

TWICKENHAM

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

6. Teddington

Radnor Gardens



Strawberry Hill

Pope's Grotto

Swan Island

Young Thames Mariners

Fembroke Lodge Vista

TEDDINGTON

Ham Lands

nor
k
reation
und

Tough's Boatyard

Teddington Lock

Teddington Footbridge

St Alban's Church

TV Studios

Lensbury Club

Teddington Weir

Vista lines



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



The obelisk marking the boundary between the PLA and NRA jurisdictions

The Teddington Reach is characterised by boatyards and river works interspersed with housing, opposite the wild open space of Ham Lands.

Downstream from **Teddington Weir** the Thames is tidal. Lock works, slipways, docked vessels and boatyards bring the reach alive. The turbulent pool beneath the weirs contrasts with the calmness of the lock where the still water is manipulated from the manicured lawns of the lock-keeper's cottage.

The Weir is enclosed by the footbridge and the island and riverbank trees, which help to screen the Thames Television Studios and Lensbury Club. The brightly painted suspension footbridge is a popular feature with good views of the Weir, Tough's Boatyard and the fishermen drinking at the end of the Anglers' garden. Just below the Lock on the Surrey bank, an obelisk marks the beginning of the Port of London jurisdiction, taking over from the National Rivers Authority which manages the river upstream to the source.

Tough's is the most famous of the **boatyards** to survive on this stretch, the peeling paint and ramshackle sheds, combining with the boats under construction and repair to create a scene of lively river interest and activity. Boat repairs at Ferry Road and Swan Island extend the character throughout the reach.

Between the boatyards, the Middlesex bank has gradually been infilled with **private houses** and 4-storey blocks of flats, sealing Twickenham Road off from the river. Many of the houses are set between 30 and 50 metres back from the water behind mature garden trees. Where the houses are built of brick and tiled, they recede beneath the shade of the trees. White stucco houses with bright orange roofs in treeless gardens are more prominent in the landscape. Garden banks are generally sheet-piled with private cruisers moored at the river's edge.

The only window from the Twickenham Road to the river along this reach is provided by **Manor Road Recreation Ground**. The Park has some fine mature horse chestnuts, but the close-mown grass and children's dog-free pen do not make the most of the riverside situation.

Strawberry Hill, painted by Farington with a foreground of grazed meadows running down to the river, is now cut off from the water by housing developments. A narrow glimpse of the water can still just be seen across Radnor Gardens from Horace Walpole's bedroom. Walpole's gardens have fallen into decay and his Chapel in the Wood today sits on the edge of a car park. Strawberry Hill, extended by the Waldegraves, now forms part of St Mary's College, but Walpole's original House is currently empty and its future use and public access are being reviewed by the College. Should the funds be raised, there is now a unique opportunity to restore the setting and contents of one of the most significant villas along the Thames, possibly in combination with the neighbouring Radnor Gardens and Pope's Grotto (see Reach 7). The historic connection between Waldegraves and the Russells at Pembroke Lodge is retained in the view from Strawberry Hill tower.



Strawberry Hill by Farington with Horace Walpole's view open down to the river

Long views from Twickenham and Radnor Gardens look south up the reach to Tough's Boatyard and beyond to the roof of **St Alban's Church**. The Church has recently been restored and the distinctive green of the copper roof will reappear as the new roof oxidises. Views from Teddington look south-east up the reach, under the footbridge to the weir.

On the Surrey side, **Ham Lands** provides a complete contrast with the Middlesex bank. The wild open space stretches right round the bend in the river to Ham House and Petersham Meadow, creating one of the most rural parts of the Thames through London. The edges of the area are gradually becoming wooded and managed as coppice with standards and the river banks are gently sloped with gravel beaches or vegetated granite sets. In places the

banks have eroded and need repair and scrub has grown up between the towpath and the river and should be cut back, but on the whole the effect is natural and pleasing.

The **Thames Young Mariners'** Base uses an unfilled section of gravel workings within Ham Lands. The still waterbody, gradually becoming surrounded by trees, is well-screened from the river and the lock connection is relatively discreet.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Teddington's name probably derives from the 'tun' of Tudda's people rather than the more appealing '*tide's end town*'. There is no Domesday entry for Teddington and the first direct evidence of the name is in 1100. In the 13th century the manor gained independence from the parish of Staines, but it was in the possession of Westminster Abbey when granted to Henry VIII to become part of the honour of Hampton Court. Even after Teddington had been alienated in 1603, the office of bailiff and collector was connected with Hampton Court.

