

The Lost Avenue



The Setting

The Lost Avenue, also known as the Great River Avenue in Ham is the backbone to the network of views and vistas that define the Arcadian Thames linking Pope's Villa at Strawberry Hill with Richmond Hill. Laid out in the early Seventeenth Century as part of the Ham House network of avenues, this important asset was largely lost in the latter half of the Twentieth Century. In 2004, the Thames Landscape Strategy partially re-opened the vista between the river and Ham Street as a woodland ride. The ride is now a popular amenity providing a well-used walk at the heart of Ham Lands, popular with local people, dog walkers and visitors alike.

The Challenge

Scrub growth is however a constant management problem. The cleared avenue is already now largely inaccessible again as council budgets are reduced year-on-year. Due to the sensitive ecology of the Avenue, the best conservation option to manage the scrub and encourage a diverse grassland is through the use of heavy horses to move dead and felled wood (to create habitat piles in the adjacent woodland) and to cut the grass.

The Opportunity

The TLS has teamed up with Operation Centaur (an equine charity dedicated to preserving the use of working heavy horses, based at Hampton Court Palace) and local volunteer groups to carry out an annual programme of works. Sponsorship, volunteer and corporate volunteer opportunities are available (often working alongside heavy horses). The work programme includes vegetation management, harrowing, and mowing to keep the cleared areas open.

Total Cost of Project: £9,000 including Operation Centaur and TLS management / volunteers
12 volunteer day experience days available. Up to 20 volunteers per session.

To sponsor the annual conservation programme £9,000 To sponsor a day's work £900

Please contact Jason Debney at the TLS for information on corporate volunteer opportunities