

# THE CAUNDLE - MOLESEY'S FOURTH RIVER

By Brian Smith

During 2008 and 2009 Brian Smith, Roger and Jenni Haile, and Claire Annable – all members of the Waterways Group of the Molesey Local History Society - carried out some research into the River Caundle. Presentations were made at the Waterways Group meeting and at the Society's Annual General Meeting in 2009.

## Introduction

The Caundle could be regarded as Molesey's fourth river but, as it is less than 2 miles long, "stream" is perhaps a better description. The Caundle used to flow along the south side of Walton Road but the water flowing in the stream was diverted to the main drainage system when the area south of Walton Road was built upon and the stream bed has either been culverted or forms part of back gardens in the properties along Walton Road.

## The course of the Caundle

The Caundle can be seen on the large scale (6") Ordnance Survey map of 1868 when it was still an open stream.

The map clearly shows the course of the stream from its source in Molesey Priory to where it joins the Mole near the Bridge Road (now Esher Road) bridge although it is a little unclear around the pond at the junction of Church and Matham Roads.

The map shows many landmarks familiar to us today – the Europa pub, St Mary's Church and several of the roads to the north of Walton Road.

There is however, in 1868, no major development south of Walton Road – Seymour, Spencer and Beauchamp Roads, for example, do not yet exist.

Rookery Alley– now called Spring Gardens is shown to the south of Walton Road

A similar large scale map of 1898 shows much more development and the gradual filling-in/culverting of the Caundle, and in the 1928 edition only a very small length in Clinton Road had not been culverted or covered, apart from the last 100 yards or so before it flows into the Mole.

The geology of this area is of glacial gravel overlaying impermeable clay. The water table is thus very near the surface and after heavy rain or the overflowing of the River Mole many small springs and pools would have appeared. The Caundle seems to have been the main stream which drained this surface water naturally, and smaller, often intermittent, streams fed into it.

The source was probably a pond (Monks Pool) in the grounds of Molesey Priory (now the football ground). The stream then flowed in a N-E direction, near to the present Lord Hotham pub. It then veered to the S-E and flowed along the southern side of Walton Road until there was a change of course to the east of the present Seymour Road. This "kink" seems to be at the bend at the entrance to Clinton Avenue.

After a short distance the stream joined a pond located at the rear of Kent's, the chemist, where it was joined by a drainage stream flowing north from the Mole along the gardens on the eastern side of Spencer Road.

Continuing on its S-E course the Caundle joined another pond (the Causeway or Causey pond) situated near the junction of Church and Matham roads. It then flowed behind the New Inn and the parade of shops, passing to the north of Matham Manor, to the rear of Walton Road Garage and the

shops there, and finally entered the Mole a few yards upstream of the Esher Road bridge over the Mole.

At the eastern edge of the Causeway pond was Cassey Bridge which carried vehicular traffic to the fords across the Mole (Tanners Ford) and the Ember.

In 1868 the Caundle was an open stream, except for the pond near the Church which had been filled in earlier, but was culverted and filled in during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as the area south of Walton Road was developed and the surface water previously carried by the stream was diverted to the main drainage system along Walton Road.

Only the last 100 yards or so, from No. 26 Walton Road, is still open. The bed can be seen in the garden of No. 20. The confluence with the Mole is in the garden of No. 4. The occupants say that apart from surface water there is no stream there now, but the banks and bed remain.

When the New Inn was being converted to flats recently the builders uncovered the culvert and old stream bed and started to use this to dump building rubbish but they were instructed to remove this and keep the old bed open by the Environment Agency.

### **The Caundle – What’s in a name?**

The name “Caundle” has been seen on an old map and it is used in a couple of articles produced after the 1968 floods by Michael Harrison.

Walton Road used to be called “Candle Lane”. One suggestion (Berry) is that this is named after the candle factory in West Molesey but as this factory was not established until 1845 and Walton Road appears as a name on the 1868 map this is unlikely

A more likely explanation (Baker) is that “candle” is a corruption of the Middle English word “cangle” meaning a natural boundary (e.g. a stream or a hedge). It is suggested that this “cangle” could have formed the boundary between the manors of Molesey Matham and Molesey Prior.

The language shift from “cangle” to “candle” to “caundle” does seem a likely progression - after all Molesey has had a number of different spellings and there are still people who address letters to us in Moseley!!

Alternative names have been the “Black River” or “Dead River” – probably referring to the discolouration of the water by rotting vegetation.

In the 1974 map of the “Bridge Road Conservation Area” it is called a “drain”. I prefer Caundle.

Note: there is a River Caundle in Dorset but enquiries of the records office in Dorchester indicate that the meaning behind the name is not known there either.

### Cassey Bridge

There was once a road called the “Causeway”, leading from Walton Road, fording the Caundle, then leading up to the Bell Inn and the fords crossing the Mole and Ember, and this may also be a source for the name Cassey (Causey.....Causeway) Bridge which later crossed the Caundle near to Matham Manor.

There is a sketch (Baker – Book of Molesey p26.) that shows Walton Road looking east towards the New Inn. The line of willow trees marks the course of a waterway – the Caundle or, possibly, the pond near to the present Kent’s Chemists. It seems that the artist probably drew this whilst standing on or near the north corner of Manor Road. The barns of Manor Farm are shown on the left hand side. The Church of St Mary’s would seem to be in the correct location from such a view point. The building with

the 4 windows in the centre of the drawing is probably the New Inn and the bridge in the foreground crossing the Caundle would appear to be Cassey Bridge.

There is another picture of Cassey Bridge, drawn by E. Potterton in 1927, although the bridge was long gone by then. This picture appears on the front cover of the 'Short History of Molesey' by Rowland Baker.

### **Matham Manor and the Caundle**

In 1964 Michael Harrison carried out an archaeological "dig" in the grounds of Matham Manor. This summary is based on the report he produced a few years later for the Esher Local History Society. It is well worth reading.

In the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century the Caundle was a sizeable stream (at Matham Manor) – some 3 feet wide and 18 inches deep. This may well have been because of the increased flow from the channel that joined the Caundle at the "Kent" pond.

The bed of the stream was found to be some 8 feet below current surface levels and there was evidence that over the centuries the stream had moved northward because of rubbish tipping from the Manor. A number of artefacts were found in these "tippings".

Before the construction of Teddington Lock the Caundle was tidal and affected by the "backing up" of water flowing down the Mole into the tidal Thames.

There is evidence that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century a channel was built from the Caundle southward to the Manor and a landing stage was built. Cooking utensils were found in the investigations. It is also possible that this channel was a source of clean water for the house as a deeper hole dug in the culvert led to a bubbling up of clear water.

This channel tended to fill up with sediment very quickly but it is likely that the owner was able to get to the Thames and Hampton Court etc by boat from his property.

Berry reported that he recalled being told by a schoolteacher when he was a boy that a small boat had been uncovered during construction of houses in the area.

[Note the "St Marys Road" pond" could well have absorbed the extra water flowing up the Caundle during high tides and the back up of the Mole thereby stopping the rise in water level moving further west along the stream]

### **Sources**

Rowland Baker      The Book of Molesey

Rowland Baker      A Dictionary of Local History (E & W Molesey)

Rowland Baker      A Short History of Molesey

Michael Harrison    East Molesey – Some Historical & Archaeological Notes on the History of the Village

A.M.Berry            Some Reminiscences of Molesey & A Potted History of Molesey

Ordnance Survey maps – 1868 and 1896 – 6" and 25" to the mile

**Brian Smith - 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011**