Between the 17th and 19th centuries **Teddington**, although never as fashionable as Twickenham, attained a certain popularity with the gentry: Paul Whitehead, poet laureate, the architect Henry Flitcroft and Walpole's friend the artist Richard Bentley are all buried in St Mary's church. Nearly all the houses of the gentry however have now been pulled down - Teddington Grove built by William Chambers for Moses Franks in about 1765, with Chambers' greenhouse and garden temple; Udney House of c1790 with its Robert Adam picture gallery, demolished as early as 1825; Bushey Villa possibly by Stephen Wright. By the 18th century, the High Street was lined with houses, communications having been improved by the turnpiking of the Twickenham road in 1767. However until the 19th century, Teddington remained an isolated agricultural community, with Hounslow Heath to the east, the river to the west and its great open fields to the north and south.

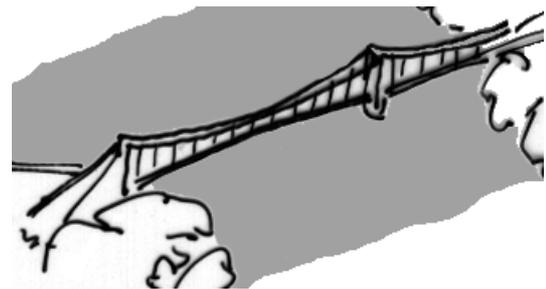
There has been a weir at Teddington since at least 1345, but the present **lock** was built in 1812. The weir marks the end of the tidal reach of the river. The 1812 structure was one of several built on Rennie's recommendation to improve the notoriously bad navigation. The present enormous barge lock and tiny skiff lock were built in 1950.

Suburban development followed the arrival of the London and Southwestern and the Thames Valley Railways in 1863-64. After that, Teddington's population grew enormously, from 1,183 in 1861, to 14,037 by 1901. Development spread rapidly with Upper Teddington west of the station, and southwards from Fulwell station to join up with the slightly earlier New Hampton. Along with New Found Out in the south, the new settlements built a church, a cottage hospital, a hotel, shops, and a town hall with ballroom and theatre.

Although it brought these amenities, the suburban expansion did not include any new **industries**. As early as 1746 there seems to have been a linen-bleaching works between the north of Broom Road and the river. By 1831 the parish contained '*the largest and most complete establishment ...in the kingdom*' for wax-bleaching and candle-making. This later became the Paint Research Station. Boatbuilding had been an important local industry since at least 1855. RA Tough opened his famous yard in 1895, and many small boats left from here for Dunkirk in 1940.

In the second half of the 19th century, **market-gardening** was a major employer and was continuing to employ 200 people as late as 1921.

To the north, Horace Walpole bought the lease on a small house in 1747 on land known as **Strawberry Hill** Shot, and in the following year he secured the freehold plus 5 acres of land. The small house and 5 acres formed the core of the Gothick confection which remains one of the great monuments of the 18th century. However gothic within, Walpole wanted his garden to



Teddington Lock footbridge

'... the prettiest bauble you ever saw. It is set in enamelled meadows, with filigree hedges.'

Horace Walpole

'Visions you know have always been my pastures. I almost think there is no wisdom comparable to that of exchanging what is called the realities of life for dreams. Old castles, old pictures, old histories, the babble of old people make one live back into centuries that cannot disappoint one.'

Horace Walpole



Strawberry Hill by Rowlandson

be 'riant', full of 'the gaiety of nature'. A great friend of Gray and William Mason and an early admirer of William Gilpin, Walpole's gardening ideas reflected their 'poet's feeling and painter's eye'. Honeysuckles dangled down from 'every tree in festoons' and picturesque trees framed views of the Thames.

