assess the degree to which the Association was successful in achieving its aims. The funding of the Association and the manner in which it managed its finances remain opaque. None of its financial records have survived nor do any remaining estate records provide indications as to

Table 2. Funding of LDA works, 1922–1925

Year	Location of clearance works	Area	Expenditure	Percentage paid by LDA members
1922	River Blackwater	B	£4500	25%
	Embrook and Barkham Brook	E	£1600	“
1923	River Loddon	C	£1000	“
	River Blackwater	B	£2750	“
1924	Cove Brook	B	£600	33%
	River Loddon	A	£1150	“
1925	River Loddon	A	£800	“
	River Blackwater	B	£1000	“
Total Expenditure			£13,400	

RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, copy of report dated 8 March 1928 from the Berkshire County Land Agent of an interview with Owen Goddard on 7 March 1928.

who was paying and what amount to the Association, the Bolton/Llewellyn material being a minor exception. Although the River Loddon flows through the Park at Stratfield Saye House and, to this day, forms an aquatic feature in the garden to the east side of the house, there is no evidence that Lord Douro, eldest son of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Wellington and tenant of the property during 1920–1925, provided any funding to the Loddon Drainage Association. The Wellington estate did not pay for any works, and aside from a contribution of £10 towards Owen Goddard’s expenses in June 1921, they made no further payments to the Association or to Goddard.<sup>82</sup> Estate tenants farming to the south in Stratfield Turgis and Sherfield on Loddon, or at Stanford End Mill to the north of Stratfield Saye, may have contributed to the Association directly or as an additional payment as part of their annual rent, but as rent accounts for the interwar period have not survived, this cannot be verified. Although the County Councils were not represented on the Association’s management committee, they and other local authorities seem to have provided much of the funding to underpin the Association’s day-to-day operations.

Heavy rainfall during the winters of 1923–1926 caused serious flooding in the Loddon valley and around Reading, with the flooding of the River Thames adding to the problem.<sup>83</sup> Clearance of obstructions along the upper Loddon and a consequential increase in run-off and water flows may have added to the flooding problems around Twyford and Wargrave in Berkshire. The existence of the Loddon Drainage Association and its activities attracted no interest from the local press and there was no reporting of its meetings or work schemes along the rivers. After 1925, there was silence from the Association until 1928, the absence of correspondence suggesting that neither Berkshire County Council nor its neighbours had maintained a close interest in the Association’s affairs.

In 1928, Berkshire County Council received complaints about obstructions on the River Blackwater. Frimley Urban District Council (UDC) was aware that the river had been cleansed in 1921–1922 and there had been further works thereafter, but the river was again in need of clearance work. Frimley UDC had approached the Loddon River Association but was informed that the latter no longer possessed funds and was unable to obtain grants from the Government. Frimley UDC sought agreement to set up its own drainage scheme.<sup>84</sup>

In March 1928, Mr S Collins, the Berkshire County land agent, interviewed Owen Goddard in an attempt to ascertain the status of the Loddon Drainage Association. In summary, the organisation was moribund and without funds. Goddard did provide an overview of the works achieved and the sums expended, as listed in Table 2.<sup>85</sup> The average annual expenditure over five years was £2680 p.a., around £140,000 today, much of which would have been spent on manpower; to meet Government funding requirements, three-quarters of this effort was to be



**Illustration 1.** Owen Goddard, date unknown. Courtesy of the Finchampstead Society, *Finchampstead in Old Pictures*, (Reading, 1998), p. 23.

provided by unemployed ex-servicemen, although the data available does not permit an assessment as to whether this was achieved.<sup>86</sup> From 1925, applications for funding of employment schemes for ex-servicemen were restricted to County Agricultural Committees and the volume of funding available was capped.<sup>87</sup> This may have been a key factor in the demise of the Loddon Drainage Association as County Agricultural Committees took greater control over funding. Alongside Government funding, local authority grants kept drainage works going and the contribution of landowners does not appear to have been significant. In this sense, the landowners may have achieved their key aim and subverted the Government's intention that the beneficiary should pay. Goddard voiced the opinion to Collins that as a result of the Association's efforts the condition of the rivers was 'by no means unsatisfactory'.<sup>88</sup>

