

FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION

Potential Project Outcomes

It is proposed that the 'Restoration of the Lost Floodplain' will:

- Optimise the use of the floodplain for water to go during a flood event.
- Identify ways to restore and reconnect the natural rhythms of the river corridor to create a 'living landscape' – a mosaic of habitats (created at a landscape scale) allowing wildlife to flourish and move about in as climate changes.
- Create a network of sluices, controls and channels linked to a real-time flood forecasting model to enable flooding to be carefully controlled across a large area, reducing the risk of disruption to people.
- Put in place a network of sustainable footpaths, cycle routes, informal trails, signage, and dry routes to allow visitors and locals to navigate through the landscape even in times of flood and drought.
- Restore the historic landscape framework of fields, avenues, creeks, ponds, woodland, grazed wet meadows and native hedges.
- Put in place a long-term management plan to carry out the day-to-day maintenance of the riverside that will include an active volunteer programme.
- Establish an education and outreach programme to connect people with their environment.

Project Scope – By Area

Below is a list of possible project locations. Considerable consultation and funding will be needed before any agreement is reached.

Syon Flood Meadows, Kew Gardens, Kew Haha, The Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Course, River Crane, The Old Deer Park, Petersham Meadows, Ham Towpath & Radnor Gardens, Ham Lands, Marble Hill Park and the Warren Footpath, Home Park at Hampton Court Palace, Canbury Gardens Kingston, Thames Ditton, River Mole & Cigarette Island, Hurst Park, Broom Road Recreation Ground, and other riverside settlements & town centres.

Case Study – The Old Deer Park Richmond

The Old Deer Park is an area of amenity grassland that floods during spring tides. Flood risk will increase with time. Whilst the space can be used for water during flood events the space does not function as floodplain, having little wetland habitat, and standing water is a barrier to recreational use. Restoration of the Lost Floodplain would re-create areas of wetland and reedbed, install a network of sluices and creeks to control the water and improve connections for human use during times of high water.



At the core of the project is the principle that the floodplain is our most important asset in managing increased flood risk that results from climate change. Places for people to enjoy, for wildlife to flourish and, when needed, for water to go. By restoring our lost floodplain we can conserve the character of the countryside in the city that makes the Arcadian Thames so special for future generations to enjoy and use.

Putting the Thames Back into Kingston



Councillor Chrissie Hitchcock and Jason Debney opened the recently restored riverside by the Bishop's Palace (left). Consultation and fundraising continued during the year, notably for the enhancement of Eagle Brewery Wharf and the implementation of the moorings plan.

Teddington Gateway

2008 saw much work carried out by the Environment Agency to implement the TLS Teddington Gateway masterplan. A magnificent new lay-by for visiting boats was installed which includes provision for trip boats to pick up and drop off passengers. Railings and surfaces have been improved on the Lock Island and new hedgerows planted nearby. A funding bid has been submitted for further enhancements to the area, notably the footpath linking Riverside Drive in Ham with the Lock Island footbridge.

Restoration of Ham Avenues



Great South Avenue Summer 2008 - After Restoration

and several self-sown sycamore. All suckling elms were coppiced to the ground.

Fifty magnificent new lime trees were planted to fill gaps in the avenue along with over a kilometre of native hedgerow. The hedge will help to re-enforce the countryside character of the avenue whilst providing

The restoration of the historic Ham Avenues has continued throughout 2008. The London's Arcadia project has carried out many improvements to the Great South Avenue and Melancholy Walk which has now been connected with the Thames Path through the completion of the Hammerton's Boardwalk. Following lengthy consultation with local people and users, it was agreed that the section of the Great South Avenue between Sandy Lane and Ham Common

should be enhanced by taking out only those lime trees that were dead or diseased

and several self-sown sycamore. All suckling elms were coppiced to the ground.

Fifty magnificent new lime trees were planted to fill gaps in the avenue along with over a kilometre of native hedgerow. The hedge will help to re-enforce the countryside character of the avenue whilst providing

extra cover for wildlife along the important greenway. Consisting of a variety of mixed thorns, holly, rambling roses, damson, sloe, way faring trees, field maple and elderberry. Most of the work was carried out by local

volunteers including many young people from nearby Grey Court School. While the new hedge grows, a 'dead hedge' has been built using the material from the tree works that will provide security and habitat for wildlife.



Francesca Morrison Working with Local School Children



Planting Trees Along the Avenue

Community Involvement, Volunteering, and the Probation Service

Much of the work carried out along the river is delivered by volunteers. These willing helpers come from a wide variety of organisations ranging from “Friends of...” groups to residents’ associations, local environmental trusts, amenity societies and organised volunteer groups such as BTCV. The type of activity that volunteers can get involved in is far reaching. Some want to help keep their patch of river clean and tidy - joining the TLS on one of the many riverside clean up events whilst others want to be involved in more specialist pursuits.