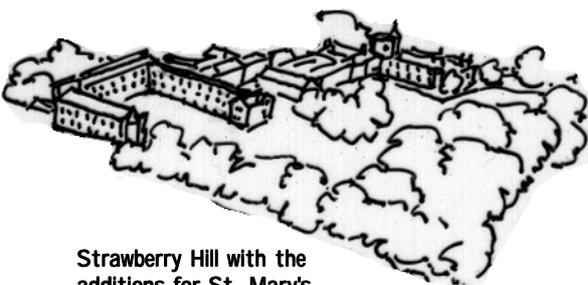
When he bought the Strawberry Hill estate Walpole wrote of the Thames, 'Barges solemn as the Barons of the Exchequer move under my window; Richmond Hill & Ham Walks bound my prospect; but thank God! the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry. Dowagers as plenty as flounders inhabit all around and Pope's ghost is just now skimming under my window by a most poetical moonlight'. Pope had died three years earlier but Walpole was well-versed in his gardening precepts. The riverside village, his 'seaport in miniature', gave life to Walpole's views, which in 'the setting sun and the long autumnal shades enriched the landscape to a Claude Lorraine'. Strawberry Hill repaid the favour from the river: Boydell, whose *History of the Thames* (1794) was dedicated to Walpole, noted that the house 'very beautifully varies the advancing scene. Its Gothic windows that appear between the branches compose a very pleasing picturesque object, both as we approach and glide by it.' Walpole's meadows have been lost to later development, and of his assorted garden buildings little survives, except his 'chapel in the wood' now far from embowered. Walpole's book *On Modern Gardening*, was highly influential and remains of interest as the first attempt at garden history.

Although some way from the Thames, one of England's most important industries in the 18th century, the **manufacture of gunpowder**, had an impact on the riverside. The industry had a centre on Hounslow Heath, using the River Crane to drive the mills and the willows to supply high quality charcoal in an area that was reasonably remote but convenient for London. Unfortunately the charcoal burning was often in close proximity to the finished product and explosions were common. In 1772 Walpole wrote to his cousin the Hon Henry Seymour Conway, a lieutenant-general in the Royal Ordnance: 'I have been blown up; my castle is blown up; Guy Fawkes has been about my house; and the 5th of November has fallen on the 6th of January! In short, nine thousand powder-mills broke loose yesterday morning on Hounslow Heath; a whole squadron of them came hither, and have broken eight of my painted-glass windows; and the north side of the castle looks as if it had stood a siege. The two saints in the hall have suffered martyrdom! they have had their bodies cut off, and nothing remains but their heads.' Walpole suggested the powder be kept safely underwater until required.

Ham Lands or Ham Fields were settled as early as the Stone Age, and there are remains of an Anglo-Saxon village here, but in mediaeval times they were a tract of water meadows near the river and open grazing on the poor soils of the flood plain. In 1670 the Duke of Lauderdale made use of them by extending his great east-west avenue across their northern part almost to the river bank. The Rocque maps show the way it was laid out across the old meadows.

The 1901 Bill for the preservation of the view from Richmond Hill involved the extinction of the Lammass rights of many copyholders, although the 1901 plan shows that many copyholders resisted this loss of their ancient rights. Odd narrow strips like Greenwood's aster fields continued to hold out until the 1950s. The Act in fact only preserved a narrow band of the river bank on the northern edge of Ham Lands, and with the Lammass rights extinguished, the land was freed for a massive programme of gravel extraction.

After the construction of the improved Teddington Lock in 1904, the frequency of flooding on the Ham Lands declined. In that year, the Ham River Grit Co. was granted a lease on the Lands, and began extracting gravel which was shipped from a newly constructed works and wharf on the Thames. Gravel had always been extracted in small quantities for local building from the river bank but the industrial scale of this operation prompted effective protests about the impact on the view from Twickenham and in the 1920s a canal was cut across the towpath to a lagoon where processing and loading could carry on out of sight. At their greatest extent in the 1930s the workings even encroached as far north as the line of the Ham Avenue. After the Second World War, once the entire area had been worked, it was backfilled



Strawberry Hill with the additions for St Mary's College

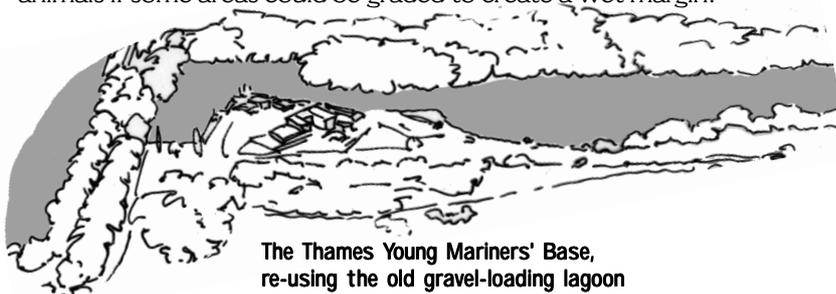
with enormous amounts of spoil and rubble from bomb-damage and the whole area is now considerably higher than it was at the beginning of the century. The lagoon, reduced in size, is still in use today as the Thames Young Mariners' base.

