

Watermark



The Newsletter of the Thames Landscape Strategy, Hampton to Kew Issue 17 December 2005

Volunteers Transform Molesey's Riverbank



Volunteers from The Surrey Care Trust, TLS and Elmbridge Borough Council aboard 'The Swingbridge'

Volunteers and young offenders joined the Thames Landscape Strategy to manage a stretch of riverside between Molesey Lock and Hurst Park. Organised by the Thames Landscape Strategy in partnership with Elmbridge Borough Council and the Environment Agency, the work was carried out by the Surrey Care Trust's initiative the Swingbridge Community Trust. Based aboard

their specially equipped narrow boat volunteers worked one or two days per week clearing scrub and removing dead elm suckers.

Jason Debney, Co-ordinator of the Thames Landscape Strategy explained, "If we are to maintain a varied and wildlife rich riverside, then every now and again it needs to be managed. Importantly, the works were as low-key as possible. In this stretch of river all that was needed was the clearance of dead and suckling elm and the thinning out of trees that have self sown along the river's edge and were strangling important riverside species such as ash and alder. The volunteers used all the wood from the works to create discreet log piles at the back of a nearby copse of trees. As this starts to decay the wood becomes a valuable habitat for insects such as stag beetles that are now endangered in many parts of south east England".

The Surrey Care Trust's Swingbridge Community Boat benefits both people and the environment. From October to March, Swingbridge is the base for teams of volunteers and offenders on Community Punishment Orders to carry out environmental clearance and conservation work along Surrey's waterways, the Basingstoke Canal at Woking, the River Wey at Guildford and for the first time, the River Thames at East Molesey.

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Arcadia Update:

Jerry Hall digs deep on Richmond Hill! Find out why in Pages 4 & 5



Kraft Picnic Walk

The first of three new walking leaflets has been launched at Watermans Park to encourage families to come down and discover some of the hidden gems of the Arcadian Thames. Launched by Cllr Ron Bartholomew (London Borough of Hounslow) and Cllr David Marlow (London Borough of Richmond) the 7-mile circular walk between Kew and Richmond Bridges can be joined at any point and includes wonderful river facts, access information, public transport links, picnic spots, pubs and much more.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (as part of London's Arcadia) and Kraft Foods, the leaflet includes details on how to download a special children's activity sheet to take with you on your walk. The leaflet is available from a variety of sources including local libraries, council offices, The Watermans Art Centre and Richmond Tourist Information Centre. A certificate from Sir David Attenborough is available for all families who have completed the walk.



Cllr Bartholomew of Hounslow and Cllr Marlow of Richmond with staff from Kraft Foods and local residents enjoy the launch of the Kraft Picnic Walk on a warm and sunny September's day

W a t e r w o r k s

Bringing you up to date with progress on the Thames Landscape Strategy

Teddington Gateway

The Thames Landscape Strategy has joined forces with the Environment Agency to raise funds for the restoration of Teddington Lock. Local people and river users have been consulted to find out what they would like to see happen to the lock and from this a conservation management study is currently being drafted. The restoration will concentrate on the key areas of heritage, wildlife, boating activity and recreation. It is anticipated that an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund will be submitted in the new year once more detailed research and consultation has been carried out.



Teddington Lock footbridge currently undergoing a £600,000 restoration funded by the London Borough of Richmond

TLS welcomes new member of staff

A review of the TLS organisational structure was carried out in 2005 by consultant Ian Sesnan. This report highlighted the need for additional staff at the Thames Landscape Strategy office. In response, Historic Royal Palaces, the Environment Agency and the London Boroughs of Richmond and Kingston provided additional funding to employ a full time Project Development Officer for 2006. Valerie Beirne was appointed in October 2005. Valerie has much experience in watery matters having worked for the London Borough of Richmond, where she helped with the development of the Arcadia project before working with the Thames Explorer Trust and Groundwork UK.

Ten Year Review

Consultation with the four TLS local authorities has revealed that the Thames Landscape Strategy is still a well-used and relevant document ten years after it was published. The Strategy has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and has inspired many subsequent policy documents. In light of these findings, a significant review of the 1994 report is not needed.

An annex to update the 1994 report will be produced to take into account changing priorities such as climate change, flood risk management, river transport and Biodiversity Action Plans. The annex will also provide a way forward for the next ten years as many of the 180 identified projects contained in the Thames Landscape Strategy have now been implemented. Clarification regarding the planning status of the Annex is currently being sought and full consultation will take place before publication.