A week later, a similar interview took place with Captain Roseveare, who said that he was fully aware of the work of the Loddon Drainage Association, pointing out that as a voluntary body it



was not legally constituted as a Drainage Board; there was no impediment to a Council superseding it with a new scheme under the Land Drainage Acts 1918 and 1926. But Roseveare expressed his view that he would not favour large expenditure on the upper reaches of the Loddon and its tributaries given what had been achieved by the Association between 1922 and 1925, and not until work was done on the lower portion of the River Loddon from Twyford to Wargrave.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusions

The schedule of works undertaken at Table 2 suggests that most of the Association's activities were focused on the upper reaches of the River Loddon and on the River Blackwater, those areas where the principal landowners were located. As Clayton indicated, the River Whitewater was in reasonable condition and no works or funds were allocated to that tributary. While Goddard and Roseveare may have determined that the Association's programme of works was successful, albeit on the basis of the limited funding available, the absence of detailed records or celebration of successful outcomes makes assessment difficult.

The Ministry moved very slowly in pursuit of the County Councils' desire to establish a new Drainage Board in 1919. Given their experience with the Ouse, did they anticipate a firm response from landowners? The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries was aware of the organisation of opposition to the proposals and was clearly open to persuasion, meeting representatives of the Loddon landowners for discussions about an alternative approach. The evidence suggests that politically savvy landowners, well connected and many in local positions of authority and influence, were more than capable of organising support for their counter-proposal. Many were involved in the North West Hampshire Conservative and Unionist association; the President was the Duke of Wellington and George North was chairman of the Stratfield Saye Branch.<sup>90</sup> The local MP for Aldershot clearly assisted the Association by arranging a meeting with Ministers in January 1921.

While the Duke of Wellington may have supported the efforts of the Association, neither he nor his son provided any significant financial support. The Duke may have encouraged his land agent to take a leading role in the Loddon Drainage Association, as this would reflect well on the estate (and the Duke) and would have met the expectations of some of the other major landowners in the district. The assurance that the Duke supported the Association's efforts, with his land agent chairing the body, would have underpinned the buy-in from other landowners along the Loddon and its tributaries; in turn, their tenants would be encouraged to agree to the programme of work to clear the rivers.

The creation of the Loddon Drainage Association, under North's chairmanship, was evidence of the continuing influence of estate owners and larger landowners in rural areas in the aftermath of the Great War. While ensuring that they avoided any increase in rate payments to local Councils to fund drainage works, they did deliver the necessary clearance works, as Roseveare indicated, whilst taking full advantage of grant funding from the Ministry and local Councils. The Loddon Drainage Association may not have been very different from the plethora of local drainage schemes which emerged after the War but the absence of local controls and oversight was a factor in central Government's efforts in the late 1920s to put land drainage on a formal footing under Ministerial direction. The Land Drainage Act 1930 imposed new structures on a catchment-wide basis. Some 361 different drainage authorities were removed; the Loddon Drainage Association might have been one of them if it was still in existence, and forty-seven new Boards instituted, each having two-thirds of its membership drawn from County and Borough Councils, thereby reducing the ability of landowners to influence proceedings.<sup>91</sup> In those cases where no catchment board existed, powers were vested in County Councils to undertake drainage works, thereby further reducing the opportunities for landowners to exert influence over such improvement schemes.<sup>92</sup>



