

# You are crossing...

## The Swalecliffe Brook

The source of the Swalecliffe Brook lies south of the village of Dunkirk, near the A2. From here it flows north-east for just over 8.5 miles, and enters the Thames Estuary at Long Rock, about a quarter of a mile from this panel.

Having passed under the A2, the Swalecliffe Brook follows the western boundary of a woodland with a unique history: Bossenden Wood was the site of the last battle on English soil, in 1838. It then enters the Denstroude area, which also has a dark past. Historically it was little farmed because people suffering from the Black Death were banished here. Much later, in the late 17th century, it became settled by Huguenots escaping persecution in France, as evidenced by Huguenot Farm, which still exists today.



The Brook in woods near Chestfield

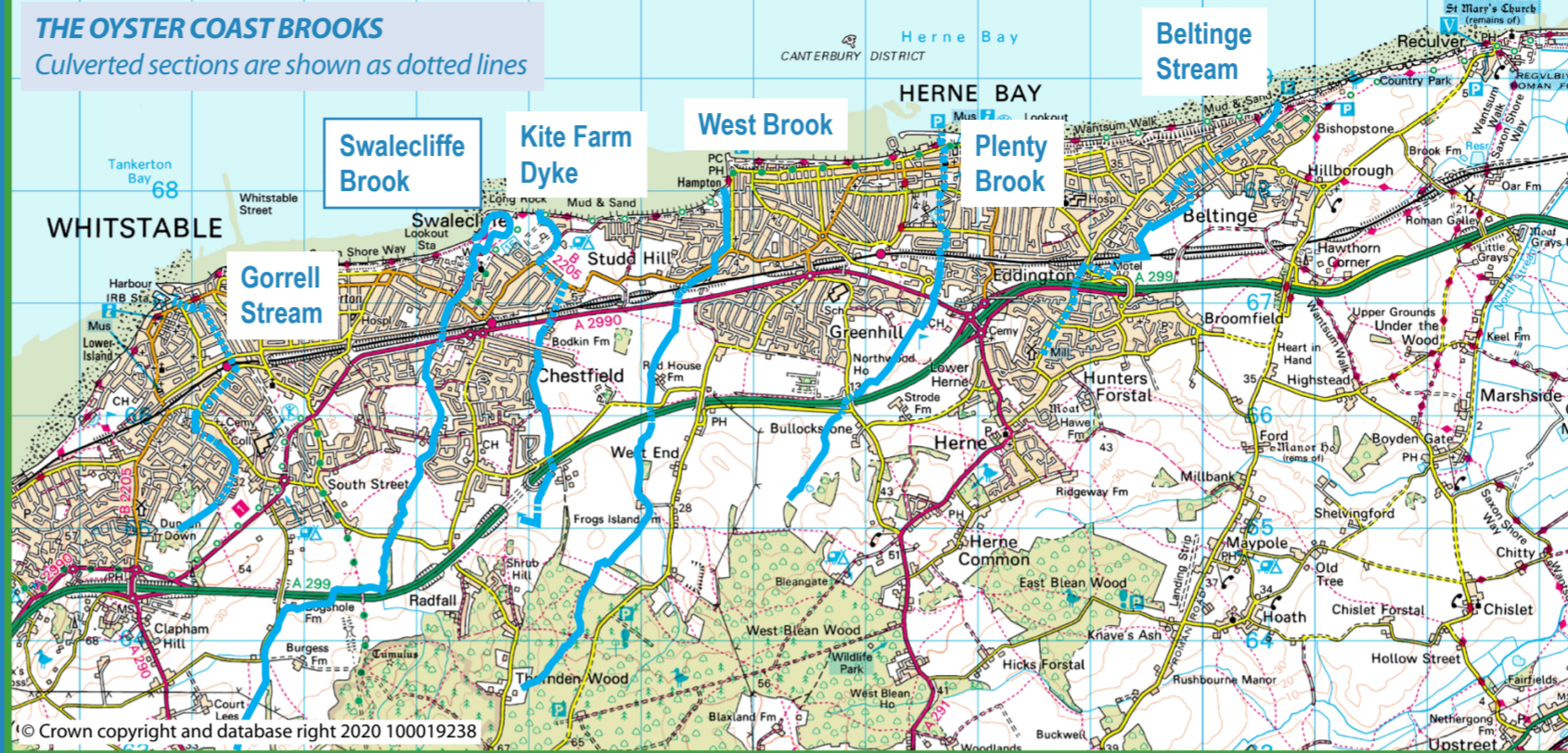
North of Clowes Wood, the Brook encounters another piece of history - the route of the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (nicknamed the Crab and Winkle Line), the world's first regular passenger steam railway, now a popular walking and cycling route.

As the Brook leaves the ancient woodland of its upper catchment and nears Whitstable, human activity starts to impact on it. The A299 Thanet Way generates considerable run-off, affecting its water quality. After South Street, the river assumes urban qualities. It suffers from misconnections, litter and 'river corridor squeeze' – urban development coming right up to its banks. The John Wilson Business Park generates industrial runoff and the Swalecliffe Wastewater Treatment works discharges into the river.