Riverside Management

The TLS now produces the Riverside Management Plan for large sections of the towpath, open spaces and foreshore stretching from Kew through to Kingston town centres (both sides of the river). Working closely with the relevant boroughs the revised management plans have seen the creation of fabulous new habitats and a staggering 80% drop in litter.



Residents and visitors enjoy the towpath in Richmond. Recent changes to the towpath management regime has led to an increase in the number of different wild flower species recorded there over the summer.

What is happening to our Conkers?

Anyone who has walked along the river this summer would have noticed that horse chestnuts are losing their leaves much earlier than in previous years. One reason for this is an infestation of a small moth called *Cameraria ohridella*. As the climate gets warmer the moth has been spreading northwards across Europe, reaching the UK about five years ago and is so far restricted to London and the South East of England.

The moth lays its larvae in the leaves of the horse chestnut. As these small grubs eat their way through the plant they leave brown lines that cross the leaf eventually causing it to drop. Once the larvae have pupated they fly off to the next tree thus spreading the disease. The damage caused by the infestation reduces the capacity of the tree to gather light and if this happens year on year it could be a problem in older and younger specimens. Experts agree that in itself the moth will not kill the tree but this yearly infestation could have long-term implications to the conker population particularly if the infested tree has other pests and diseases such as phytophthora – a destructive fungi. How different September would be to future generations of schoolchildren if there were no conkers to play with – yet another reason why everyone should sit up and take notice of climate change now before it is too late.

New TLS Website

The Thames Landscape Strategy website is being fully re-written to bring it up to date. The new look site will be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and contain much more information regarding the organisation's project work. In addition there will be a large section on recreational opportunities across the region and the full TLS 1994 Report will be incorporated into the site.

Out and About with the TLS

During the past year, the Thames Landscape Strategy has visited many different fairs and events across the region and already 2006 is shaping up to be even busier.

The year started with the annual Richmond May Fair, followed by the Ham Fair, the Teddington River Festival and the RNLI festival at Surbiton. In addition, more than 50 talks and lectures were given on the work of the TLS, and many guided walks were arranged linked to the organisations project work.



Sir David Attenborough, Patron of the Thames Landscape Strategy, with Jason Debney (TLS Coordinator), Councillor Barry O'Mahony (RB Kingston & TLS Chair) and Lord Watson of Richmond at the Thames Landscape Strategy Summer Party held at Pembroke Lodge in June 2005.



TLS marquee at Ham Fair, June 2005, one of many events attended by the TLS



TLS Summer Party, held in June 2005



London's Arcadia Project Officer Tasha Hunter at a fundraising event held during the summer 2005.



TLS and London's Arcadia in action. Over 2800 volunteers days were carried out during 2005.

In summer 2006, the TLS has booked a stand at the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show taking place between the 4th and 9th July. The display will provide the Strategy with an excellent opportunity to showcase its work to a new audience at the world's largest horticultural show. Volunteers will be needed to help run the exhibition and already many friends of the TLS have put their names forward. If you would like to help just contact the Co-ordinator at Holly Lodge.

Wildlife Matters: a reedbed update

The TLS is involved in many different projects to improve bio-diversity along the river and has recently been surveying the foreshore looking for suitable places to plant reed beds. The common reed is the UK's largest native grass usually found at the margins of waterways and ponds. Historically, the River Thames would have been lined with huge areas of reedbeds but today they are confined to one or two locations. A staggering 40% of reedbed habitats have been lost in the UK between 1945 and 1990 and today they cover only 0.03% of Capital's surface.

Reeds are important for a number of reasons. They provide an excellent habitat for all kinds of wildlife (including birds such as water rail, reed and sedge warblers and the water vole), they look good and they help to filter nutrients and remove harmful pollutants from the water. One location that has been identified as a possible place to re-establish this important habitat is along the Warren Footpath between Twickenham and Richmond Bridge. The conditions along this reach are perfect with long stretches of open foreshore at low tide and willows growing on the riverbanks between the water and the Thames Path. It is anticipated that the Heritage Lottery Fund money from the London's Arcadia scheme can be used in order to plant reedbeds on this stretch. Many factors will need to be put in place first however, and threats to the viability of the scheme such as grazing by Canada geese and nibbling by Chinese mitten crab will have to be accounted for.

Another riparian habitat that the TLS hopes to create is a sand martin wall which are usually best placed on islands. As part of the London's Arcadia project the wall would be designed to fit into the landscape whilst providing a suitable breeding habitat and could be built to accommodate a kingfisher nesting site as well.



Reeds and sedges have quickly colonised the riverbank outside Marble Hill House

London's Arcadia: Update



The restored Richmond Riverfront

The £3.3m Heritage Lottery funded scheme to restore the View from Richmond Hill is now well under way with many of the first year projects already completed. The first of the Thames Landscape Strategy 'In Action' projects, London's Arcadia includes the riverside open spaces on and below Richmond Hill between Twickenham and Richmond Lock.