## Notes

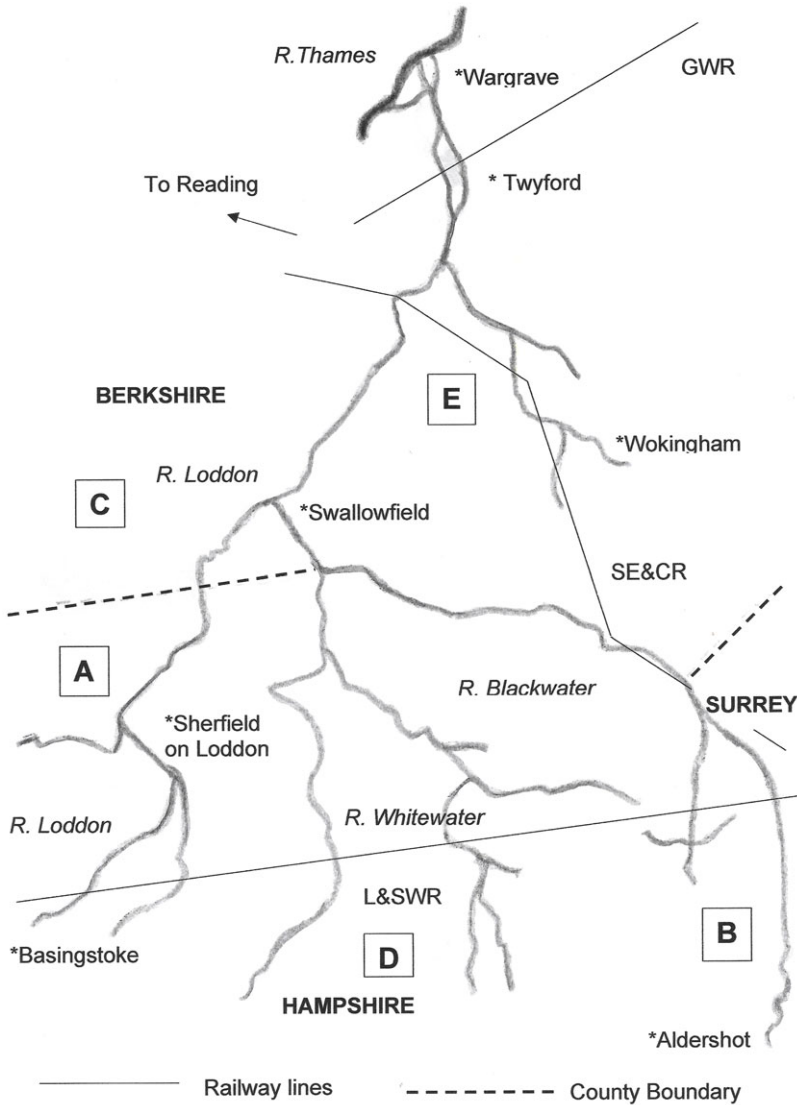
- 1 Much of the material used in this paper was found in three collections: the Wellington Archive at the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL); Berkshire County Council records in the Royal Berkshire Archive (RBA); and correspondence with Capt. Llewellyn Llewellyn, land agent to Lord Bolton, Hackwood Park, Basingstoke, in the Hampshire Records Office (HRO). The author is grateful for the assistance provided by archivists at all three locations.
- 2 Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, 1997), 243. The question of estate sales during 1918 to 1922 is examined at length in John Beckett and Michael Turner, End of the Old Order? F M L Thompson, the Land Question, and the burden of ownership in England, c1880–c1925 in the *Agricultural History Review* (AgHR), 55, 2, 2007, pp. 269–288 and F M L Thompson, The land market 1880–1925. A reappraisal reappraised, in the AgHR, 55, 2, 2007, pp. 289–300.
- 3 Benaiah Adkin, *Land Drainage in Britain* (London, 1933), p. 1.
- 4 Adkin, *Land Drainage*, p. 16. The key legislative developments between 1861 and 1930 are summarised in pp. 192–197.
- 5 Peter Dewey, *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London, 1989), p. 190.
- 6 Dewey, *British Agriculture*, p. 191. Edith Whetham, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol VIII, 1914–1939* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 126.
- 7 Whetham, *Agrarian History*, p. 126.
- 8 John Bowers, 'Interwar Land Drainage and Policy in England and Wales', AgHR, 46:I (1998), 64–80 and John Sheail, 'Arterial Drainage in interwar England: the legislative perspective', AgHR, 50:II (2002), 253–270.
- 9 Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, AgHR, p. 69.
- 10 Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, AgHR, p. 70.
- 11 Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, AgHR, pp. 71–2.
- 12 Sheail, Arterial Drainage, AgHR, p. 257.
- 13 Sheail, Arterial Drainage, AgHR, p. 257.
- 14 Sheail, Arterial Drainage, AgHR, p. 258.
- 15 Sheail, Arterial Drainage, AgHR, p. 255.
- 16 Francis Floud, *The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries* (London, 1927), p. 261; Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, AgHR, p. 68, Table 2, 'Estimated expenditure on arterial land drainage and sea defence schemes', but note in Table 1, 'Government finance to land drainage', p. 67, the sum expended on Unemployed relief schemes totalled £850,000 for 1921–1925.
- 17 Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, AgHR, p. 65.
- 18 Sheail, Arterial Drainage, AgHR, p. 254. Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, AgHR, p. 69.
- 19 T H S Escott, *England: its People, Polity and Pursuits*, Vol 1 (London, 1879), p. 57.
- 20 Geoff Monks, The Path to Professionalisation: Mechanisation and Legislation on the Welbeck Estate in Carol Beardmore, Steven King, and Geoff Monks, (eds) *The Land Agent in Britain: Past, Present and Future* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 57.