NATURE CONSERVATION

The infilled gravel workings at **Ham Lands** now support a mosaic of woodland, scrub, grassland and wetland habitats. The site is now a Local Nature Reserve and contains an exceptional diversity of plants and animals, including numerous species which are rare in London. Early maps show water meadows and fields near the river and 'Ham Fields' as open grazing over the poor soils of the Flood Plain Gravels.

The **Thames Young Mariners' Base** lagoon, connected to the Thames by a sluice, is fringed with willows and provides nesting cover for great crested grebes, mallards, moorhens, coots, and reed buntings, all of which breed here despite considerable disturbance from activities such as sailing and angling. Little grebes and kingfishers are both frequent visitors and may breed in some years. The lagoon also contains a good population of fish, together with breeding frogs and toads in spring.

The **Young Mariners' building**, owned by Surrey County Council, would make an excellent environmental centre combined with its present use. The grassland around the base is kept fairly short and is consequently less diverse but one area, left unmown until late summer, contains a thriving colony of bee orchids; an indication of the meadow flowers which would grow if the rest of the grassland were to be managed with a late summer hay cut. The sides of the lagoon are steep and there would be great benefit for plants and animals if some areas could be graded to create a wet margin.



The Thames Young Mariners' Base,
re-using the old gravel-loading lagoon

Ham Lands has been known to local botanists for many years as an important and diverse site. It is particularly famous as one of the only London sites for the nationally scarce Nottingham catchfly, which grew by the towpath until it was overgrown by scrub in the early 1960s. Other plants once found on Ham Lands which are now rare or extinct in London include several species of clover characteristic of dry, sandy soils, common meadow-rue in the flood meadows, autumn squill, and the parasitic great dodder. Although these plants have disappeared, others have colonised the landfill areas, including the rare Deptford pink, which has recently been rediscovered. Over the last ten years over 230 species of plants, including numerous London rarities, have been recorded from Ham Lands making it one of the richest sites in London.

Hawthorns and willows are scattered throughout the grassland and more extensive areas of **scrub and woodland** occur, especially to the south near the Young Mariners' Base. These areas provide important feeding and nesting cover for birds, including pheasants, stock doves, tawny owls, woodpeckers, spotted flycatchers and six species of warbler, all of which breed on Ham Lands. Foxes, weasels and other mammals also make use of the scrub to hide away during the daytime. However, scrub is spreading in to many of the grassland areas and a priority for management must be to check this before the floral diversity of the grassland is lost.

The **towpath** is relatively wooded alongside the southern part of Ham Lands and, in managing the trees, opportunities should be taken to open up windows to the water. The extra sunlight would benefit the wildlife by promoting new plant growth and small sunny glades.



Greater spotted woodpecker

PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION

There is continuous public access across Ham Lands and along the Surrey bank towpath. Paths connect Ham to the Teddington footbridge and across to the other side of the river. On the Middlesex bank, the only public open spaces are the Ferry Road slipway and the small Manor Park Recreation Ground. The Thames Path follows the riverside on the Surrey bank, but on the Middlesex side, from Hampton Wick to Twickenham Waterfront, runs along roads back from the river.

There are British Rail stations at Teddington and Strawberry Hill.

The Young Thames Mariners' Base in Ham Lands provides an area of non-tidal flooded gravel workings for sailing and canoeing.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|
| Boatyards: | Suntest Marine Swan Island Harbour Tough's Boatyard | | |
| Water recreation: | British Motor Yacht Club Young Thames Mariners | | |
| Land recreation: | Fishing at Teddington Lock Ham Lands walks and bridleways Manor Park Recreation Ground Thames Path | | NRA LBRuT LBRuT |
| Refreshment: | The Anglers The Tide End Cottage | | |
| Landmarks: | PLA/NRA Obelisk on the Surrey bank St Alban's Church St Catherine's Convent Strawberry Hill Teddington Footbridge Teddington Lock | | PLA Grade II* Grade I St Mary's College NRA |

LOCAL INTEREST GROUPS:

Amenity and Local History:

Borough of Twickenham Local History Society
Ham Amenities Group
Ham and Petersham Association
Richmond Local History Society
River Thames Society (Upper Tidal)
Strawberry Hill Residents' Association
Teddington Society

Nature Conservation:

London Wildlife Trust
Richmond & Twickenham Friends of the Earth

PRINCIPAL LAND USES

Lock works, moorings and boatyards dominate much of the Middlesex bank, though housing and low blocks of flats have gradually filled the intervening river edge. Opposite Teddington Weir the television studio complex forms a 6-storey block of buildings.