The first scheme to be implemented was the restoration of the View from Richmond Hill including The Terrace and Terrace Field designed by TLS author Kim Wilkie. At long last volunteers have removed the hideous chain link fence that for years has marred the view. In its place, the meadow now sweeps to yew trees alongside the Terrace Gardens before giving way to the formal Victorian park.



A magnificent new path has been created connecting Buccleugh Gardens with The Terrace via a series of York stone steps. All the paths have been sealed with a bonded gravel finish to give a rural character to the walk and handrails installed to help people access the steep slope of Richmond Hill.

Work to restore the gravel Terrace path on top of Richmond Hill is complete. Along its length, a magnificent band of York stone has been laid on which seats have been repositioned. At the same time the retaining wall was repaired and famous Richmond Hill railings were restored although not straightened. To repair the wall and railings 'as new' would have necessitated in a massive undertaking and was completely out of the scope of the Arcadia scheme. Even so, years of neglect have been reversed



St Helena Terrace before and after restoration designed by the London's Arcadia project

and Richmond Hill now looks magnificent.

Work has finished resurfacing the towpath along Petersham Meadows. The long-term plan is to restore the surface all the way to Ham car park but before this is carried out it is important to test several different options first. As such, the new surface along the meadows is in fact a number of different types (although it is almost impossible to tell) so that these can be tested over a period of time to ascertain which type stands up to the rigours of regular tidal inundation and constant use the best before proceeding with the rest of the towpath.

Whilst weighing up the options all sorts of different factors have to be taken into account. One of these is accessibility. The final solution has to accommodate walkers, cyclists, buggies and wheelchairs. The most durable surface would have been tarmac but it was felt that this would have spoilt the rural character of the riverside (a view echoed by many wheelchair users). It's a difficult balancing act but one that Arcadia must get right.

Work along Cholmondeley Walk is now almost complete. Large areas of concrete have been removed and replaced with grass and new drains have been installed to allow tidal water to drain more easily. New benches have been installed along the river, historic railings repaired and lost granite setts replaced. Further along the riverbank the benches on Richmond Riverfront have been fully restored, bins replaced, grassy banks repaired and lights improved. Upstream of Richmond Bridge work is currently taking place to install new accessible ramps to link Richmond Bridge with the Thames Path after which the whole area will be landscaped.

During December, work was carried out near the White Cross pub in the centre of Richmond. The project involved re-laying the lost granite setts between the bottom of Water



Richmond's Mayor Councillor Jowitt helps plant one of the magnificent Limes on the Terrace Field

Lane and St. Helena Terrace. In East Twickenham, Isleworth Promenade has been restored and historic railings repaired.

Arcadia has also planted and layered huge lengths of hedge and planted hundreds of trees across the area. 500 holly whips were planted on the Terrace Field boundaries mixed with various types of thorns that are traditionally found in countryside hedges and a magnificent line of native limes have been planted along the Terrace.

The Heritage Lottery Fund grant has enabled two full time members of staff to be appointed to work on the initiative. Ken MacKenzie has been appointed as full time Heritage Lottery Fund Project Manager and Tasha Hunter as Arcadia Project Officer. Miranda Stearn from Orleans House Gallery has been appointed as Heritage Education Officer to implement the TLS 'London's Arcadia' Education and Lifelong Programme.

Picture right: volunteers help rip down the unsightly chain link fence that was such a blot on the landscape for decades.

Far right: Terrace Field before restoration



Kim Wilkie, Councillor Tony Arbour, Jerry Hall and Jason Debney on Richmond Hill



Planting of Swamp Cypress trees on Cholmondley Walk



The restored steps into Terrace Field



Restoration of the Water Lane cobbles



Congratulations to proud new father, Ken MacKenzie, London's Arcadia HLF Project Manager with daughter Tilly



London's Arcadia Naming Opportunity Scheme

Although work is now well underway, to do all the works planned Arcadia still has to raise a lot more money to match the contribution made by the Heritage Lottery Fund. There are so many ways that everyone can get involved and without your help works will simply not happen. Sponsorship ranges from £25 to £25,000 and includes everything from bird boxes, benches, railings, sections of towpath, owl holes, bat boxes and grand gates. One of the best things that can be sponsored are one of the hundreds of trees that are to be planted. Costs include the tree itself, aftercare and watering. All the names of sponsors will be recorded in a special commemorative book and in addition donors will receive a certificate of thanks from the Thames Landscape Strategy Patron, Sir David Attenborough. Details can be obtained from Tasha Hunter on 020 8891 7399 or write to the TLS at Holly Lodge for details.