- 21 Cathal Rogers, *Land Agents and Urban Aristocratic Estates in Nineteenth Century Staffordshire: a comparison of Longton and Walsall*, unpublished PhD thesis, (Keele University, 2018), accessed on 27 November 2019, p. 301.
- 22 Penelope J Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700–1850* (London, 1995), p. 31.
- 23 Eric Richards, The Land Agent in Mingay, G E (ed). *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol 1 (London, 1981), p. 440.
- 24 Lowri Ann Rees, Ciaran Reilly and Annie Tindley, (eds), *The Land Agent 1700–1920* (Edinburgh, 2018), pp. 11–13.
- 25 George North was land agent at the Duke of Wellington's Stratfield Saye estate from 1892 to 1936. He was a founding member of the Land Agents' Society in 1901; see obituary in the *Journal of the Land Agents' Society*, (JLAS), Vol 41, 1942, p. 34.
- 26 Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, 1997), p. 243.
- 27 Mandler, *The Fall and Rise*, p. 243.
- 28 *The River Loddon and the Emm Brook*, Wokingham District Council at <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/your-community-district/countryside-service/countryside-sites/rivers>, downloaded on 24 January 2025. See also Loddon Catchment Partnership, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/4328b25bc06947889a21710cbefcca4e?item=1>.
- 29 Kevin Cahill, *Who Owns Britain*, (Edinburgh, 2001), p. 239. Drawing on John Bateman's data, Cahill estimated that Wellington owned 15,847 acres in Hampshire and Bolton owned 13,808 acres.
- 30 MERL, A187, Bundle G-H, letter from Owen Goddard to George North dated 17 November 1921.
- 31 MERL, W/1815/18, letter from the Thames Conservancy to George North, dated 5 May 1910. Farms near Bramley had been inspected and criticised for discharging liquid manure into the River Loddon. As late as 1935, tenanted farms in Stratfield Saye were found guilty of the same offence, see MERL, W/736/11, Thames Conservancy report dated 17 December 1935.
- 32 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands. Rivers Loddon, Blackwater and Whitewater and tributaries, Berkshire War Agricultural Executive Committee (WAEC) minutes dated 17 November 1917.
- 33 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, Berkshire WAEC minutes dated 18 March 1918.
- 34 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Hampshire WAEC to Berkshire WAEC dated 10 April 1918.
- 35 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, copy of Dorset and Hampshire WAEC report on a drainage scheme for the Rivers Avon and Stour, dated 5 April 1918.
- 36 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from secretary of Berkshire WAEC to Hampshire and Surrey WAEC dated 27 May 1918 and minutes of officials' meeting on 5 June 1918.
- 37 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, minutes of Drainage Inspectors meeting, 17 June 1918.