Swalecliffe Brook at Long Rock

Having made it through this built up area, the Brook finally reaches the open space and coastal habitats of Long Rock, where it flows into the Thames Estuary. Long Rock is a valuable site, protected by law (see section to the right for more).



## The Oyster Coast Brooks

The Oyster Coast Brooks is a collective name given to the small rivers that flow into the Thames Estuary between Seasalter and Reculver. Their name comes from the long history of oyster production for which this area is still known.

This is quite a built-up coastline, so all the Brooks flow partly through towns. As these towns have expanded, some of the rivers have been encased in underground 'culverts'. Both the Gorrell Stream and the Plenty Brook flow unseen for long stretches under streets and pavements. Even where they are not underground, they often flow in hidden, hard to access channels. People are often unaware of their existence.

### Long Rock - internationally important for wildlife

Long Rock is a very important place for nature. It has four major conservation designations and is protected by UK and European law, as part of larger conservation areas that also include the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay.

Scarce and declining birds like the ringed plover have bred here, while other species like the brent goose feed and rest on migration. The shingle beach and grassland support specialised insects and unusual plants such as the rare hog's fennel. The Swalecliffe Brook passes through Long Rock and here is home to

But these hidden rivers need our help – there are problems with low water levels and pollution from a number of sources. The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership is working with landowners and partner organisations on these issues, but there are also things that local people can do.

### How you can help

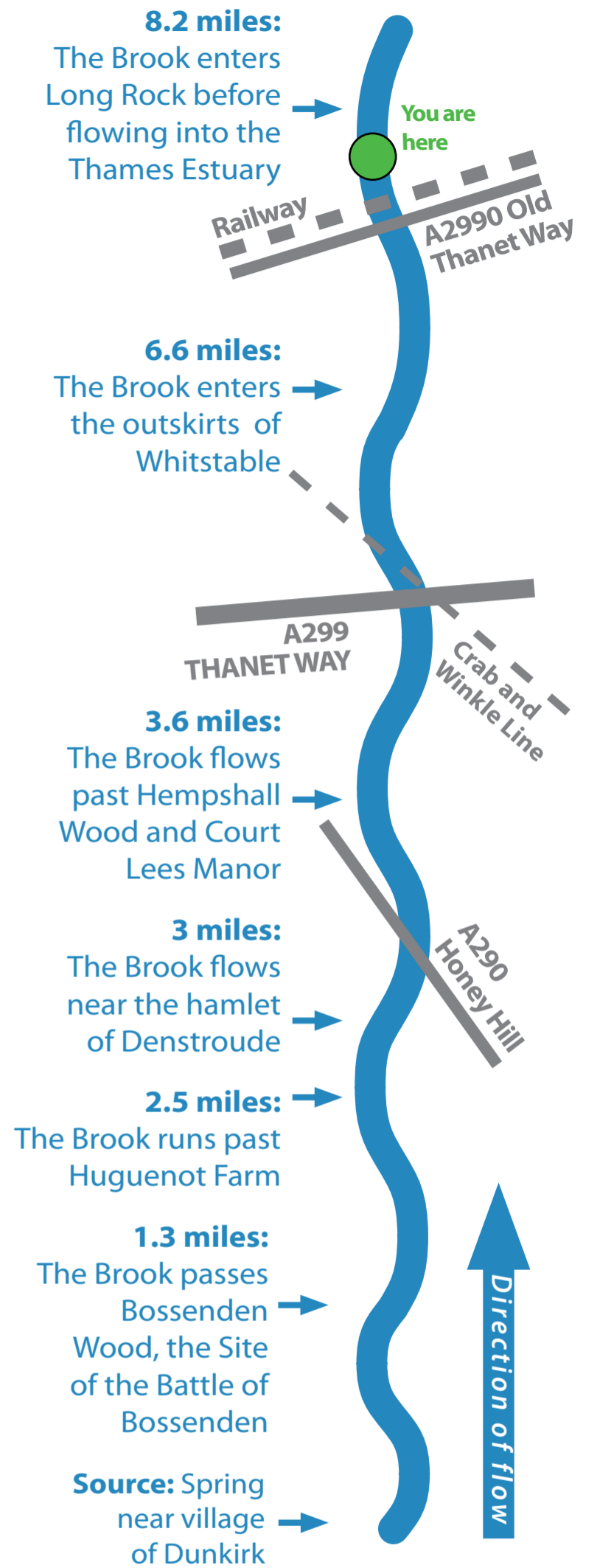
- Use less water – our domestic water comes from the same sources that feed the Oyster Coast Brooks.
- Check your plumbing – make sure water from your bathroom and kitchen goes into the wastewater and not the surface water drain.
- Volunteer – join the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership in looking after rivers.



Water vole

a population of water vole, one of our fastest declining mammals.

All of this wildlife is sensitive to disturbance from people and dogs. We ask all visitors to long rock to keep to footpaths, stay off the beach and keep dogs under close control.



Find more information and download a leaflet about the Stour Catchment from our website [www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)  
Thanks to Simon Huston for his work on text.



To report pollution: Environment Agency hotline - 0800 807060

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