

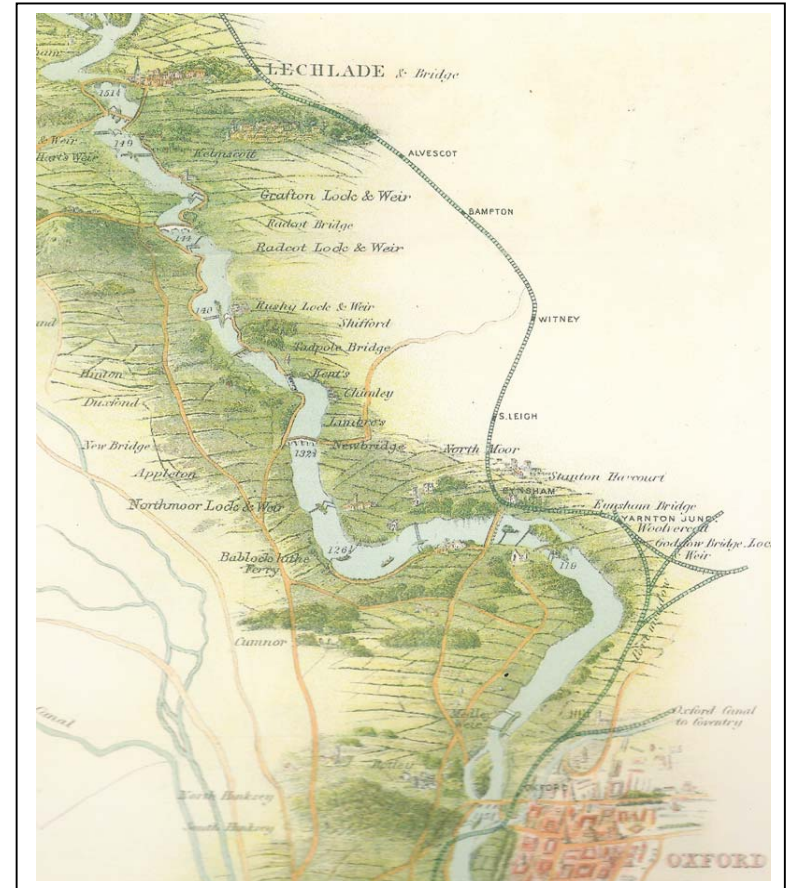
GIPSY ON THE UPPER THAMES

The Oxford Sailing Club organise an impressive ‘Sailability’ (sailing for the disabled) programme on Farmoor reservoir, but there are real difficulties in embarking and disembarking – as I discovered when wet up to my armpits trying to hold a boat steady on the sloping concrete shore of the reservoir while a wheelchair’s occupant was brought as close as possible.

Money is being raised to build a floating pontoon (details on www.pontoonproject.com), and I hope to add to this by completing a sponsored single-handed sail in my 11ft long British Moth dinghy *Gipsy* from the head of the Thames navigation above Lechlade down to Medley Sailing Club on Oxford’s Port Meadow. The distance on the water is 30 miles, and there are twelve bridges (which means twelve lowerings and raisings of my mast) and eleven locks to negotiate. I hope to complete the journey in three days. I’m going to choose a time when the weather looks favourable in late May or June.

If you would like to contribute by sponsoring me, please reply by email or post with offers per mile, per bridge or per lock, or for completing the whole trip. I will then let you know when I set off, with a rough estimate of when I’ll be where, and then (hopefully!) send a final report of adventures en route and time of arrival in Oxford.

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Above: Tombelson's Map of the Thames is not strictly to scale, but it gives a good over-view of my route

*Far left: Gipsy's launch in 2005
Left and right: Gipsy sailing on the Thames at Port Meadow*

