

## History of the Court Mill Chalk Stream

This chalk stream is as old as the hills! It has been modified by man over many years especially latterly, though over the last 70 years it has been left much to its own resources.

It has at least 4 if not 5 small springs, up to 50 metres below the main source at the base and head of the Gyll. Something of interest to many chalk stream experts is whether or not there is a Travertine deposit (a calcium carbonate sediment from an original hot spring) at its source and it does not.

The first mention found is in records held at the Kew Records office in the Court Rolls of 1461-62' in Latin and translated by David Thompson at the Steyning Museum. It talks of two water mills in the area. An East Mill probably that at Gatewick called the Gatewick Mill and which in the Middle Ages had a miller named John Patching. A West Mill – Court Mill fed by Fullers Brook. Fulling, was a process in cloth making where after oil, dirt and impurities are removed the cloth is hammered to thicken it and make it more water resistant. Water mills were constructed to generate the hammer effect and called Water or Fulling Mills. Fullers Earth is a naturally occurring material, hydrous aluminium silicate, high in magnesium oxide and used in the initial cloth making process to remove the oils, dirt and impurities in the wool. This process came from Persia to Europe with the Crusaders on their return from the Holy Land.

The first map recorded belonging to the Wiston Archive and held at the Chichester Records Office Ms5591 (?? room1 shelf 5G) is of 1639 by a cartographer Biggs.[See first three maps in attachment, the latter is enlarged] The map quality is poor but shows the High Street going straight into Mouse Lane and onto Wiston House. Charlton Court, with the Horsham Road passing along its SW entrance, off Mouse Lane (presumably where the public footpath is today.) Also a track to Mouse Lane across what is now the Mill Field (also now a public footpath.) At the bottom of this map there is an area lined with trees which is where the Chalk Stream is. There is no detail.

Map 4 in the attachment is undated but before the Rifle Range was established. The Horsham road has been redirected to its present situation. No information on the Ponds and Chalk Stream.

A map of 1825 (Wiston Archive 5622) Map 5&6 on attachment,(which are contiguous) shows Coxham Lane entering onto the “New Horsham Road” built when???? between 1639 and 1825. On this map the Volunteer Rifle Range is well demarcated with its firing distances well defined and including the rifle butts.

- They show
- a) the crossing immediately below Court Mill, going to the track across Mill Field.
  - b) the existing weir to the Court Mill Pond
  - c) the long narrow pond feeding to the weir with a “neck” 2/3rds of the way up from this.
  - d) a crossing where the Dam is and a totally wooded area above this to the source.

A map of 1875 (Sheet L1. 11)Map 7 on attachment, larger than that of 1825 does not show any differences.

An Ordinance Survey Map map of 1932, Map 8 on attachment and 1961 do not reveal any further information.

In 1886 a Thomas Brown paid rent to Wiston Estate of £75 a year for Court Mill.

From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the stream (Fullers Brook) supplied the Tannery of Tanyards Lane. Also of curiosity at the eastern side of The Star pub where the stream flows towards Tanyards Lane is a “drain” hole which, as well as helping to drain flood waters, was put there to allow steam lorries to draw up cooling water through a flexible hose pipe.