BTCV Volunteers Building the Nest Boxes for the Sand Martin Bank

The London’s Arcadia projects have this year had volunteers building a sand martin bank for nesting sand martins. They have also spent hours on Ham Avenues cutting up branches from the tree works to make a dead hedge on Sandy Lane. This hedge will provide a temporary barrier while a new living hedge, also planted by volunteers, grows big enough to be laid (usually after four years). The dead hedge will eventually rot down - which provides a habitat in its own right. Arcadia has also organised work days inoculating mistletoe on trees, clearing scrub, hedge laying, tree planting and survey work. Many of the volunteers are young people. A key consideration of the TLS Education Plan is to introduce school children to the river and its management, linking formal education programmes with time out in the field helping to sustain and improve their environment. Activities include tree planting and Himalayan balsam bashing.



Swingbridge 2 Community Payback Group with Cllr. Ruth Lyon

offenders at a time carry out a number of management tasks, from scrub management, bramble bashing to cutting up and lifting mud and turf that has slowly been making the towpath narrower and muddier, restoring it to much more of its original width. The work has also seen the creation of a stag beetle loggery. The TLS works with Probation Services in Kingston and Richmond carrying out a number of weeks in each of these boroughs.

The TLS works with local companies such as Petrofac Engineering Ltd. Who come out on corporate volunteer days as part of their commitment to sustainable and environmental corporate responsibility. A group of 10 staff from the Woking office planted a hedge along the fence of Molesey Cricket Club.

Although over 18,000 volunteer hours were recorded in 2008, staff resources limit the amount of work that can be carried out by volunteers and community service workers. As such an Access for Nature funding bid is being submitted to Natural England to help the TLS in our work that is hoped

(if successful) would help introduce a far greater diversity of people to the river and its management.



Volunteers Planting Flower Beds in Bridge Hosue Gardens

Hampton Court Approaches

The TLS is co-ordinating an exciting new initiative to enhance the visitor experience, setting and available travel options for the world-famous Hampton Court Palace. A partnership of Historic Royal Palaces, the Royal Parks, Elmbridge Borough Council, Surrey County Council and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has been brought together that has produced a masterplan for the area that was historically regarded as the Royal estate between Molesey, Garrick's Temple, Bushy Park and Kingston Bridge. The project proposes enhancements to the way that pedestrians, cyclists, boats and vehicular traffic approach the Palace particularly along the river, the towpath and the busy Hampton Court Road and Hampton Court Way. A range of landscape, streetscape and highway improvements has been agreed. Throughout 2008, a new dual cycling and walking route has been constructed between Kingston Bridge and Hampton Court. Funded by Transport for London, this has included the narrowing of the carriageway for road safety reasons and the installation of a new bredden gravel path. Dog-teeth bollards have been placed alongside the road to strengthen the Royal estate character of the area. Work is now underway to extend this new route across Hampton Court Green and onto Garrick's Temple. This work will also see equestrian enhancements and proposed landscaping of the unsightly road layout outside the Trophy Gates.



Hampton Court Road Before Works



Hampton Court Road After Works

A Visit from Richmond Virginia

The TLS enjoys close ties with the James River Project from Richmond, Virginia, USA. In May, a group of young people and river managers from Virginia visited the Thames as part of the 'Richmonds of the World' initiative which aims to share knowledge and experience between the two towns.



Ralph White, Director of the James River Project leads students from Virginia in survey work along the Thames



Young visitors enjoy a trip on the river - the first time many had been on a boat, let alone rowing HM the Queen's shallop!



A painting of the view from Richmond Hill is presented to the TLS at The American International University in London



A reception at Syon House was organised for the garden enthusiasts who had also visited Ham House and Kew Gardens during their visit

London's Arcadia

London's Arcadia is a £3.3 million Heritage Lottery funded project to implement the TLS on and below the View from Richmond Hill. Launched in 2002, the project is now entering its final phase of works which in 2008 have included:

Ham Car Park – opened in May, the newly landscaped Ham Car Park by Ham House provides a greener environment with ash tree planting to soften the views to the car park and additional parking bays. The replacing of the car stop posts and the re laying of the gravel has enhanced the area as an access point for the river, Hammertons Ferry, and the Tow Path whilst still meeting strict design guidelines.