The Surrey bank is entirely devoted to the Ham Lands area of public access.

SIGNIFICANT SITES UNDER PRESSURE FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT:

Sites

Tough's Boatyard

Main landscape factors for consideration

- character and activity which the boatyard brings to the river
- scale and layout of buildings which have evolved over 100 years

The following proposals have been identified as part of the survey and analysis of the Thames Landscape Strategy. The policy proposals amplify the issues raised in Chapter 2 to be included in Supplementary Planning Guidance. The project and management proposals are recommended for incorporation into national agency and local government work programmes, co-ordinated by a Project Officer and Officers' Steering Committee (see Chapter 5). All proposals would require full consultation before implementation:

Policy Proposals

| | <i>Policy</i> | <i>Reference</i> |
|---------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Pol 6.1 | Conserve and enhance the reach character of boatyards and river works contrasting with the wild open space of Ham Lands opposite. | LBRuT: RIV 8 |
| Pol 6.2 | Protect the visual links between: Strawberry Hill, Radnor Gardens and the river Strawberry Hill tower and Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park Pope's Grotto and St Alban's Church roof | LBRuT: RIV 1, ENV 2 13.61 (8/16) |
| Pol 6.3 | Conserve and enhance the nature conservation interest of the river and its corridor, with particular attention to Ham Lands. | LBRuT: RIV 12 13.21 (11) |
| Pol 6.4 | Keep housing on the Middlesex bank well-setback from the water's edge behind dense garden planting. | LBRuT: ENV 8 |
| Pol 6.5 | Encourage the survival of the boatyards as an integral part of the river landscape character and resist their replacement by uses not functionally related to the river. | LBRuT: RIV 8, D4 |
| Pol 6.6 | Prevent any further intrusion into the view between Strawberry Hill and the river, and in the long-term consider raising funds to remove intervening buildings when they become available. | LBRuT: RIV 1 13.61 (16) |

Project Proposals

| | <i>Project</i> | <i>Initiative</i> |
|----------|---|---|
| Proj 6.1 | Conserve and supplement the riparian trees which help to screen the television studios and Lensbury Club from Teddington Weir. | LBRuT: ENV 8, RIV 2 Private landowners |
| Proj 6.2 | Redesign Manor Park Recreation Ground to make more of its riverside position. | LBRuT: 13.53 (9) |
| Proj 6.3 | Repair eroded sections of the Ham Lands bank. | LBRuT NRA |
| Proj 6.4 | Restore Horace Walpole's Garden at Strawberry Hill. | LBRuT, Eng Her. St Mary's College |
| Proj 6.5 | Develop the Thames Young Mariners' building to provide environmental interpretation, accommodation and education in combination with recreation uses. | SCC, LBRuT Thames Young Mariners |
| Proj 6.6 | Enhance the value of the Thames Young Mariners' lagoon by altering the profile of some of the slopes to create shallow marshy areas. | SCC, LBRuT Thames Young Mariners |
| Proj 6.7 | Plant trees along the edge of Riversdale Drive to screen Ham Lands. | LBRuT |

Management Proposals

| | | |
|---------|--|---|
| Mng 6.1 | Manage the woodland edge of Ham Lands as coppice with standards to encourage a variety of light conditions and to open windows to the river. | LBRuT: 13.21 (11) ENV 18, RIV 12 |
| Mng 6.2 | Maintain Ham Lands open grassland with annual late hay cut in September. Control the encroachment of scrub into the meadow and coppice existing scrub to maintain a thicket habitat for birds. | LBRuT: 13.21 (11) ENV 18, RIV 12 |
| Mng 6.3 | Extend meadow management to the grassland at the Young Mariners' Base. | LBRuT: 13.21 (11) ENV 18, RIV 12 SCC, Thames Young Mariners |
| Mng 6.4 | Where appropriate control scrub growth between the Ham Lands footpath and the river. | LBRuT: RIV 12 13.21 (11) |
| Mng 6.5 | Control vegetation along popular Ham Lands path from Ham to Teddington Footbridge. | LBRuT: RIV 3 |
| Mng 6.6 | Continue to maintain the PLA/NRA Obelisk and keep it visible from the river. | PLA, NRA |

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REACH

6. Teddington

