

Hogsmill Valley Walk Strategy –

What have we been up to?

As we mentioned last time Local Area Strategies 3 and 4 have now been adopted. That means that four local area strategies now exist to guide works along the Hogsmill Valley Walk. These strategies cover different parts of the walk and highlight areas where improvements can be made:

- LAS 1 – Penrhyn Road to Heron Court.
- LAS 2 – Knights Park Bridge to Villiers Road.
- LAS 3 – Villiers Road to the A3.
- LAS 4 – The A3 to Old Kingston Road.

Path Investigation

Walkers will be aware that the Hogsmill Valley Walk leaves the Hogsmill River at Villiers Road and takes walkers around Lower Marsh Lane before rejoining the river after Berrylands Station. Because we would much prefer (check out Local Area Strategy 3) to continue the walk along the Hogsmill River we recently completed a study into the possibility of changes to the Hogsmill Valley Walk near the Kingston Cemetery and Kingsmeadow Stadium. The study looked at issues such as stability of the river bank and possible impacts on nearby land uses. We are just awaiting the final engineering report and hope to have the results for you in our next issue!

New signs have arrived!!

In March 2005 we installed new signs along the Hogsmill Valley Walk. Check out the photos! To avoid increasing the number of signs on our streets the new signs also contain the London Loop and Thames Down Link logos. As well as new signs, you might notice new wooden waymarker posts and a couple of special wooden fingerarm posts pointing out the direction of St John the Baptist Church in Maldens and Coombe.



Goodbye Suzanne and Thanks!

That's right, Suzanne West has said farewell to the Royal Borough of Kingston to pursue environmental challenges elsewhere. We wish Suzanne well and thank her for all her efforts on the Hogsmill Valley Walk!

We hope to be able to introduce Suzanne's replacement in the next edition of the Hogsmill News! So watch this space! In the meantime Frances Smith and her helpers are continuing Suzanne's good work.

Pedestrian survey

Some of you may have participated in surveys that were undertaken along the Hogsmill Walk in September 2004 and again in March this year. The results are being put together and will be used to plan future works on the Hogsmill River. The surveys help us to work out how often different parts of the Hogsmill Valley Walk are used and also give us the chance to get some feedback on what you would like to see happen along the Hogsmill. After all, it's your Hogsmill!

Permaculture Reserve Workshop

Sunday May 29th is the next workday in the permaculture reserve. The intention for this workshop is to create a 'vegetable mound' on what is effectively a slowly-decomposing compost heap! The idea comes from a German method for growing early vegetables without a greenhouse. Piles of dead bramble (collected over previous months) will form the core of the mound. On top we'll be adding horse manure, vegetable waste, compost, turf and leaves. And on the very top we'll put soil and the seedlings. As the organic matter rots it will slowly feed the growing vegetables, providing both nutrients and heat. We intend to grow marrows, pumpkins, courgettes, marigolds and sunflowers in the first year; however what we actually plant will depend on donations!

If this sounds like fun to you then please come along, any time after 10.30 am on the 29th May. And don't forget that tea and biscuits will be provided. Bring along secateurs (for those who want to continue the 'battle of the bramble'), strong gloves and any gardening equipment you think you'll need!

What's On?

Sunday 19th June

The Hogsmill River Party

Come and join us at the Blue Bridge for a great day out! For more details on this year's event see the article opposite.

Last Sunday of every month

Permaculture Reserve Workshops

Tucked between Knollmead Primary School on the Sunray Estate, the University sports ground and Malden Manor is one of the Borough's hidden treasures. Here, on the site of a natural spring that feeds into the Hogsmill Valley, is the 'Kingston Permaculture Reserve'. Since early 2004 the last Sunday of every month has become a regular 'work day' at the permaculture site with volunteers and HAG members pitching in to improve the site. See article for more details.

Next workshop: Sunday 29 May 2005

Future dates for your diary

**June 26th, July 31st, September 25th,
October 30th**

Please note that there is no meeting in August due to a bank holiday.

*Please contact Gwen Mark with any offers/ideas by
e-mail gwen.mark@zen.co.uk
or call 0208 549 1294.*

Hogsmill Happenings! With the Hogsmill Action Groups (HAGs)

On 5th December 2004 Marie-Claire Edwards (our Ecology Officer) organised an action day at Kingston Cemetery planting a new, native hedgerow (and a large number of daffodils). This replaces the overgrown old hedgerow, which wasn't native and was removed as part of Kingston Cemetery fencing and maintenance works. The new hedgerow is doing well and will add important habitat to the Cemetery. Hedgerows are important for biodiversity as they provide habitat for birds, small mammals and insects. Hedgerows are one of the Habitat Action Plans in the Kingston Biodiversity Action Plan.

Other recent HAG events include a bramble-bashing day at the Knollmead permaculture site in January and a February willow workshop at the same site. The willow-workshop included harvesting of willows and demonstrations on how to turn the harvest into fences!

The Hogsmill River Party is back !

Sunday 19th June is the date for your diaries and Knights Park Bridge (aka the Blue Bridge) is the place to be!!

So, what does the day hold in store?

From 2pm there will be information on HAGs, wildlife, local interest groups, walks and talks along the river, drawing and crafts activities and historical story telling. From 6pm until 10pm there will be music and dancing (with bar and food) with an opportunity to meet your neighbours living and working along the Hogsmill. Fingers crossed for kindly weather.

Don't forget this event is organised by a group of residents, so all contributions and offers of help are welcome! We need to hear from all those talented musicians, dancers, cooks (homemade cakes, biscuits and vegetarian food), artists, story-tellers, organisers, PR people and qualified first-aiders that we know are out there in our community. A range of jobs need doing so we depend on everyone doing a little to keep the work-load down.

If you would like to be kept up to date with regular news and information on the Hogsmill, or have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Community Environmental Projects Officer on 020 8547 5347, email environment@rbk.kingston.gov.uk or write to the address opposite.



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