Wesley Kerr, Chair of HLF London Committee and Mayor Cranfield-Adams open Ham Car Park



Ham Car Park After the Works Were Completed

Volunteers have completed works at Bridge House Gardens. A kick rail and drought tolerant plants have been planted. Near-by at Riverdale Gardens, the popular riverside park has been re-landscaped which has included the planting of new cedar of Lebanon trees and many shrubs. Two new memorial gardens have been created and an accessible path between the Petersham Road and Thames Path.



Volunteers at Bridge House Gardens



Planting a Native Hedge at Kew Football Ground

Kew Football Pitch – 200m of native hedge was planted by volunteers along the fence in front of Kew Football Pitch in Ham. This has improved the local environment and will establish a green corridor from Ham Lands to Ham House Meadows, and the river.

Grey Court School Jolly Boat – In partnership with the Great River Race and Richmond Bridge Boathouses, students at Grey Court Secondary School constructed a 'jolly boat' which was launched at the Great River Race. The students rowed the boat during the race from Ham to Greenwich coming an excellent third place in the youth's category.

London's Arcadia has continued to implement many projects to improve habitats along the river including reedbeds along the Warren Footpath, the planting of black poplars and installation of bird and bat boxes. The TLS is now negotiating a way forward to continue the excellent work carried out by Ken MacKenzie and Fran Morrison of the London's Arcadia scheme. It is hope that the project will be brought under the management of the TLS partnership broadening its scope to embrace the borough's of Kingston, Hounslow and Elmbridge.



Volunteers Planting the Reedbed at Marble Hill

THE BAT SUPER HIGHWAY

London's Arcadia Warren Footpath Bats and Lighting Project

By Francesca Morrison - London's Arcadia Project Officer

This exciting project involves bats, people, lighting, and the River Thames to improve this important river corridor for both bats and people. The £500,000 project is being funded by BIFFaward and the London's Arcadia HLF bid. The Arcadian Thames with its wealth of green spaces, parks, the river, reedbeds, and areas of wetland, mean it is a great habitat for bats. The bats roost in the nooks and crannies in the veteran trees found in Richmond Park, flying down the Ham Avenues, using the linear feature to navigate their way to the River Thames where they feed on insects. Ham Avenues are often referred to as 'bat super highways' and if you've ever been out on the Avenues on a summer evening, just after dusk, you will know why. Overhead the bats can be seen performing spectacular aerial manoeuvres as they make their way to the river to feed. Of the 17 species of bat found in the UK, 9 are regularly recorded along our stretch of the Thames making it a nationally important population. This is significant as across the UK bats are in decline due to loss of habitat, destruction of roosts, and through light pollution. By monitoring bat populations we can learn a lot about the wider state of the environment. As top predators, bats are what are known as an 'indicator species'. This means any changes to the food chain (through new land use practices, development, or water quality) will ultimately have a knock-on effect in bat numbers.



Pipistrel Bat - Courtesy Bat Conservation Trust

As part of the London's Arcadia project, we will be focusing on improving the section of the river corridor that runs from Orleans Road to Richmond Bridge on the Twickenham side of the river called Warren Footpath, particularly looking at the lighting of this area. The aim of the scheme is to improve the lighting so that it is good for people (the Warren Footpath is used by commuters and leisure users), whilst minimising the light pollution for nocturnal wildlife. This is a tricky balance to achieve. Bats are adversely affected by lighting for several reasons, the main one being that many species are particularly light sensitive; they only emerge once it is dark and will not fly into lit areas to forage for insects. Lighting an area therefore limits the habitat available to bats to forage and feed. If they can't forage and feed they will not build up enough reserves to last through their winter hibernation. Currently the lights on the Warren Footpath spill into the river which is the main feeding ground for bats. At the moment we are coming to the end of the research phase of the project.

Before any works can take place it is important to know what bats feed where and when, how humans use the towpath and what lights are available. By gathering this information we can then decide on the best possible solution that is good for people and bats. With the help of volunteers we are carrying out bat surveys of both side of the river to monitor bat populations as well as monitoring the light levels. Volunteers have included local residents, students from Richmond Virginia, and members of the London Bat Group. The project has included young people from the start and recently featured on BBC's Newsround when volunteers from the Ham and Petersham Sea Scouts took part in the survey. We are also monitoring how people use the footpath as well as carrying out questionnaires to gauge perception and opinion on the current lighting.



Volunteers Out on Survey

We are working with several lighting companies to design some bat-friendly lighting schemes. Some of these ideas so far have included colour changing lights and turning off the lights during periods of peak bat activity.

We will be collating all the information discovered during the research phase and hope to have several lighting designs to take to public consultation in March 2009, with the implementation planned for the summer.

