

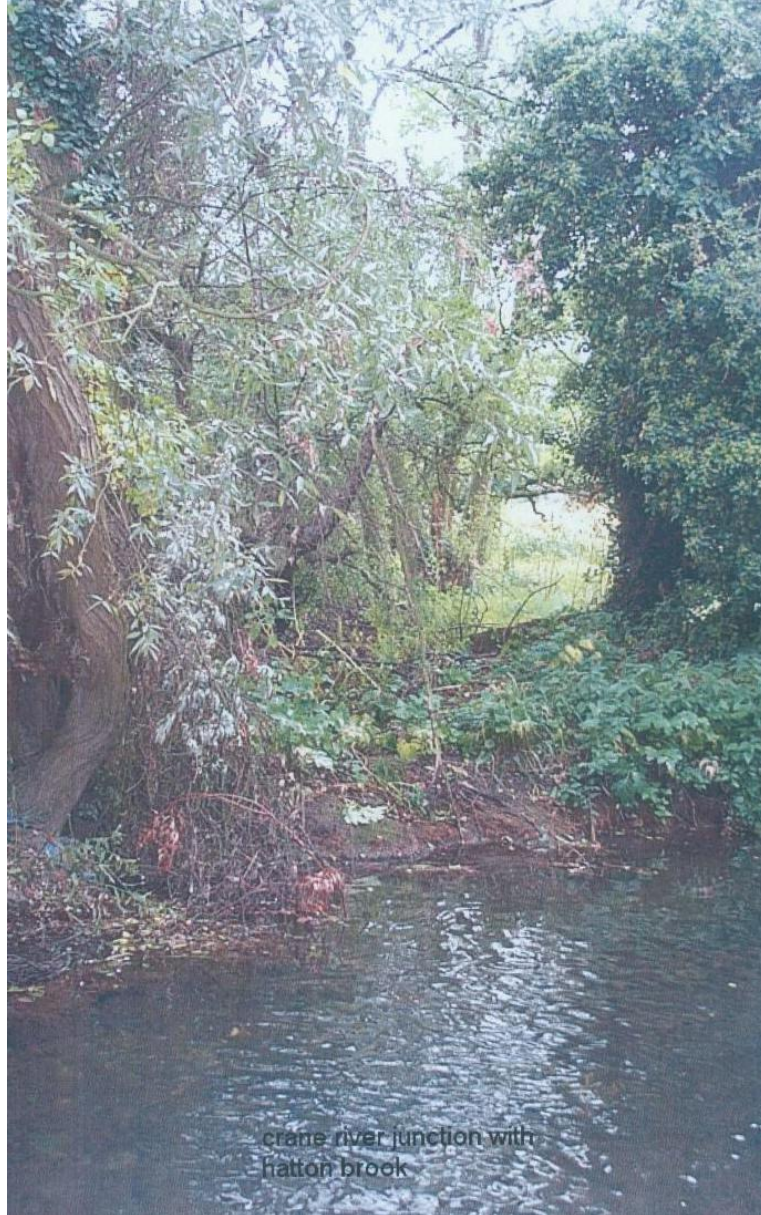
Feltham History Group

A series of articles on local places and events

Number 3

Hatton Brook

'through hatton field it once gently meandered'



Shown here (centre of frame) meeting The Crane 'devoid of water'

Water on this flat area of South-west Middlesex is never far from the surface; which in many instances result in ponds appearing which subsequently require regulation usually via a system of ditches.

Water from the fields of Hatton, draining into the brook of the same name, would have bolstered its volume in times past before the advent of surface water drains and sewers to remove it.

On Thursday 23rd September 2004 it was the intention of 3 members of Feltham History Group, Dave Turvey, Roger Cowing and I, to locate, vestiges, if any, of this once important brook.

Its point of rising appears to be a farmstead situated north of Bath Road at a place called Doghurst Covert. From there it crossed the old road to Bath near to the Magpies Public House continuing close by Kings Arbour Close and then onwards, forming as it does the Parish boundary between Harmondsworth and Hatton.

One can discern that it departs the Parish boundary 'field drain' of Harmondsworth at what could be described as the 'mid point or the central area of today's Heathrow Airport' spurring off towards Hatton Road. This Harmondsworth 'ditch' may well be the 'pseudo Danube' mentioned in my Hatton Habitat description.

However from its departure from this 'field drain' its length is short; between a mile and half. It can be traced on the 1817 Enclosure map of 'Bedfont with Hatton' from a plot of land owned by someone by the name of Graham running just south of the Dog and Partridge PH and being referred to as a 'Drain' although on Major Coleby Towers 1822 map its condition is Hatton Brook, but on the 1894 O/S Map 'west of the Pub' it is noted as being a "covered drain".