Waterspace & Visitor Action Plan

Throughout the Autumn 2005, the TLS has been finishing the final draft of the Waterspace and Visitor Action Plan. The Action Plan brings together the joint themes of visitor and recreational activity with public transport, access, interpretation, river use, regeneration and marketing. These projects will have far reaching implications. If successful it is hoped that with time, new facilities will be installed to allow trip boats to stop at Teddington Lock, Cross Deep, Ham Car Park, Kingston and Twickenham. This, for the first time in decades would link all the wonderful houses, gardens and town centres along the Thames between Hampton Court and Kew by river transport.

The action plan also proposes a holistic approach to interpretation across the TLS region. This will ensure that the visitor is provided with information about the river landscape whilst reducing the visual impact of signage. Interpretation will take many forms ranging from the use of lighting or common street surfaces through to more traditional panels and a series of bronze plaques.

Although the final draft of the action plan will be subject to further consultation, many of its recommendations are incorporated into other Thames Landscape Strategy 'In Action' projects. For example, improvements to moorings at Kingston form part of the Putting the Thames Back into Kingston initiative and access and interpretative enhancements proposed for Brentford will form part of a major new scheme for the area. More detail in the next addition of Watermark.



This sporting life

The Thames Landscape Strategy is embarking on a consultation exercise with local rowing, canoeing and sailing clubs, looking at the potential of developing a sporting 'hub' along the River Thames between Hampton and Richmond. This stretch of the Thames provides a wonderfully versatile area for protected water recreation, with one of the highest concentrations of rowing, sailing and canoe clubs in any metropolitan area in Europe. The towpaths along this stretch are also among the most intensively used footpaths and cycle paths in London.

A recent meeting between officers from the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and from the Thames Landscape Strategy highlighted some common issues facing water sports clubs along that stretch of the river. Ageing facilities, lack of storage space for boats, membership issues and conflicts of interest with other river users were just a few common issues discussed. Many clubs could also benefit from better access to the river and improvements to the spaces around their buildings.

The meeting tentatively explored the potential opportunities that developing a sporting 'hub' relating to water sports could bring to the area. In light of the increased coverage of public health issues such as rising rates of obesity and associated illnesses within the population (particularly younger people) and the need to combat this by engaging people more widely in physical activity, a sporting hub could have far wider benefits than just to the rowing clubs themselves. There are also obvious links to the success of London securing the 2012 Olympics, and the relative high profile that rowing, sailing and canoeing currently enjoy on the back of Olympic successes at Athens 2004.

However, before any detailed proposal is put together, the Thames Landscape Strategy is contacting all watersports clubs in the area between Hampton and Richmond to get their feedback and views on the potential development of a sporting hub. During this time the TLS will also be contacting the Sport England Sub-regional Link Officer for South West London to explore ways of closer working between the two organisations in the development of this project.

What climate change could mean for the Thames

The link between human activity and global warming is still not conclusively proven, but what is now universally accepted is that climates are changing, and changing faster than at any time in human history. What remains unclear is the pace of the change, what is causing this change, and the exact effects of this shift on the world's climate. What is certain, however, is the need to plan for climate change as we begin to realise just how our everyday lives will be affected.

A large, low lying city like London is particularly sensitive to climate change. In response a special group – The London Climate Change Partnership, has been set up to identify what the effects of climate change could be on the capital, and the group's findings will have an impact on planning the future of the city. Of particular concern is the affect of anticipated temperature rise due to the 'urban heat island' effect that London is especially vulnerable to. Research has shown that both summer heat island intensity and frequency are increasing as climate changes. The most noticeable and uncomfortable effect of this would be on night time temperatures. Hotter, drier summers might be great for the tourism industry and kids on their school holidays, but will have detrimental effects on water resources and air quality. Rising temperatures will increase the need for air conditioning inside buildings, tubes and buses simply adding to the problem due to increased use of fossil fuels to generate the electricity. It is true that a reduction in the need to heat property would offset this slightly, but it is looking increasingly likely that a fundamental new approach in the way that buildings are designed (and where they should be built) is going to be needed. By the middle of this century summer temperatures of 30C could be the norm with London having a climate similar to that of New York, Rome or Madrid of today.

