

TWO MILE BROOK, BURNHAM, BUCKS.

Version 2, 21st July 2024

There are two tributaries of the Thames in the western half of Slough, and these notes concern the more **western** of these two rivers, the one which flows from Burnham Beeches past Britwell and Cippenham into the Thames near Eton. On its way it passes by four protected nature reserves - Burnham Beeches, Cocksherd Wood, Lynch Hill Valley and Haymill Valley. These notes are by no means authoritative but do record what local people have always believed and experienced. Undoubtedly the Environment Agency has much greater technical knowledge. This river is historically recorded with the name **Two Mile Brook**. When the parish boundaries were devised in medieval times each parish in this locality had access to the Thames as well as access to high ground and to the major length of a tributary river. It appears that Burnham Parish's tributary river was Two Mile Brook.

I have added notes about the scale of the flooding issues in RED. I am worried I may have suggested a worse problem than is the case. The flooding is more a nuisance than a threat.

The notes below are referenced to the location letters marked on the first of the attached maps.

A - The Project Sponge map shows the river rising north of Burnham Beeches. It is presumably a Chiltern chalk 'misbourne'. The OS shows the source at (SU 5361 5671 , *OS 495361,185671*).

B - It then surfaces in two lakes within Burnham Beeches. Burnham Beeches is owned and managed by the Corporation of the City of London.

C- It is next apparent at Swilley Pond, just south of Burnham Beeches. Until about 1980 Swilley Pond was usually full of water but since then it is more usually dry, only filling during exceptionally wet weather.

D - The water then continues flowing through the chalk, as well as down Walton Lane, to Cocksherd Wood. Cocksherd Wood is a statutory nature reserve and is owned by Slough Borough Council and managed informally by Evergreen 2000 Trust. This area is subject to fairly regular minor road flooding and in 2001 and in 2024 the wood itself was

subjected to partial flooding which closed one of the footpaths. I believe that, after the 2001 flood, improvements were made to the drainage.

DOVE HOUSE CRESCENT : The first indication of a problem at the eastern, lowest end of Dove House Crescent was in 2001 when the gardens at numbers 1 and 3 were 10cm under water, though the house structures were not affected. Slough Council discovered and cleared a blockage in the surface water culvert and since then there has been no obvious potential for gardens or houses to flood. On the other hand the road at the bend at the eastern end of Dove House Crescent floods to about 20cm about twelve times a year. This is exacerbated by silt washed down from the land to the north. Locals routinely shift the silt to let the water quickly drain. Slough Borough Council now seem to have started doing gulley-emptying on these road surface drains.

COCKSHERD WOOD : As for the adjacent Cocksherd Wood, a small part of this wood flooded to about 30cm in 2001 and again in 2024 after unusually heavy rain. On both occasions the essential pedestrian route through the woods was blocked requiring a lengthy detour. The flooding remained for about a month in each of these two cases..

E - Lynch Hill Valley and Lammas Meadow are owned by Slough Council and managed informally by Evergreen 2000 Trust. The river is here confined to an underground culvert which carries the water below Lynch Hill Valley and Lammas Meadow. Occasionally a small area of Lynch Hill Valley near Long Furlong Drive floods and becomes an unlikely host to ducks.

F - The culvert now opens into Haymill Valley. Haymill Valley is a statutory nature reserve owned by Slough Council and leased to Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. It has an nationally important reed bed habitat.

G - Next there is some land owned by the Environment Agency where there is a modern flood control system. Nearby is a small dam, built by volunteers, intended to keep Haymill Valley partially flooded. Nearby also is the site of Ay (or Ash) Mill which in Victorian times operated a water mill using Two Mile Brook's water flow.

H- The water is now again passed into an underground culvert as it passes under the Network Rail tracks and emerges in Cippenham Village as a series of open, narrow road-side streams.

Finally the water drains into the Thames somewhere near Eton.

Additional observations :

J - Surface water from Slough Trading Estate is passed through a modern control installation to drain into the Two Mile Brook at Haymill.

