

River Thames Scheme



Protecting our communities
Securing our economy
Enhancing our Thames

August 2024

WALKING TRAILS

DESBOROUGH ISLAND & BROAD WATER LOOPS

About the River Thames Scheme (RTS)

The River Thames Scheme represents a new landscape-based approach to creating healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable communities by tackling flooding with a new flood channel while enhancing open green spaces and sustainable travel routes in the area. Our scheme goals look to encourage economic growth, increase biodiversity and by doing so, respond to the dual challenges of climate change and nature recovery.

DID YOU KNOW?

The River Thames Scheme aims to achieve carbon neutrality by using sustainable construction practices, renewable energy sources, and extensive tree planting. This makes it one of the most environmentally conscious infrastructure projects in the UK.

For more information, visit our website www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk or scan one of the QR codes below:



QR: RTS Walking Trails page



QR: RTS Active Travel page



QR: RTS Habitat Creation page

Created with the help of



Protect - Enhance - Secure

www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk
enquiries@riverthamesscheme.org.uk

WILDLIFE SPOTS

a

This is a very common area for many **water birds** including:

- Mute Swan
- Canada Goose
- Egyptian Goose
- Greylag Goose

b

Weeping Willow

One of the worlds fastest-growing trees, it thrives in wetlands and can often be found on riverbanks and by ponds

c

Pedunculate Oak tree (Veteran)

The name comes from the 'peduncles' (stalks) the acorns grow on

d

Blackthorn bush

An early blossoming tree with tough wood and bulbous sloe fruits

e

Bulrush/Cattails plant

A tall plant with sausage-like seed heads and broad leaves found in freshwater wetlands

f

Field Maple tree (Veteran)

The UK's only true native Maple tree - A producer of the 'helicopter' fruits and sticky sap, and very tolerant of air pollution

g

Snowberry plant

A hardy shrub with sticky leaves and toxic mini marshmallow-looking drupes (not berries - like a cherry or olive)

h

Alder tree

A fast growing, rot resistant, Nitrogen absorbing, wetland tree that produce small, woody cones that contain their seeds

i

This area is a great place to spot **Grey Heron** living in this part of the River Thames

j

Clover & Thistle patches

Clover is a natural soil fertilizer and food source for pollinators as well as a biodiversity habitat for a wide range of insects.

Thistles in bloom have a vibrant pink flower atop a strong stem with prickly leaves, a defense mechanism to deter herbivores.

k

Wild Cherry

A fast-growing, fragrant blossoming tree with small cherries and rich, red-brown wood

l

This area is a hotspot for **Damselflies** between April and September

m

Evergreen Rose

A special member of the Rose family, blooming year round and hardy in nature, making it a perfect food source for pollinators

n

Elderberry

A wildlife haven due to its strong branches, providing a safe nesting structure for birds and a food source with its tasty berries

o

Walnut Tree

A late bloomer with little white flower clusters and hanging catkins, it produces small green husked fruits

POINTS OF INTEREST

1 Walton Bridge

Site of a ferry crossing from the 15th century until 1750 when the first of six successive bridges across Thames between Walton-on-Thames and Shepperton parishes was opened. First bridge completed was in 1750. The current bridge opened in 2013.

c1400 - Ferry crossing

1750 - Arch bridge - Made of wood - Designed by William Etheridge - Featured in the painting Canaletto by Daniel Defoe (1754)

1783 - Ferry crossing

1788 - Vaulted arch bridge - Made of stone and brick - Designed by James Paine, designer of the current Chertsey Bridge and Richmond Bridge, and a previous Kew Bridge (1789) - Collapsed in 1859

1859 - Ferry crossing

1864 - Truss bridge - Made of iron, brick and stone - Designed by E. T. Murray - Damaged

in 1940 during the Second World War - Kept in use until 1985 for pedestrians and cyclists

1953 - Temporary bridge - Callender-Hamilton modular truss bridge - Made of wood and steel - Design developed by A. M. Hamilton - Kept in use until 2013 for pedestrians and cyclists

1999 - Temporary bridge - Poorly designed leading to a number of problems - Predicted structural weakness by 2015

2013 - Current bridge - Through arch bridge - Made of steel and concrete - Designed by Atkins

2 Desborough Cut & Island

Desborough Cut is an artificial channel in the River Thames, upstream of Walton Bridge. It was completed in 1935 to improve water flow and ease navigation on the river, also creating Desborough Island. The cut is 1km long, more than halving the distance from one end to the other, bypassing the meandering stretch.