- 38 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, copy of report by C H J Clayton, Chief Engineer, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, dated 9 August 1918.
- 39 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, Clayton report, dated 9 August 1918.
- 40 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Secretary of Surrey WAEC to Berkshire WAEC dated 23 October 1918.
- 41 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to Berkshire County Council dated 5 November 1918.
- 42 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to Berkshire AEC dated 5 December 1918.
- 43 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to Berkshire AEC dated 25 June 1919 and minutes of the Berkshire AEC meeting, 1 July 1919.
- 44 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/15, Berkshire County Council, Drainage of lands, draft order for River Loddon Drainage Board, undated.
- 45 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, undated circular addressed to Llewellyn Llewellyn, land agent, Hackwood Park Estate Office. Captain Llewellyn, a former officer in the South African Police, was land agent to Lord Bolton from 1910 to 1935; see obituary in *JLAS*, Vol 34, 1935, p. 238.
- 46 In 1920 the Water Bailiff was Michael O'Brien, who had been in post since 1904, see MERL, W/1257/20 of 23 August 1904 and W/1259/15 of 8 August 1904 for O'Brien's references. From 1920 he was retained as part of Lord Douro's household and paid from his account rather than by the estate, see MERL, A483, Stratfield Saye House cash book 1918–1926, p. 63.
- 47 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Edward Ellis Morrhall, Berkshire Organising Secretary, NFU, to Llewellyn Llewellyn. Morrhall had been appointed to his post in December 1918 having spent the previous ten years on the staff of the *Sussex Daily News*; BNA, Berkshire Farmers' Union, *Reading Standard*, 21 December 1918.
- 48 MERL, A197, letter from Merlin Batting, Simmons and Sons, to George North dated 20 July 1920 and letter from George Simmons to George North dated 24 August 1920.
- 49 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Secretary of Hampshire AEC to Berkshire AEC dated 9 March 1920 and letter from Secretary of Berkshire AEC to Ministry of Agriculture dated 13 March 1920. Surrey appeared to have been forgotten and their nominee was subsequently swapped for one of the Hampshire names.
- 50 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, copy of press cutting, *Reading Mercury* dated 4 May 1920.
- 51 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Secretary of Berkshire AEC, dated 10 June 1920.
- 52 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letters from George North to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 16 and 20 July 1920.
- 53 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, undated memorandum sent to Llewellyn Llewellyn.
- 54 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Secretary of the Berkshire AEC dated 13 August 1920.
- 55 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from George North to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 26 July 1920.
- 56 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, second letter from George North to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 26 July 1920.
- 57 Wolmer did not inherit the title as Viscount Wolmer until 1941 and as the son of a peer he was eligible for election to the House of Commons; he was elected as MP for Aldershot in 1918 after serving with the Hampshire Regiment during the Great War. Biographical details from: <https://archives.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repositories/2/resources/3241>.
- 58 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from George North to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 22 December 1920.
- 59 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from George North to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 22 January 1921.
- 60 57 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14 contains a copy of the Loddon Drainage Association, Articles of Association booklet.
- 61 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, Loddon Drainage Association, Articles of Association booklet, 19.
- 62 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Owen Goddard to Association members dated May 1921. Goddard, 1877–1949, was born in Eversley, Hampshire, a few miles south of Finchampstead. As well as running the Post Office in the village, he was a Churchwarden at St James Church in Finchampstead.
- 63 BNA, Arborfield Remount Depot Recreation Hut Opened in *Reading Mercury*, 25 December 1915.
- 64 MERL, A187, Bundle G-H, 1921, letter from Goddard to North dated 26 April 1921.
- 65 MERL, A187, Bundle G-H, 1921, letters from Goddard to North dated 14 July 1921 and 15 August 1921.
- 66 MERL, A187, Bundle G-H, 1921, letter from Goddard to North dated 31 August 1921.
- 67 MERL, A187, Bundle G-H, 1921, letter from Goddard to North dated 3 September 1921.
- 68 MERL, A187, Bundle G-H, 1921, letter from Goddard to North dated 27 October 1921.
- 69 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from George North to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 11 February 1921 and from Owen Goddard to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 7 September 1921.
- 70 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Mr H Mundy, builder and contractor, Basingstoke, to Llewellyn Llewellyn dated 20 December 1922.
- 71 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Owen Goddard, Secretary of the Loddon Drainage Association to Director of Agriculture, Berkshire County Council, dated 16 November 1921.

