

# Crane Park Island

Address:  
Ellerman Avenue  
Whitton  
TW2 6AA

Entrance: Enter Crane Park island. There are entrances by footpath via Ellerman Avenue or Great Chertsey Road.

How to get here: The nearest railway station is Whitton, a 15-minute walk away.

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## Facilities

**Parking** – There is no parking as it is situated in Crane Park. Parking can be found via Ellerman Avenue and then Crane Park can be accessed from there via gates between the houses (near to no 54, be aware of restrictions).

**Access** – Most of the island is accessible by wheelchair, but one footpath has steps. Paths range from smooth to dirt. There are a number of bridges providing access to the island without steps. Along the guided walk there is a bench, and seating by the river-dipping platform.

**Toilets** – There is no toilet access.

## Health & safety

Your group must have a mobile phone with service and a first aid kit. Make sure you know your nearest A&E and that you have the emergency contact details for all of the young people in your group.

Make sure you refer back to the Explorer pack for detailed instructions and advice on risk assessments and health and safety.



# Crane Park

-  Entrance
-  Dragonfly Trail (cycle & walking)
-  Footpath
-  Footpath (disabled access)
- B** Bus stop
- P** Parking on adjacent roads



THE SHOT TOWER  
(cycle parking)



CRANE PARK ISLAND  
NATURE RESERVE

PLAY AREA



London  
Wildlife  
Trust

## History and facts

The river Leigh flows either side of Crane Park Island which is found in Crane Park in Twickenham. This site was formerly the Hounslow Gunpowder Mills, used for making gunpowder pellets. Other mills producing swords, oil and flower lined the river banks as far back as 1066. Soon after the closing of the mills it became an ornamental pond but soon after this it was drained to create the nature reserve in 1981. London Wildlife Trust has managed this site from 1986 until today.

## Habitat

This site is one of London Wildlife Trust's smallest reserves at 2 hectares, Crane Park Island is host to a surprising number of habitats. The different habitats supporting wildlife include reedbed, ponds and a freshwater river, woodland and scrub. During the autumn and winter when birds are not nesting the site is managed by selective reedbed removal and invasive species removal. This reserve is also a Site of Metropolitan Importance and used for education sessions in the local community.

### Things to see:

- Willow
- Blackthorn
- Kingfisher
- Elder
- Common reed
- Horse chestnut
- Bullhead fish
- Millipede
- Centipede

# 1. Shot Tower

**Enter Crane Park Island through Crane Park.**

Before you enter the island look to your left. You will see the Shot Tower which was built in 1828 and used to make lead shot used for firing weapons. Molten lead was poured through a sieve at the top and formed shot as it fell to the bottom of the tower, where it was cooled in a tank of water.



# 2. Meadow

Look to your right and you will see a small meadow where birds, insects and small mammals make their homes in the long grass.

**Carry on walking straight until the path splits into 3, take the right path down the steps to walk alongside the river.**



# 3. Millrace

On your right you will see a wooden wheel which was used for grinding the ingredients of gunpowder, it was powered by the flow of the river.

**Carry on walking along the path until you see reed beds on your left.**

## 4. Reedbed

Here you will find reed bed, which is important for birds that nest in the reed as well as insects and amphibians that live in this habitat.

At the side of the reedbed is willow, which can be used to make baskets.

**Carry on walking straight up the path until you reach the pond on your left.**



## 5. Pond

Here is the pond which supports a range of different organisms. From invertebrates, like water skaters to amphibians, like frogs. In this pond you can find 2 different types of frogs...the marsh frog and the common frog.

**Turn left straight after the pond at the stag beetle post.**



## 6. Minibeasting

Here is the overgrown minibeast area. Don't be afraid of the long grass, you can walk along the path and look around. There will be old logs on the floor that you can pick up and look under. Keep your eyes peeled for frogs and toads hiding under the logs too! Be sure to leave the logs as you found them.



## 6. Bug Hotel

You will see stacked up logs in triangles, these are bug hotels made by volunteers from old wood. This is the perfect habitat for animals to hide like toads, solitary bees, bumblebees, ladybirds and woodlice. You could make a bug hotel, with old waste in your home or youth club.

**Leave the minibeasting area and carry on walking up the path.**



## 7. River Crane East

**Look to your right and notice the trail stake with the fish on it. Follow this trail to the right and you will reach the triangular dock at the end of the island where you can enjoy the River Crane.**



## River Crane East

The River Crane is home to many different organisms because it is very clean with oxygen giving plants. You can find fish like bullheads and minnows. Keep a look out for any flashes of blue and orange near the river! There is a beautiful kingfisher bird that lives nearby.



## 8. Meadow

**Leave the dock and carry on walking to the right, around the island.**

On your left you will see a meadow that has elder and hawthorne around the edges which birds use to nest, hide and feed. Stand still for a few minutes and see if you can hear any birds singing, you might even spot a robin.

**Carry on walking down the main path.**



## 9. Glade

**Carry on along the main path until you reach a large opening of grass with old brick ruins on your right. Walk off the main path down the dirt track towards the ruins.**

The ruins were once part of the gunpowder mill. But are now home to wild plants, why not see if you can spot some.



## 10. Horse chestnut

**Carry on walking along the new path follow it to the left until you reach a large horse chestnut tree.**

An old legend is that the top of the tree was blown off in WW2 and then the branches grew back. Can you see where the explosion hit the tree?







## 11. River Crane West

**Take the path to the right of the Horse Chestnut and follow it round until you get to the end of the island and meet the River Crane.**

You can see many fish if you stand still and look into the clear slow flowing river. It's a great place for fish to live and have offspring.

## 12. Shot Tower

**Turn around and follow the straight path back to the entrance, passing by the shot tower on your right.**