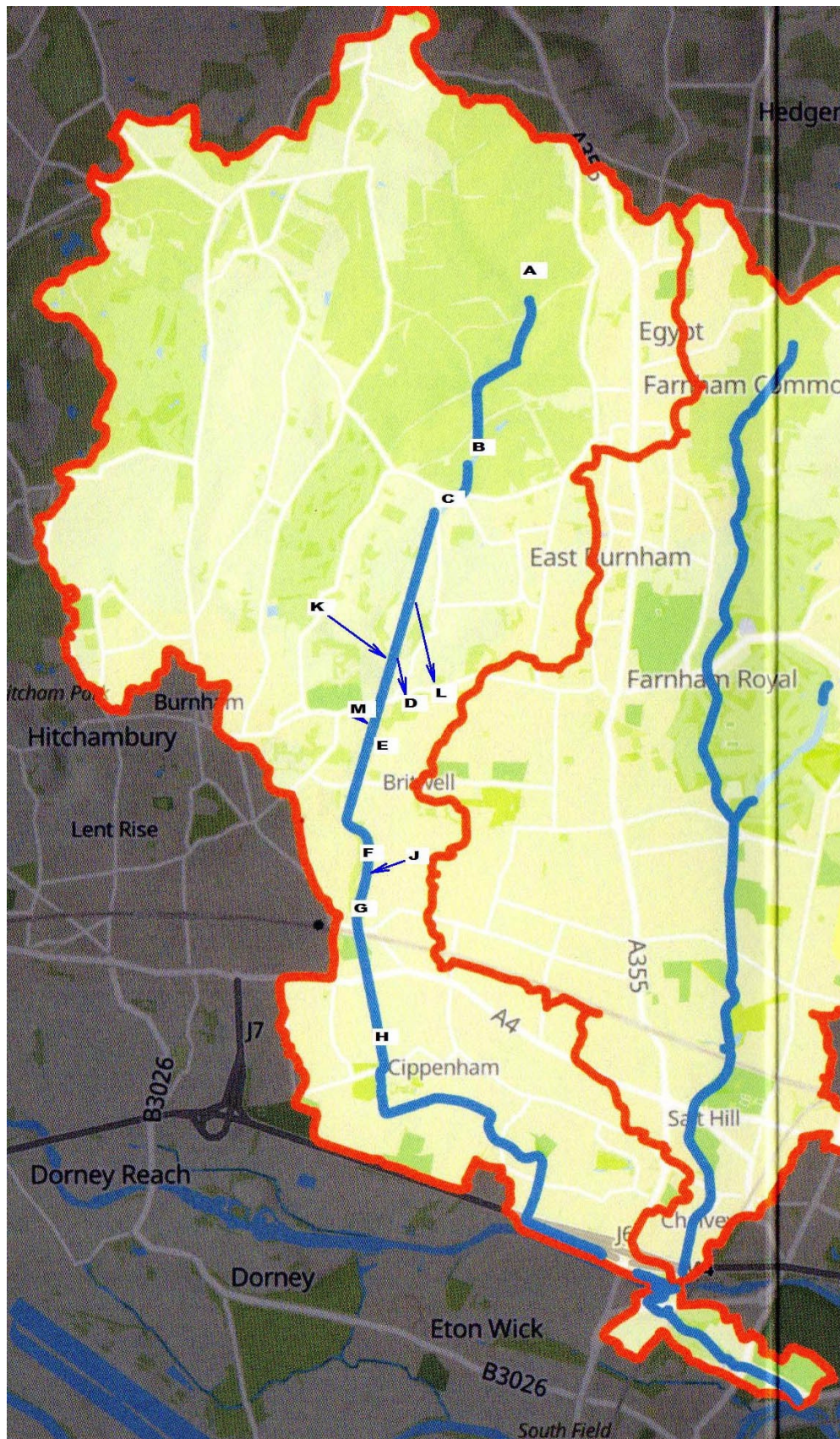
K - I believe that traditionally Two Mile Brook was held to have its source at Cant's Hill near the present Burnham Beeches Hotel (Grove House), Burnham Beeches at that time being disregarded as a source.

L - Water tends to diverge towards point L on Farnham Lane, near the eastern extent of Cocksherd Wood, where it regularly causes serious road flooding which the authorities seem unable to cure. Every time there is heavy rain, perhaps twelve times a year the road surface at this location on Farham Lane is covered with water, about 30cm deep on the north side and tapering to 5 cm deep on the south side. During rush hour the heavy traffic in each direction alternates so that both directions can use the south side of the road This causes delays, but local drivers are so used to this flooding they just adapt so every-one can pass safely. The problem is exacerbated by silt being washed down the footpath to the immediate north which habitually blocks the drains. Locals clear the silt once traffic and rain have subsided. Farnham Lane is jointly managed by Slough Borough Council and Tranport for Buckinghamshre. One is responsible for maintenance and one for any major rebuild, though no-one seems quite sure which is which.

