

Ecology

The River Crane passes through a patchwork of open spaces each with its own distinct ecology. Many of the spaces have high environmental value and include woodland, wet woodland, meadow and heathland.

Hounslow Heath

The surviving area of the once extensive Hounslow Heath includes an environmentally diverse mixture of heathland, acid grassland and some scrub. The site includes a visitor's centre and nature trails.

Wet Woodland

The riverside path passes areas of mixed woodland and scrub which includes ash, willow, sycamore and some oak. In Donkey Wood there is an area of wet woodland. Here, alder trees grow in the wetter conditions, where the river regularly floods over its banks. This alder is managed by the ancient practice of coppicing. The shoots of the alder are harvested on a regular basis and the tree then regrows from the stool. The harvested wood is used in woodland management.

If you want to learn more about green spaces on the River Crane please visit:

FORCE

Email info@force.org.uk
or visit www.force.org.uk



Friends of the
River Crane Environment



@FriendsRivCrane

Hounslow Council

Telephone 0845 456 2796
Visit www.hounslow.gov.uk

Crane Valley Partnership

www.cranevalley.org.uk/contact

Other leaflets in this series:

Crane Park to Hounslow Heath

Dragonfly Trail (Crane Park)

The Lower Crane Valley

Donkey Wood & Brazil Mill Wood

Green Spaces on the River Crane



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HEATHROW

A30 Great South West Road



Cranford Park & Grand Union Canal



423
482
203

203
482



Hatton Cross 0.7m



Hounslow West 1.0m



Heathrow
Balancing Ponds

Causeway

Green Lane
Water Meadows

Blast Mounds

Donkey Wood

River Crane

River Gdns
Mill Way
Upper Duke of Northumberland's River

116
635
235

116
117



Boardwalk



Blast Mounds



Baber Bridge



Mill Stone



Wet Woodland

Donkey Wood & Brazil Mill Wood

Green Spaces along
the River Crane





The River

In this stretch the River Crane has diverse habitats bordering the river channel. The river was altered to provide water power to mills for industrial processes from the 13th century. In the 16th century the upper Duke of Northumberland's River was constructed to supplement water power in the river.

This man-made river continues to link the River Colne to the River Crane, enriching the river with water from a chalk fed stream. The Roman road between Brentford and Staines would have crossed the River Crane in the area of Baber Bridge.



Links Upstream & Downstream

It is possible to follow the River Crane both upstream and downstream from Donkey Wood. Upstream and beyond Heathrow Airport is Cranford Park, the Grand Union Canal and Minet Park. Downstream there is a continuous linear path through Feltham Marshalling Yards, Pevensey Nature Reserve and Crane Park.

The Mills

This area has a rich industrial history and remnants of this past can be seen in structures along the river. The Bedfont Powder Mills, built in 1635 as a sword mill, soon converted to the manufacture of gunpowder. In 1833 Curtis and Harvey leased the Bedfont Powder Mills from the Duke of Northumberland. Since 1820 they had manufactured gunpowder downstream at the Hounslow Gunpowder Mills. The mills continued in use until 1926. There was a second mill near Baber Bridge, described from the 18th century as "Brazil Mill". Brazil wood was processed into a red pigment used as a dye. By the 19th Century it was known as 'The North Feltham Cartridge Factory'.



Gunpowder Mill by Joseph Lancaster, 1912



Bedfont Gunpowder Mill, Hounslow Heath
Not attributed, c1870