

You are crossing...

The Whitehall Dyke

The Whitehall Dyke rises in woodland to the west of Canterbury. Historically, it was known as a strongly 'chalybeate' water - this word describes springs containing mineral salts of iron, said to be beneficial to health.

The stream flows through a wooded landscape with small clearings mainly used for orchards and hop gardens, for which some water is abstracted. Water quality is affected by pollution and low flows while ponds and other structures restrict fish movement.

It passes north of Bigbury Hill - an Iron Age fort said to have been the site of a battle recorded by Julius Caesar in 55BC.

Having flowed under the A2, the stream passes Kent College, once the home of the renowned Victorian artist Thomas Sidney Cooper, before reaching its confluence with the Great Stour at Hambrook Marshes.



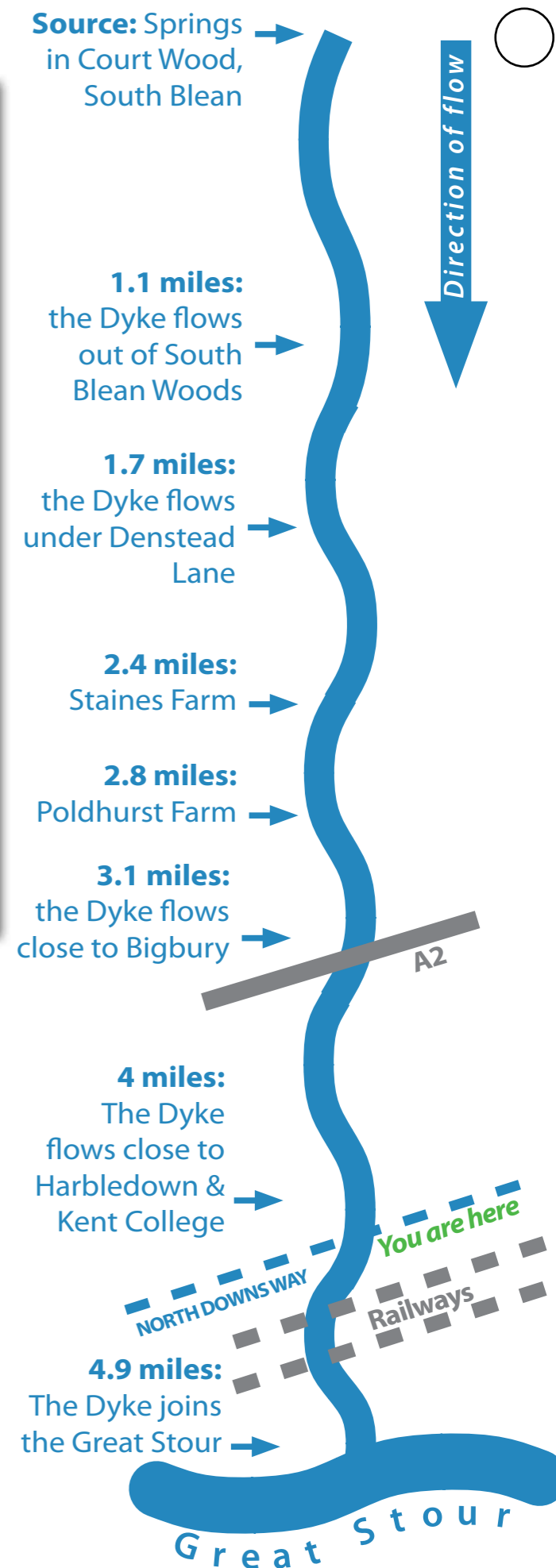
Bigbury



A 'chalybeate' stream with its rusty-coloured water



The Whitehall Dyke flows through South Blean Woods



Chalybeate Springs - Waters for Health

These mineral springs, known also as 'ferruginous waters', contain salts of iron. Since the early 17th century, they have been renowned for their health giving properties. Probably the most famous chalybeate spring in Kent was discovered at Tunbridge Wells in 1606. An entire town grew around its popularity! The spring was said to contain "vitriol" which could cure:

"the colic, the melancholy, and the vapours; it made the lean fat, the fat lean; it killed flat worms in the belly, loosened the clammy humours of the body, and dried the over-moist brain."

Thanks to Simon Houstoun for his work on the text. Find more information and download a leaflet about the Stour Catchment from our website www.kentishstour.org.uk



To report pollution:
Environment Agency hotline - 0800 807060