It may be hard to imagine, but London is officially one of the world's driest capital cities. In fact the available water resources per head of population are similar to that of Israel. It is now anticipated that climate change will have a big impact on rainfall with drier summers, wetter winters and increased flash storms. Long periods of snowfall are now a distant memory and in many winters the incidence of night frosts can be counted on one hand. The effects of this are varied. Whilst a summer ban on hose pipes by 2050 would be inconvenient, it could be said that warmer, drier summers would stimulate an al fresco lifestyle. However, it is the effects of climate change on the environment around us that is worrying most people, and in particular the effect of climate change on flooding and the region's wildlife.

The need to protect London against a predicted increase in flood risk is now a number one priority even though London has some of the best flood management measures in the world. This is due to the fact that a lot of the metropolis lies within the floodplain of the River Thames. The future risk from flooding is made worse for three reasons. Current levels of defence do not take into account increased river flows and storm runoff caused by climate change (20% more storm water for example will pass over Teddington Weir and into the Thames estuary by 2050), the pressure to build in the floodplain is increasing (resulting in less land available to absorb the flood waters) and sea levels are rising (reducing the impact of existing defences and increasing the impact of North Sea storm surges). Research into the flood risk implications for London is being co-ordinated by the Environment Agency through their 'Thames Estuary Flood Management Strategy (TE2100). Locally, the 'Floodscape' study (part of a wider European initiative led by the Environment Agency) has looked at the effect of what would happen if Ham Lands was managed in a way that it could once again function as water meadows allowing the area to be used as a storage area for the vital few hours of peak floods, when high river flows and storm surge tides converge below Teddington Lock.

Climate change will also have an effect on wildlife. Earlier springs, longer frost free seasons, and reduced snowfall would affect the bird nesting season and the dates that trees come into leaf are getting earlier and earlier. Valuable habitats may be lost or degraded due to lack of water or changes in temperature, and an increase in pests, diseases and invasive species could have a negative impact on established flora and fauna. The Chinese mitten crab for example (one of the most destructive invasive species in the UK), is already prolific in our part of the Thames and is destroying one of the most valuable riverside habitats alongside Syon Park and has recently been reported in the Hogsmill River. Shifts in the world's climate may not necessarily be bad for all wildlife, but what is certain is that some established ecosystems will change, and habitats that we cherish today may be lost in the future. Difficult choices will need to be made in terms of land management, and we may find ourselves committed to protecting certain habitats and species that will struggle to adapt to a new climate. In other places new environments will emerge, and species that are rare today may become much more common.

Climate change is going to affect all of us – to what extent is still to be established and a hotly debated subject. However, it is certain that as climate changes the public open spaces along the Thames will become increasingly important to Londoners – how much these places will have to adapt will remain to be seen.

- Jason Debney

For more information on the proposed Floodscape project visit www.floodscape.net

Putting the Thames back into Kingston

A major TLS project at Kingston has taken shape over the past year that hopes to transform many areas of the town's riverside and initiate a real revival in the use of the Thames. It is still early days and there is a lot more consultation needed but already some aspects of the scheme are ready to be implemented.

Like so many towns, Kingston traditionally turned its back on the river due mainly to the industry that lined its banks. But scratch beneath the surface and Kingston also has the most glorious boating traditions associated with the river. It is the town that Jerome K Jerome hired his skiff from before setting off, three men in a boat, up the Thames to Oxford and there are more rowing, sailing, canoe, punting and skiff clubs clustered around the town than almost anywhere on the Thames.

The Thames Landscape Strategy plan is simply to 'Put the Thames Back into Kingston', to celebrate this watery heritage and to use it as a mechanism to regenerate the use and character of the Thames corridor linked to wider Borough initiatives such as the Kingston K+20 Scheme and the Environment Agencies Waterways Plan.

To make Kingston a key Thameside centre it has been important to look at the riverside open spaces from the point of view of how they interact with the river itself including its wildlife, flooding and uses. Working



Councillor Barry O'Mahony launches the project at the Minema Yacht Club



Half Mile Tree - an early hit site



Team Kingston

closely with the Royal Borough of Kingston and the Environment Agency, the TLS is currently consulting on what local people and users of the river would like to see improved. This 'Integrated Moorings Business Plan' has been funded through the fees that Kingston Council collects from visiting boats and should prepare the way for a raft of enhancements to Kingston's waterspace such as restaurant boats, permanent and visitor moorings.

Alongside the river, several early hits have been designed and consulted on that are ready to be implemented before the main project is ready. At the Half Mile Tree on Lower Ham Road a discreet landscaping scheme is currently being implemented to include scrub works, footpath and access enhancements and signage installation. On the Lower Ham Road a volunteer group has been established to help tidy up rubbish in the river and to coppice overgrown trees and at the upstream entrance to Canbury Gardens a landscaping initiative has been designed to open up a short section of riverside that has formally been off limits to the public.

