

the outdoor classroom playground

Curriculum focus:

History

Keywords:

Twentieth Century history, Local history, land use, contemporary documents, town planning, literacy, newspaper reporting, design and technology, role play, maps, playgrounds, leisure

Skills learnt in this worksheet include:

Investigating the local area
Undertaking field work
Observing and questioning
Collecting and recording evidence
Using primary sources
Historical research
Developing an argument
Role play

Resources required for this activity:

Summary sheet
1896 Sketch map of Mereway
Newspaper layout sheet

Extract from Richmond and Twickenham Times 1 July 1931

KNELLER GARDENS

Official Opening of Another Lung for Twickenham.

“Saturday last was a day which the school children of Twickenham, and particularly those living in the western end of the borough, will long remember for it marked the opening of a recreation ground of some 12 acres to be know as Kneller Gardens.

Of late years a large population has grown up at the Meadway and on the Redway Estate, and with the building of the new Kneller Schools in the near future some such ground was sadly needed.

The top end of the grounds has been set aside for children and fitted with a chute and roundabouts. In other parts of the grounds there have been laid out tennis courts, miniature golf, and other games such as hockey cricket and football will follow for the adults.

Accommodation is provided for them in the large pavilion which commands a view of the whole ground.

Large numbers attended the opening ceremony, which took place in front of the pavilion. The Mayor (Alderman J. Owen JP) and the Mayoress (Miss Mildred Owen) were in attendance.”

the outdoor classroom playground

“Councillor P.H. Lenman made a short speech. He said that everyone present must pay tribute to the borough engineer, borough gardener, and staff who had worked very hard in order to get the ground ready for the opening ceremony. The land had formed part of the Jubilee Farm estate and had cost £3,656.Approximately 6 acres of ground immediately adjoining Kneller Gardens would be used in the near future for the erection of the first senior school in the borough, and accommodation would eventually be provided there for over 1,000 children. The Chertsey arterial road would be constructed in close proximity to the new pleasure ground and with the completion of the extension of Meadway there would be easy access from all parts of the borough.....

A refreshing tea awaited the mayoral party in a large marquee at the back of the pavilion. By this time there were many hundreds of rate payers and children in the grounds and much attention was centred on a tennis tournament. At the close of play the Mayoress presented the cups and prizes.

The Mayor was afforded a great ovation as he stood on the steps of the chute [slide] and addressed the children, urging them to take the greatest care of the apparatus. A further ovation awaited him when at the invitation of his colleagues he led the way in trying the chute. It made him a hero with the children.”



Historical background

Whitton station was opened in 1930 in order to serve the new housing estates in Whitton and West Twickenham.

Many other civic projects were developed at this time to serve the growing population of the town, for example, The Great Chertsey Road was built, the West Middlesex sewage works were built on Mogden Lane superseding the Mereway sewage works. As part of this urban development Parks and Open Spaces were planned, this included both Crane Park and Kneller Gardens the first park in the Twickenham to have a children's playground.

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Ideas for activities on site:

1. **Study the 1896 sketch map of Mereway to look at the land use prior to the building of the park.**

Discuss and record on a summary sheet:

- What was the land used for before Twickenham Borough Council bought the land?
- What does the map show that the land around the park used for?
- Look around you. What is the land use around the park today?
- Why do you think that there was a need for a park?

2. **Read the account of the opening of Kneller Gardens from the Richmond and Twickenham Times dated 1 July 1931**

Divide into groups. Each group should nominate a reporter to interview the group members.

Nominate roles for all additional group members.

These could include: a child, a parent, a park keeper, a member of the council, the borough gardener, the Mayor, the Mayoress, the winner of the tennis cup etc.

The reporter should interview each member of the group, taking notes so that a newspaper article can be written up later by the whole group.

Questions that could be asked include the following:

- What are the facilities in the park?
- What is the best thing about the new park?
- Where did you / your children play before the park opened?
- Why is it important to have somewhere to play?
- Why did you build a park here?
- How much did it cost to build the park?
- What did you plant in the park?
- How will you look after the park?

the outdoor classroom playground

Groups can write up the newspaper article together using interview material, this can be done using computer software or by hand using the newspaper article blank sheet.

3. Look carefully at Kneller Gardens.

- Make a list of all the different facilities that can be found in the park, alternatively you can use the blank map, to indicate where the facilities are in Kneller Gardens.
- Discuss all the changes that you can see in the park from the description given in the newspaper article written at the opening of the park in 1931.
- Mark all these changes on your base map.
- Groups could discuss why they think that the park has changed over the last 70 years.

4. Design a new park.

- Make a list of all the different things that people use the park for.
- What kind of park are you going to design? Make a list of all the facilities that you would include in an ideal park.
- Draw a map or diagram of your ideal park. This can be done by hand or using a computer programme.

5. Discuss how the park will change over the next 70 years.

- Make a list of all the facilities that will be found in the park.
- Groups could discuss what the park would be like if they took their grand children to the park in 2060.
- Why will these changes have happened?

Further resources:

Information about the Green Flag Awards for Parks and Open Spaces, together with a management plan for Kneller Gardens .

www.richmond.gov.uk/home/leisure_and_culture/parks_and_open_spaces/parks_awards_and_accolades/green_flag_awards

Green space is the UK organisation which advocates and gives advice on well planned, designed and managed parks and open spaces

www.green-space.org.uk

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