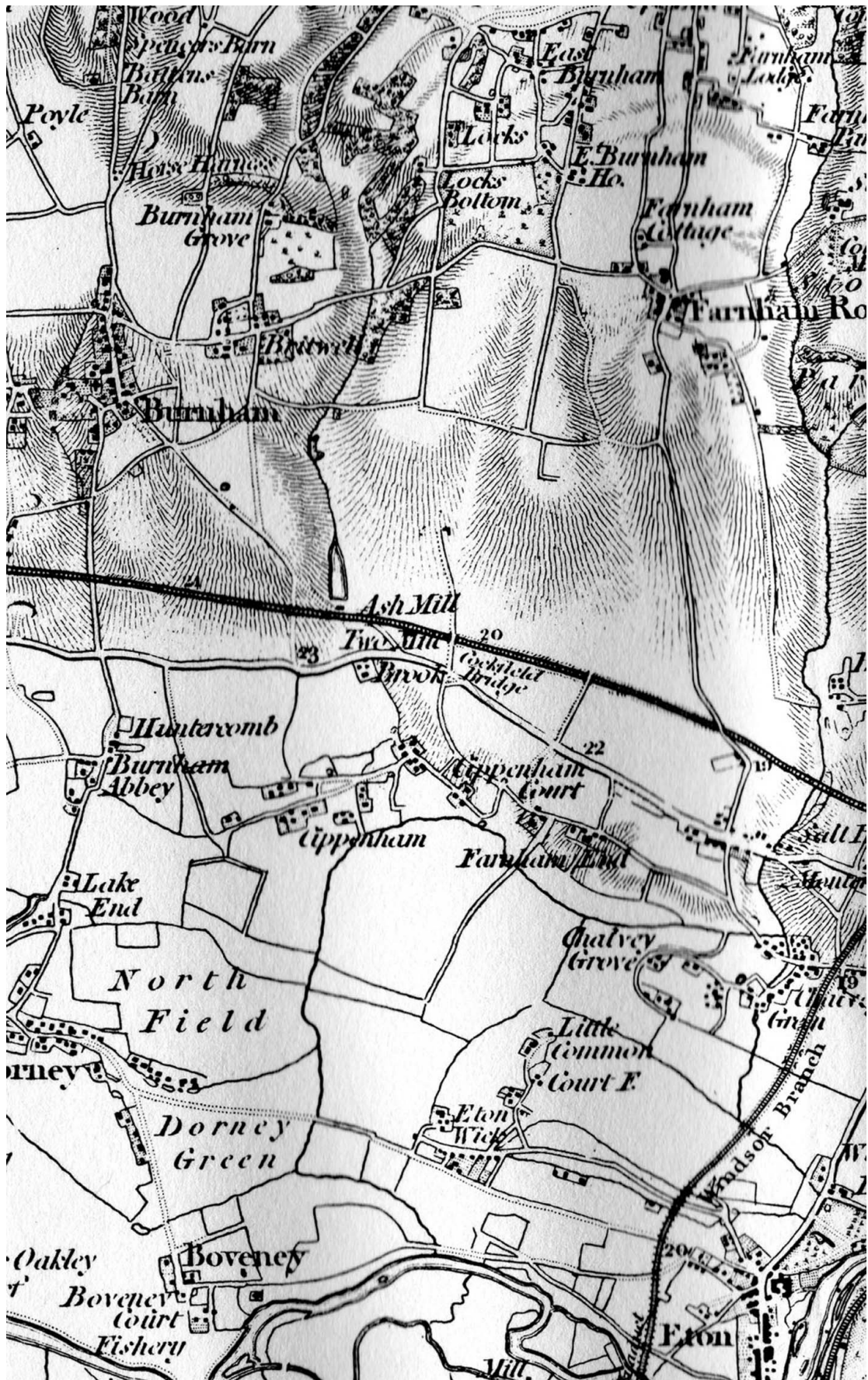
M - The houses in Dove House Crescent and Lynch Hill Lane, as well as a Pocket Park, have surface water drainage which I suspect drains into Two Mile Brook.

In the following maps I recognise the copyright of Project Sponge, the Environment Agency and the Ordnance Survey.

Alan Woodley
Evergreen 2000 Trust



PROJECT SPONGE MAP 2024



OS MAP OF 1891



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FLOOD MAP 2024