Putting the Thames Back into Kingston will extend from the borough boundary stone through to the upstream end of Queens Promenade. If you would like to get involved with the initiative simply contact the Co-ordinator at Holly Lodge.



Kingston's moorings are in need of improvement

A great stink: the problem with drains

Did you know that the famous engineer Bazalgette laid down London's drainage system in the mid/late 19th Century? This system still forms the basis of the London sewer network today. When the system reaches capacity (as it often does after periods of intensely heavy rain), any excess, both rainwater and sewage is diverted to the Thames by way of storm sewers, known as 'combined sewer overflows' (CSOs). Unfortunately with increasing urbanisation and the elimination of almost all of the natural drainage system the Thames and its tributaries had previously provided, the occurrences of these overflows into the river has increased in recent years. Climate change and more intense rain storms has exacerbated the problem. In essence the Thames is the overflow system of London's drains!

The Environment Agency undertakes crisis management, by the operation of special barges (known as Thames Bubblers) which pump oxygen into the river after a CSO event to help re-establish the river's metabolism. However long term solutions need to be found to address this problem. Currently two aspects of the problem are being addressed: the possibility of increasing the capacity of the system, and the need to reduce the problem. Ultimately Thames Water is responsible for the treatment and disposal of sewage in the greater London area, and would need to fund any improvements to the sewer system. There is little doubt that increasing the capacity of the sewer system in London, by upgrading the existing drains or by building new ones will be an expensive and lengthy process.

However, in the short term there is much that householders can do to help reduce the problem of CSO events. One simple step to take for slowing the rate at which rainwater drains into the storm drain system would be to install a water butt to collect and store rainwater in your garden. This will not only reduce the amount of water getting into the storm drains, but will also provide a valuable resource for the garden over periods of drought. Increasingly front gardens are being lost to provide spaces for car parking, not only is this a loss of valuable habitat, it also reduces the area of land available for rainwater to percolate slowly through the ground and puts greater pressure on the storm drain system. Indeed many Boroughs across the capital are introducing or strengthening policies relating to car parking in front gardens in order to address these issues.

It is not just householders who can help in the short to medium term. For developers, the Environment Agency works with other bodies to encourage more sustainable techniques for dealing with storm water run-off from new developments, these techniques are referred to as 'Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)'. At a regional level the Mayor of London, with the London Development Agency and English Nature, has recently issued a publication: Design for Biodiversity. This publication encourages developers and designers to employ more imaginative and environmentally sound practices for dealing with natural resource management in new developments, with a view to promoting greater biodiversity. Such practices include SUDs, and other measures such as the installation of green and brown roofs in developments.

Watermans Park gets a facelift

The London Borough of Hounslow and CIP have given Watermans Park in Brentford a new lease of life. The improvement works include new benches, litter bins and updated playground facilities. Tonnes of rubbish have been removed and overgrown shrubberies tidied up.

The reaction of local people has proved extremely positive with many more families now using the wonderful south facing riverside open space. The park is a perfect spot to sit and watch the tide coming in or out, backed by the fascinating Brentford Ait, where the visitor can spot herons, cormorants, foxes, ring necked parakeets and even the occasional seal!

Richmond Environment Network

The Richmond Environment Network is an umbrella organisation formed by the partnership of BTCV Richmond, the Environment Trust for Richmond upon Thames and the Thames Landscape Strategy as the Key Strategic Organisation for the Environment and Civic Pride. The objective of the network is to provide a one stop shop for support, information and guidance to organisations, groups and individuals working in the environment and civic pride sector within the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, with the overall vision of enhancing the long-term sustainability of this sector.

If you represent a group that operates within the London Borough of Richmond and would like your details included on the REN database, contact the REN Project Officer on 020 8831 6150.



Richmond Environment Network Partners: Jason Debney (Thames Landscape Strategy), Angela Kidner (Environment Trust for Richmond upon Thames), Vicki Felgate (BTCV Richmond) and Colin Cooper (REN Project Officer)

Spies : Arcadia and the secret war by Mavis Batey

Arcadia's landscape, history, royal connections and famous men are all being celebrated and perhaps now is the moment to commemorate the part that the Richmond area played in the Secret War. For some time it has been known that Latchmere House on Ham Common was the top secret detention centre, Camp 020, where infiltrated wartime spies were interrogated and 'turned' into double agents but exactly how greatly this helped the war effort, working with MI5 and the Bletchley Park code-breakers, has never been brought together before; of particular interest is how the citizens of Richmond unwittingly played a crucial part in the case of 'turning' one very important agent. The German spy in question was dropped by parachute with his wireless set in a field near Cambridge on the night of 19 September 1940 where a MI5 intelligence officer, having been tipped off, was lying in wait for him; he narrowly escaped being captured by a Home Guard patrol which would have meant an intelligence disaster as the publicity they would have given to their success would have destroyed the secrecy essential for turning infiltrated spies into double agents to work for us without the enemy knowing.