Desborough Island Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) is a large area of neutral, species-rich grassland, consisting of 35 acres of open green space on the western side of the island.

The island and cut were named after Lord Desborough, the longest serving chairman of the Thames Conservancy and the man to declare the cut open.

3 4 5 Grade II Listed Building - Tax Post

c1860 - Appx 3.5 feet high - Metal - Four legged plinth with chamfered pier above under moulded capital band and pyramidal top. City of London shield cast on the front with lettering on the pier reading "24 & 25 / VICT. CAP. 42". A coal and wine tax post indicating the boundary at which duty was payable, that on coal dating back to the 1660's.

3) Grid Reference: TQ 09080 66140

4) Grid Reference: TQ 07910 66430

5) Grid Reference: TQ 08147 66422



SHARE WITH US WHAT YOU FIND!

Use the hashtag #RTSWalkingTrails and tag one of our social media accounts to show us what you spotted on your walk!

- @RiverThamesScheme
- @ThamesScheme
- @RiverThamesScheme.uk
- @RiverThamesScheme

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

Mesolithic and Neolithic

- A Later Mesolithic Thames pick and Neolithic greenstone axe
- Mesolithic/Neolithic flint
- Possible Neolithic flints
- Attributed generally to the prehistoric; a pebble hammer or macehead

Bronze Age

- A sword, a palstave, and a rapier

Roman

- A possible Roman fishing weir and Roman artefacts, including roof tiles

Early Medieval

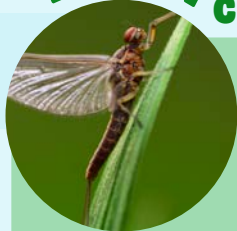
- A cinerary urn, thought to be Anglo-Saxon
- A Saxon barrow cemetery
- A decorated Saxon bowl
- An Anglo-Saxon sword, scramasax and spur

Medieval

- Cropmarks possibly indicating the original location of part of Oatlands Park
- A possible medieval pot



MAYFLY CAENIS BESKIDENSIS



In November 2022, ecologists working on the **River Thames Scheme** found a very rare Mayfly in this area of Surrey.

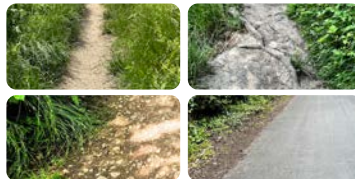
The *Caenis beskidensis* Mayfly had not been spotted in the UK for 49 years and had never been seen in the River Thames.

The invertebrate, listed as 'Nationally Rare' on the Great Britain Rarity Status list and last sighted in Herefordshire in 1973, was discovered near Walton Bridge as part of the River Thames Scheme's routine survey works. Historically, these Mayfly have been found in small and medium-sized streams.

This was a superbly exciting and history-defining find for both the scheme and all UK environmentalists, and demonstrates just how important the survey work that the scheme's ecologists do is. By establishing the value of the existing habitats living around the river, the scheme will be able to put plans in place to protect them during the scheme construction and help them thrive for the future.

Terrain

- A mix of looser and more solid ground throughout the routes
- A number of large roots protruding through the ground, especially on Desborough Island
- Some very narrow (1ft) areas of path, especially on Desborough Island



Legend

- Desborough Island Loop
- Broad Water Loop
- Cafe
- Toilets
- Parking
- Stairs
- Bin
- Bench

The **River Thames Scheme** are proposing a number of improvements and creations of green and blue habitats as part of the scheme. We have labelled some of the areas.

- Proposed woodland habitat
- Proposed meadow and grassland habitat
- Proposed scrub habitat
- Proposed reedbed habitat
- Proposed pond creation

Desborough Island Loop

Distance: 4.38km / 2.72mi
Duration: 01:07 - 01:24

Broad Water Loop

Distance: 4.45km / 2.77mi
Duration: 01:08 - 01:25

How to get here

By car
Covey Sale Car Park, Walton Lane, Walton on Thames, KT12 1QW (free)

By public transport
Bus: 400, 458, 555, 461, 514, 515 - Train: Shepperton Station (+30 min walk)

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Be considerate of the countryside
- Dispose of litter/dog poo in bins
- Keep dogs under control & in sight
- Stay on the public footpaths
- Be careful around bodies of water
- Leave wildlife where it is
- Leave gates/property as found