A NEW VISION FOR KEW

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has produced “The Vision 2008-2011: A consultation document” that has been released for comment locally, nationally, and internationally. It sets out an exciting three-year vision for Kew and Wakehurst Place. Proposed projects include the Breathing Planet Programme, Plants and People Visitor Orientation Centre, World Heritage Site Maintenance, and a Rhizotron and Xstrata Treetop Walkway. There is also specific mention of the Thames Landscape Strategy in its plans for Queen Elizabeth’s Lawn. The proposal is to move the public car park and restore the site formally known as Queen Elizabeth’s Lawn, where once stood George III’s castellated palace, and investigate ways in which the Gardens can be reconnected to the Thames by improving the towpath views and connections across the River.



Queen Elizabeth’s Lawn - Brentford Gate Car Park



The new Rhizotron and Xstrata Treetop Walkway

Another of the projects eagerly anticipated by the TLS is “Flood Defences and Boundary”. In this project it is hoped that the Gardens’ flood defences will be repaired and focus will be put onto the development of waterside/wetland habitats that will tackle the issues surrounding climate change and flood risk management. In November the TLS joined the Kew World Heritage Site Committee in anticipation of these proposed new initiatives. Much consultation and funding is needed before any work can start.

BUSHY PARK RESTORATION

The restoration of Bushy Park, led by the Royal Parks and supported by Heritage Lottery Fund, has made significant progress in 2008. Two major projects on the western side of the Park by Upper Lodge, the Water Gardens, and the Brewhouse are now nearing completion. Originally built in the 18th Century, the Water Garden was used by the Ministry of Defence from 1946 – 1994 for submarine research, and has since disappeared into the undergrowth. Archaeologists from Pre Construct Archaeology (PCA) have been working on the site to find and record the structural elements and remove anything unstable. They have found the original cascade, the northern and southern walls, and alcoves. Some of the walls have been badly damaged but using a painting from the Royal Collection, and the remaining walls, they have managed to piece together a good idea of the original structure. There have even been a few surprises, including the unearthing of a brick path at the base of the cascade which could have been used for maintenance. It is hoped that as much of the original materials as possible will be incorporated into the new structure, and it is intended that some of that which cannot, will be archived at the Museum of London. The design for the restoration has been carried out by Land Use Consultants and the work is being undertaken by English Landscapes. It is hoped that the construction will be finished before the winter 2008 to allow the planting and water feature to settle before being unveiled to the public next summer (2009).

The Brewhouse, built around the same time as the Water Garden, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument on the English Heritage ‘At Risk’ Register. Restoration has now started with the hope of it being removed from ‘At Risk’, including external repairs, installation of power, and a bridge over the Longford River. The building will be used for education and community groups but there is also discussion over the establishment of a micro-brewery.

Further projects include – Arethusa (Diana) Fountain, Pheasantry Woodland Gardens, The Stockyard Education Centre, and a Welcome Centre.



Arethusa Fountain in the Winter

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRON



“The Thames Landscape Strategy is that very rare animal: an organisation with real popular appeal and an imaginative sense of what it is about landscapes that fires people’s imagination. We need to take active steps now to ensure that we maintain a varied wildlife

habitat, support traditional river activities, adapt to climate change, and manage the landscape to complement the marvellous historic buildings, nature reserves and parks that line this stretch of the Thames.

The ideas proposed by the Thames Landscape Strategy are truly groundbreaking and really moving forward. We should rejoice in having such an enthusiastic and committed organisation to guide this process and I look forward to continued success throughout the coming years”.

Sir David Attenborough

Patron, Thames Landscape Strategy

***‘Conserve, promote and enhance for the future,
one of the world’s great river landscapes between
Hampton and Kew’***

During the 18th Century, Arcadia, an idyllic pastoral landscape was created along the Thames between Hampton and Kew. Magnificent royal and aristocratic palaces, gardens and parks were constructed and linked by a series of avenues, set within a framework of meadows and woodland.

Today this stretch of the Thames is recognised as one of the world’s great urban river landscapes, allowing Londoners to escape the hustle and bustle of modern city life.

The Thames Landscape Strategy is one of three sub-regional partnerships for the Thames in the Greater London area, whose focus is the remarkable river corridor between Hampton and Kew. Launched in 1994, the Strategy is a 100-year blueprint for the Thames, whose vision is to conserve, enhance and promote for the future, one of the world’s great urban landscapes. To achieve its aims, the Strategy brings together a partnership of statutory and non-statutory organisations, local groups and individuals to inform strategic policy and to implement a broad range of projects and management proposals.



Congratulations to Alison and Jason who were married at Kew Green in 2008 before travelling, by boat, to Richmond Park.



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