- 72 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Director of Agriculture to Secretary of Berkshire AEC dated 23 October 1918.
- 73 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Clerk of Berkshire County Council to Ministry of Agriculture dated 6 December 1921.
- 74 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Clerk of Berkshire County Council to Ministry of Agriculture dated 20 December 1921.
- 75 MERL, A187, letter from Goddard to North dated 24 January 1922.
- 76 MERL, A187, letters from Goddard to North dated 18 February, 23 March and 11 May 1922.
- 77 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Goddard to Llewellyn dated 12 January 1924 and notes and undated memoranda related to payment ratios.
- 78 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Goddard to Llewellyn dated 2 March 1925.
- 79 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Goddard to Llewellyn dated 25 March 1926.
- 80 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Goddard to Llewellyn dated 28 April 1926.
- 81 HRO, 54 M98/E/B3/14, letter from Goddard to Llewellyn dated 10 August 1926.
- 82 MERL, A550, Stratfield Saye estate ledger 1921–1922, p. 33.
- 83 BNA, Thames Floods. A Record Year, in *The Oxford Chronicle*, 7 November 1924, p. 17; In Rural Districts, *Reading Standard*, 3 January 1925, p. 9; and River Loddon Overflows its Banks, *Reading Standard*, 21 January 1926, p. 8.
- 84 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, letter from Frimley Urban District Council to the Clerk of Berkshire County Council dated 13 February 1928.
- 85 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, copy of report dated 8 March 1928 from the Berkshire County land agent of an interview with Owen Goddard on 7 March 1928.
- 86 Comparative financial figures for 1925–2025 from [www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator).
- 87 Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, *AgHR*, p. 72.
- 88 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, copy of report dated 8 March 1928 from the Berkshire County land agent of an interview with Owen Goddard on 7 March 1928.
- 89 RBA, C/CL/G1/115/1, Drainage of lands, copy of report dated 13 March 1928, author unnamed but from context the Berkshire County land agent, of an interview with Captain John Roseveare, Chief Engineer for Land Drainage, Ministry of Agriculture.
- 90 MERL, W/645/3, letter from the North West Hampshire Conservative and Unionist Association (President, the Duke of Wellington) to George North, dated 5 October 1920.
- 91 Sheail, Arterial Drainage, *AgHR*, p. 254, 262–5.
- 92 Bowers, Interwar Land Drainage, *AgHR*, p. 69.

## Annex A

The Loddon Drainage Association operated across five areas encompassing the main river, its tributaries and drainage zones as shown in Map 1:



**Map 1.** Sketch map showing the Loddon catchment area and the five areas into which it was subdivided in 1921. *Source:* HRO, H/CL5/1a/21, Hampshire County Council Land Drainage Sub-Committee, plans, undated.

**Area A** North Hampshire, the River Loddon from its source near Basingstoke to the confluence with the Rivers Blackwater and Whitewater at Swallowfield, Berkshire, with three representatives on the management committee.

**Area B** North East Hampshire, the River Blackwater from its source near Aldershot to its confluence with the River Whitewater close to the Hampshire/Berkshire County border, with four representatives on the management committee.

**Area C** South Berkshire, from the confluence of the Rivers Blackwater and Whitewater to the confluence with the River Loddon at Swallowfield, with four representatives on the management committee.

**Area D** North Hampshire, the River Whitewater from its source near Odiham to its confluence with the River Blackwater, with three representatives on the management committee.

**Area E** Berkshire, from the confluence of the Rivers Blackwater and Whitewater with the River Loddon to Wargrave and the Thames, with six representatives on the management committee.