Mercifully German Agent 3725 (who was later to be nicknamed TATE by his Ham interrogators because he reminded them of the music hall comedian Harry Tate) was bundled into a van before Jack Jones & co could lay hands on him. As on being captured the MI5 officer addressed him in German, Tate thought that his mission was accomplished and that as he had been told England was virtually defeated and shortly after his arrival would become part of the Third Reich, all he had to do was to report and wait for the final capitulation. His guards' conversation made it clear to him that this was not the case and they made sure that Tate had a good view out of the rear window when they drove through Richmond so that he could see that far from being completely demoralised as he had been told to

expect, the citizens were going about their business as usual. He was so undermined by the fact that the Nazis had so deceived him that it only took him a week at Ham to agree to act as a double agent (of course the choice was fairly easy, as it was ultimately a question of hanging or turning and most chose the latter).

What had staggered Agent 3725 when he was driven slowly through Richmond on 20 September was that, far from being on its knees, the shops and pubs were open, buses and trains running, and well-dressed people, not a bit emaciated, were chatting on the streets. We thought it would add to the interest to supplement our spy's impression of the place by reading the local newspapers to see just what was going on at the time. The cinemas were advertising a wide choice of entertainment with film stars like Joan Fontaine, Laurence Olivier, Dorothy Lamour, Spencer Tracy, Anna Neagle and Tyrone Power to keep the home fires burning. The Ritz was closed, however, as it was housing refugees from the recent East End fire Blitz (to which Richmond had sent their river fire float) The town had by then had its own taste of the Blitz and our spy would have seen the air raid precautions, the buckets of water for stirrup pumps outside premises, the first aid posts, the signs to air raid shelters and perhaps not too obvious the discreet notices about value for money funeral services; everything was sufficiently under control, however to be able to advertise keep fit classes, harvest festivals, Red Cross bring and buy sales, and evening classes in progress. Well done Richmond! Not that there was not a state of awareness and preparedness. The Herald of 21 September called for all its readers to stand firm; 'It may be that before these lines appear in print the German attempt at invasion of our shores will have been launched. All the signs at the time of writing point to it and Mr Churchill clearly prepared the nation for the onslaught when he broadcast a week ago'. This was Hitler's so-called Operation Sealion, his planned

invasion after the French surrender which had left their whole coast line in his hands and provoked Churchill's 'we'll fight them on the beaches' rallying call to the nation. Tate's mission had been to find out how much we really had in the way of defences rather than bravado.

As soon as he agreed to collaborate as a double agent Tate was taken from Ham back to Hertfordshire, so that his first contact message announcing his safe arrival should be transmitted from the area where he had been dropped. The messages he was made to send back were low key while he was still under surveillance in case he had some pre-arranged signal to indicate that he had been captured, but he was soon judged reliable enough to take part in MI5's Operation DoubleCross whereby false information about our preparedness for war would be sent to Berlin. Tate was then made to fabricate a whole network of disaffected spies he had rounded up all over the country who could supply him with information about military installations and troop movements; for these he demanded money to be sent, about £80000 in all during the course of the war, which MI5 cheerfully pocketed.

So how did double agents under MI5 operate and how much use was made of their deception? Some used secret ink to send letters to post office box numbers in neutral countries or messages were inserted in the Times personal column but most, like Tate, who had landed with wireless sets, enciphered their messages using the hand cipher their masters had provided and sent it to their controller usually attached to German embassies at Madrid or Lisbon. Although watched over by his case officer and a wireless operator it was important that the double agent himself should send the message in Morse as to an expert interceptor each operator has his own characteristic finger print. The next stage in the enemy procedure was for the information to be sent to the Abwehr

simulating an army in the S.E at the same time as wireless silence was imposed on the real troops in the S.W. Tate's part in reinforcing the idea of a phantom army FUSAG (First United States Army Group) ready to embark for Calais was to maintain that he had visited the important railway junction at Ashford, where an advance control office had been set up from whom he had managed to obtain the military timetable showing the planned FUSAG movements of troops to Dover and Folkestone. Our spy, Tate, had in fact never been to Kent and was still installed with his case officer in Hertfordshire; he was, however, free to come and go from his 'safe house' and did in fact get married to a girl farm worker nearby and had a son. He was granted permission to stay here at the end of the war and entered the legal profession. Perhaps Tate junior might like to be taken back to Ham Common to see where it all began; if so the Thames Landscape Strategy would be happy to hear from him .

