

A Spring at Seething Wells?

By Steve Hill

It is reasonable to assume that Seething Wells might have got its name from a spring at that location, but the exact location of such a spring is not known.

“Old Kingston” by Ayliffe [Ref. S1.900.AYL] in the Kingston Local History Room refers to the original Fox and Hounds pub which was on the opposite side of the road to today's Fox and Hounds pub, i.e. on the river side of Portsmouth Road [page 36]. He says:

“At the end of the old Fox and Hounds stood a very ivy-covered well-house which contained the original well and spring which became so famous as 'Seething Wells' ”.

Reference is made to an old Roman wall.

In the book “Surbiton 32 Years of Local Self Government” by Rowley W.C. Richardson [Ref. Richardson S2(900) 1888] page 16, he says:

“According to Biden, the springs at Seething Wells were considered in the last century (*i.e. in the 1700's*) very valuable and the waters in much repute for their medicinal properties... The exact position of the seething well is not *clearly* marked on any map or plan available. On the plan attached to the award of the Surbiton Common Enclosure Commissioners, in 1838, it is shown on the river side of Portsmouth Road, within but nearly at the boundary of Kingston parish (*i.e. in Surbiton*), **on part of the land containing the Chelsea filters**. In the survey made in 1848, for the Lambeth Company, there is a “spring” marked a little further on the same road, but in Ditton parish, with a small stream running down to the river. The latter may probably be more correctly called the “Seething Well.”

The “small stream running down to the river” mentioned above may be the River Rytte which now enters the Thames via Ferry Road in Thames Ditton.

The 1880 map in the Kingston Local History Room has the text “Roman Remains found here” on the third filter bed from Kingston. Perhaps the Romans wanted to be near to the spring.

The 1880 map shows the label “Seething Wells” on the Kingston side of Brighton Road directly opposite the third filter bed from Kingston as does the 1871 map, and 1920 map, and 1932 map, and 1956 O.S. Map, and 1968 O.S. map.

What Are We To Make of This?

Given the above it seems that the most likely location of the spring at Seething is under the third filter bed from Kingston.

What Else Can We Do?

Perhaps the third filter bed from Kingston is worth examining by ground-penetrating radar to detect an underground stream, e.g. see:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ground-penetrating_radar],

... and/or by thermal imaging to detect heat from a spring, e.g. see:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thermal_imaging_camera]