

Boston Manor Park

NATURE AND WELLBEING ACTIVITY TRAIL 1

Autumn 2022

Grown ups: This circular trail is designed to introduce your children to some of the diverse habitats in Boston Manor Park. The House was built in 1623, and all Park buildings and grounds have benefitted from major renovations funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund since 2019. A major aim of the work was to improve the Park's habitats for wildlife and people. Look out for more outdoor (and indoor) trails as works are completed, the Park evolves, and the beautifully restored House re-opens.

Children: Are you ready to explore the different habitats in Boston Manor Park? Let's go!

1 ADMIRE AN ANCIENT TREE



Head for the lawn in front of the big House. Boston Manor House was built 400 years ago, and past owners wanted an impressive landscape to look at through their windows. Many of them planted trees that are tall, majestic and very old now! Can you see the Cedar of Lebanon in the middle of the lawn?

It's almost 300 years old! Old trees support lots of wildlife, as well as give us oxygen to breathe, and shade in the hot summers. Perhaps you can sit on the lower branch of the great old Cedar tree and spot a squirrel leaping off a higher branch?

2 RELAX BY THE LAKE



Water is a very important feature for helping wildlife and attracting a wider range of mini beasts into a habitat ecosystem. Lots of pollinating insects start off in water - dragonflies spend about two years as larvae (called nymphs) in water, then only live for a few weeks as flying (and

pollinating) insects! Can you see the lake? Big old houses often have lovely lakes in their gardens and water has a calming effect on people. If you stand near the lake, do you feel a bit more relaxed? Take a few slow deep breaths too and see if that helps.

3 WOODLAND ADVENTURE TIME



The new woodland paths start near the lake, and will take you into Boston Manor Park's own enchanted forest. Walk along the paths, slowly, seeing if you can spot or hear any birds. On your way through the forest, did you see some bird boxes and bat boxes? Bat boxes don't have a

hole on the front, because bats get into the box through a slit at the bottom. The Park has now got over 30 boxes erected on trees, to help birds make safe nests in spring and summer, and for bats to sleep in during the day. Come on one of our bat walks in warmer months- you will see lots of Pipistrelles and Noctules at dusk, especially over water.

4 DISCOVER THE PARK'S 'URBAN' NATURAL HABITAT!



That probably sounds strange - how can the Park have a natural habitat under a huge motorway like the M4? If you follow the path until you reach the 'flyover' (the motorway goes above your head) you will find our stag beetle loggery. This was created to help our largest land insect thrive



because baby stag beetles need to spend more than 5 years as larvae (white grubs) underground before they emerge as the big beautiful black beetle for a few months. Beetles are very important 'recyclers'. They eat dead and decaying natural matter (like leaves and fallen branches) so nutrients can be returned to the soil where plants can use them. (Just look at the loggery, please don't climb on it, as you are much bigger than a beetle.)

5 VISIT THE WEIR



If you go across the metal bridge near the loggery, you will be walking over the river Brent. Keep walking until the end, underneath the flyover, and you will reach the weir. This is where lots of cormorants, herons, seagulls and even kingfishers hang out - hoping to grab a fishy bite to eat. A weir is a series of wide steps across the water that help control its flow and avoid flooding. After seeing the weir, head back to the metal bridge.

6 EXPLORE OUR TREASURE ISLAND (CLITHEROW'S ISLAND)



The Clitherow family owned the House and Park for over 250 years, and so the Park's natural island is named after them. You can reach the island along the wooden path just before the metal bridge. You will reach the Grand Union Canal, and the concrete overspill (also designed to

help with flooding). The Canal is manmade, but lots of wildlife lives all along it and in it, and people do too! Look at their barges and narrow boats. Do you think it would be nice to live near a canal or a river? This canal goes all the way to Birmingham.

7 GO BUG HUNTING



Head back along the white stony path under the flyover towards the play areas. In the wooded section near the tennis courts and the play areas, you will see some log piles, and piles of bark chipping, in several places. These log piles are habitats for mini beasts, so see if you can see any ants, woodlice,

or spiders and then go and climb up on the giant metal spider climbing frame near the fitness equipment. Running, exercising and climbing is really good for us - try and use all the different play equipment in Boston Manor Park when you visit, but don't forget to use the Park's natural furniture too - the Park manager leaves big fallen logs on the ground for nature AND children to enjoy ☺ And mushrooms love to grow on them too.

8 MARK YOUR MUSHROOMS (ON THE MAP)



Fungi is the scientific word for mushrooms. Mushrooms like to grow in decaying, damp conditions, and what you see on the ground is the fruit of the mushroom. They often pop up in the autumn. You might see them at the bases of trees, but underground there is a whole network of connections called a mycelium, which links trees and

plants that may be far apart overground. How many different types have you seen along this trail? Mark their locations on the map so you can try and find them at the same time next year. It is safest not to touch a mushroom, because it could make you ill, and it is doing an important job in the Park ecosystem.

9 SING A SONG



There are some wonderful Mulberry trees on the House side of the tennis courts. Mulberry trees produce delicious fruit (birds love to eat them too) and your parents or grandparents might remember singing a nursery rhyme about them when they were young. Listen to it on YouTube and try to sing along. Singing also makes us feel happy so sing with a smile and make up your own words!

*"Here we go round the Mulberry bush, This is the way we ...enjoy our Park,
The Mulberry bush, Enjoy our Park,
The Mulberry bush, Enjoy our Park,
Here we go round the Mulberry bush This is the way we enjoy our park,
On a cold and frosty morning! On a cold and frosty morning!"*

10 REMEMBER THE QUEEN



You should be able to see the wooden carving of a crown, which is near the House and on the other side of the path, opposite the Mulberry Trees. It was created to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee earlier this year, marking 70 years since she became Queen. She died in September 2022, at

the time this Trail 1 was being created. Stop for a moment, close your eyes and imagine how different your life would be if you were a king or a queen.

WELL DONE ON COMPLETING TRAIL 1, AND ENJOY BEING YOU - HAVE FUN, BE KIND AND HELP THE NATURAL WORLD IF YOU CAN. TRAIL 2 COMING IN SPRING/SUMMER 2023!

Keep up to date with our outdoor events on our Facebook page [@BMPoutdoorevents](#) or join our email list by emailing bostonmanorpark@hounslow.gov.uk so you don't miss out on any future fun



Trail created by Natasha Gavin, Learning and Volunteer Coordinator

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