

You are crossing...

The Wingham River

The Wingham River rises near the village of Ash, starting life as a modest ditch in a field. It flows west for 6 miles to join the Little Stour at Wenderton Hoath.

From its beginnings near Ash, the river flows past Poulton, under Durlock Bridge, then past Great Pedding, Beaute and Brook Farms – a landscape of rich soils and intensive agriculture. It is joined by the Dambridge Stream, a tributary which now flows only periodically.

It then reaches Wingham, flowing under the bridge you are standing on. This is the most pleasant stretch of the river, with a gravelly bottom and good habitat for wildlife. Just west of the village, another tributary, fed by springs at Wingham Well, swells the waters.

Thanks to Simon Houstoun for his work on this text.

Beyond this point the river's journey takes on a more marshland character. The names of features like Port Rill, Snake Island and the Isle of Rhee hint at a time when the river was a wide, navigable inlet off the Wantsum (the sea channel that separated Kent from the Isle of Thanet) and Wingham was an important port.

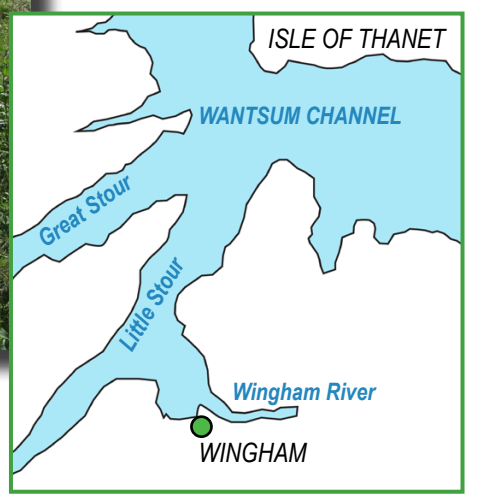


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Wingham River near Dambridge Farm



The confluence of the Wingham River and Little Stour



In Roman times, the Wingham River was a navigable inlet off the Wantsum Channel

A river under pressure

The Wingham River is affected by many of the issues that impact on rivers today. Abstraction of water for domestic and agricultural use leads to low flows. It runs through an area of intensive farming, so suffers from agricultural pollution. A sewage works discharges into the river near Dambridge. In the past the river has been damaged by dredging, that changed its natural shape and removed wildlife habitat.

This is a lot for one small river to deal with! But now a partnership of organisations, including the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership, is working to address these problems. This has started with physical improvements to restore more natural flows.

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