At Hatton Road, as said, it courses near to the Dog and Partridge before making a crossing and heading; again in a south- easterly direction passing behind homesteads and other buildings

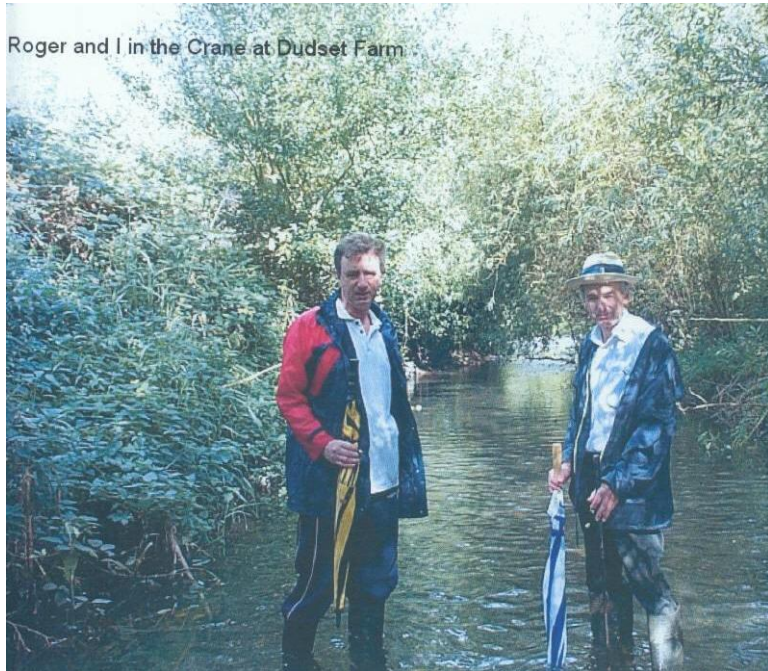
Near to Lock Lane there was a collecting pond which drew water off for a purpose that, as yet, is not clear. The water held in the pond being released again into the Brook 'proper' near to the rear of the farm before being drained eastward to the River Crane.

Today much of Hatton falls into the area now known as the Crane Valley Walk Way. Maintenance of the CVWW is shared between Hounslow, Hillingdon and Richmond Boroughs (their own respective sections)

Hounslow's job, however, is far more 'difficult' than the other two bodies given it is the neighbour, on the east side, of Heathrow Aerodrome.

Security is the difficulty and this need for such means that access to the CVWW is not continuous.

As in my description noted in 'Crane River Ramble' the experience of water wading is inevitable as the banks of the river are in many places 'wild' with vegetation.



Roger and I midstream facing south

Access to the river is denied until near to the Great Southwest Road where no less than 3 crossings are in place over the Crane, the first is a road bridge to the British Airways Perishable goods distribution centre the second is the Piccadilly Line tube 'crossing' and the third the A30.

However it is here that entry into the water [Crane] is made 'wading against the flow in the shallows we scoured the western bank for any sign of what may have been a brook. Some 150 yards from our point of entry the river, near to a large semi prostrate (4 feet above the surface) *Salix babylonica*, deepened to all of 24 inches – our way seemed barred! Deepening such as this is typical of an outfall from a tributary.

Not dissuaded, RC was of a different mind, insisting we forced our way between the Willow and a barbed wire clad post and a rail barrier, in position I would add, to prevent horses 'there were 2 grey ones' from finding their way into the water.

We clambered 'gingerly along' through the 'irritation' - one false step would have meant a change of clothing - but to our great delight Hatton Brook came in sight.

This section of the Brook being the only part visible today is some 300 yards in length - the southern edge of which is defined via hedgerow of black thorn and bramble plus an Oak or two together with Willow, Alder and various other small trees making for a truly undomesticated landscape.

Hatton Brook appears from under the Eastern Perimeter Road and although looking little more than a field ditch its boggy bottom is evidence of its still indispensable importance.



(Hatton Brook emerging from Heathrow Aerodrome 2004)

Here, as can be seen, it has a fascia of red engineering brick and measures some of 8 feet across and 3feet 6inches in depth encasing a pipe which has an aperture of some 24 inches.

It was discussed to make another visit following particularly periods of persistent pluvial activity just to witness its once obvious requirement.

In the middle of this field is a small culvert purposely placed to enable, the aforementioned horses, a point of crossing between fields?



(mid field culvert of Hatton Brook)

Although today many of the features shown on Ordnance Survey maps may be hidden away in dangerous, difficult and/or private locations it is well worth the effort to observe them.

Alan Rice
Honorary Secretary