Wartime graffiti in house on Petersham Road

Did you know that in Gort House on Petersham Road, there is some wartime graffiti that is covered by listed status from English Heritage?

The basement of Gort House was adapted to serve as a World War II air raid shelter with ceiling reinforced with props and built in bunk beds. Its walls retain a remarkable collection of beautifully executed wartime graffiti in red, blue and green paint, mostly comprising humorous text and verse.

Hurst Park & Molesey Riverside



Councillor Ruth Lyon of Elmbridge Borough Council helps at a public consultation event

The Thames Landscape Strategy in partnership with Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council have carried out a number of consultation exercises with Molesey residents, on whether there is a need for a conservation management plan for Hurst Park and Molesey Riverside between Hampton Court Bridge and Hurst Park. On Saturday 3rd October, the Thames Landscape Strategy attended an open day with their marquee, asking residents to give their opinions on how they would like to see the area's landscape managed in the future. The day was a great success with over 300 people attending.

The next step in the consultation was a mailout of a questionnaire to all residents in the area through the Hurst Park Residents Association. The questionnaire was structured around a number of different management issues, ranging from access, signage and sports facilities through to scrub management, wildlife and biodiversity. Over 80 responses were received from local residents, both from the Molesey bank as well as the Hampton bank, along with a number of responses from residents of Garrick's Ait. Both the residents association and the Thames Landscape Strategy are pleased with the response rate, as the questionnaire was relatively long and postage had to be covered by respondents.

The findings from the survey showed an overwhelming majority in favour of a conservation management plan being developed for the riverside. Results also showed that residents were united in their views on a number of key issues. The key findings of the consultation will be drawn together in a report, which will be fed back to Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council. This report will also be fed back to the local community via the very active Hurst Park Residents Association.

Thames Clean Up

More than 100 volunteers helped clean up the Thames foreshore during last November's annual draw-off between Teddington and Richmond Locks organised by the Environment Trust for Richmond in partnership with the TLS, London's Arcadia, the River Thames Society and the Ham and Petersham Association.

During this period the gates on Richmond Lock that are normally closed at low tide to facilitate navigation are kept open and the river is allowed to drain out naturally at low tide. Whilst these low tides revealed many horrors to clear up they also reveal all sorts of treasures normally hidden beneath the waters that were recorded by Alison Shaw and Renata Kowalik from the Zoological Society of London. This is important for the TLS, as without a clear understanding of the river ecology it is difficult to plan works and management programmes. The more interesting species recorded were the freshwater shrimp, the river snail, pea muscles, zebra muscles, freshwater cockles, swan muscles, leeches, flatworm, bleak crabs and eels.

Education, Access & Interpretation

The Thames Landscape Strategy is committed to increasing education, access and understanding of the Thames environment through a variety of different media, including interpretation panels, volunteer days, walking leaflets, schools programmes and talks.

One of many education projects that has been carried out this year was in partnership with Orleans House Gallery called 'Natural Talent'. It was a huge success with 50 school children in year 2 involved in a cross curriculum activity over 4 days that culminated in a trip on the river aboard HM The Queen's Thames Barge 'The Jubilant'. The children learnt about the river's wildlife and why litter and pollution damage the environment so much.

The first of five new walking leaflets has been launched to encourage families to come down and discover the river.



To accompany these walking guides a series of interpretation panels are being installed at key locations such as rail and bus stations. Along the riverside, bronze plaques are being placed in the ground to aid the casual walker to understand their surroundings. Each plaque has a unique identification number that will correspond to interpretation boards and walking guides. These have been designed in a way to reduce the clutter of more traditional interpretative panels. It is hoped to roll these out across the TLS area over the coming years.



Support the Thames Landscape Strategy

The TLS is a unique 100 year blueprint for the river Thames between Hampton and Kew. Launched in 1994, it has won several national and international awards. Supported by a partnership of local authorities and national environmental agencies, over 180 projects and management proposals to enhance the riverside have been agreed. Already over 140 projects are complete or in progress. Sir David Attenborough is the Patron of the Strategy, which works closely with local community groups to implement projects. Funding has been secured from the lottery, charitable trusts and commercial sponsors. However, we need to raise every penny we can each year to enable the work to continue. If you would like to help please contact us at the address opposite or visit: www.thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk

 Hounslow



English Heritage



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



THE ROYAL PARKS



ENGLISH NATURE



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

Kew

PLANTS PEOPLE
POSSIBILITIES

PORT OF
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