



Discover the Source: *Draft Exhibition Outline*



The River Wandle has a rich natural, cultural and industrial heritage; and one that should be celebrated. Over the years, the Wandle chalkstream has played a vital role in communications, trade and human settlement. The river was crucial to local industry and has associations with William Morris, Liberty Print Works, calico printing, and the production of watercress and lavender. Nowadays the river flows through a high-density mix of residential and commercial development, historic centres of industry and a number of valued parks and open spaces.

With such a wide-ranging story, encompassing natural, cultural and industrial heritage, it is not surprising that the character of the Wandle landscape is unique.

This exhibition aims to celebrate the unique Wandle landscape with the local community by telling the story of the source of this much loved chalkstream and how it has changed over time under human influence.

Through the Discover the Source of the Wandle project, volunteers and a local Contractor have researched the source of the Wandle through time, investigating local archives, historic maps, paintings and books; as well as remnant built and natural features in the local landscape such as stench pipes and dry channels; building a story of how the source has shaped the local community over time, and how society has, in turn, altered the river and its sources.

The exhibition will take the materials and evidence collected by the volunteers and design an exhibition to showcase the findings to a wider audience; helping everyone enjoy and understand their local Wandle landscape better.

Outlined below is the draft exhibit story which showcases the project findings. The draft exhibit has 9 boards, however this is open to alternative suggestions by contractors. Each board will summarise a part of the project's research and aim to increase understanding and awareness of a specific issue, e.g. the link between water use and the volume of water in a river. Together, all of the boards combined will tell the whole story from past to present to future, and at the end visitors will be encouraged to pledge an action to encourage small changes that will help protect the river such as saving water.

INFORMATION BOARD #1 – INTRODUCTION

Content:

- Introduction to the Discover the Source Project and the exhibition.
- What is the “source” of a river?
- A map of the Wandle in London (created by the Contractor) showing the location and geography of the river - the location of its two ‘arms’, its main channel and its mouth flowing in to the Thames.
- The Wandle as a chalkstream – a rare habitat globally.
- Link to the self-guided walk leaflet to encourage people to explore the project further.

INFORMATION BOARD #2 – CROYDON ARM IN THE GEOLOGICAL PAST (BEFORE MAN)

Content:

- The historic geography of the Wandle, and how the river used to be much larger pre Ice Age.
- Evidence of this historic river system such as a historic topographical map showing the past extent of the Wandle created by the Contractor.
- Highlight the evidence of this past system that you can still see in the landscape.
- The role of climate change as one factor that has influenced the location of the source in the past.
- Image of a mammoth tooth supplied by Horniman Museum which was found on the Wandle.

INFORMATION BOARD #3 – CARSHALTON ARM IN THE GEOLOGICAL PAST (BEFORE MAN)

Content:

- Explore how local geology is a factor that influences the source of the Wandle (e.g. chalk and clay) with a geological map of the local area created by the Contractor.
- Introduce a “spring line” and the importance of this spring line to the location and development of local settlements – notably Carshalton, Wallington, Beddington, Waddon and Croydon.

INFORMATION BOARD #4 – CROYDON ARM IN THE HISTORICAL PAST (RECORDED HISTORY)

Content:

- Show that the River Wandle once had sources in Croydon.
- Tell the story of how Wandle through Croydon was culverted and hidden underground to protect local health.
- Consider the impact this has had on the local landscape – comparing historic paintings with present day photos – and the features of the old river which remain in the landscape today.

INFORMATION BOARD #5 – CARSHALTON ARM IN THE HISTORICAL PAST (DOCUMENTED)

Content:

- How the Wandle impacted Carshalton over time – development of local industry, artistic inspiration etc.
- The work of William Tatton Winter (1855 – 1929), comparing local landscapes captured by him with present day photos.
- The local legend of Anne Boleyn and her horse.
- The loss of the lake at Carshalton House and other landscape changes, the clues of which remain visible today.
- The implications of a changing landscape for local industry and water mills in the local area (Example: lawsuit between local mill owners).

INFORMATION BOARD #6 – CROYDON ARM IN THE RECENT PAST (WITHIN LIVING MEMORY)

Content:

- The evidence that the River Wandle once flowed through Croydon from the Swan and Sugar Loaf pub.

- The River Wandle is connected to the bournes to the south and how this sometimes results in local flooding in some areas.
- Look at the “new source” of the Wandle in Wandle Park where the river was de-culverted.
- Explore other types of flooding, such as surface water flooding which is exacerbated by the increased impermeability of the landscape.

INFORMATION BOARD #7 – CARSHALTON ARM IN THE RECENT PAST (WITHIN LIVING MEMORY)

Content:

- Explore the relationship between rainfall and the level of water under the ground in the chalk aquifer using graphs and how this effects the level of water flowing in the river.
- Introduce water abstraction and the effects of this on river water levels. For example the recent low flows at Carshalton Ponds.
- Look at the implications of low flows on the river and its wildlife.

INFORMATION BOARD #8 – THE FUTURE?

Content:

- Explore what threats face the river in the future and their implications:
 - Climate change: changing rainfall patterns are likely to lead to localised flooding as well as drier periods which will influence the sources of the Wandle and the amount of water in the river.
 - Land use change: development is resulting in more extensive impermeable areas leading to localised flooding and reducing infiltration and groundwater recharge which will affect the sources of the Wandle and the flow in the river.
 - Water abstraction: increasing demand for water from development and population growth has affected source locations and made the river vulnerable to low flows.
- Highlight the ways people can help play a role in protecting the river; where appropriate these should back up messages on water saving provided by the local water company:
 - Saving water in the home and garden
 - Install a water meter to monitor their water use
 - Explore some water saving methods
 - Look at a rain garden and what it does
- Invite the public to pledge a change to protect the Wandle (this is where the interactive element will be added, see #10).

INFORMATION BOARD #9 – THE PROCESS

Content:

- Explain the Discover the Source project in more detail.
- Tell the story of how the information was researched and gathered and the volunteers who helped.
- Thank the funders and other project partners.
- Encourage people to explore further and try out the self-guided walk.

INFORMATION BOARD #10 – THE INTERACTIVE ELEMENT

- The final element of the exhibition will be interactive, asking people to “pledge” an action towards protecting and safe guarding the Wandle based on what they have learnt, particularly through board #8.
- This could range from installing a water-company provided water meter and saving water in their own homes, to volunteering with the Wandle Trust in other projects.
- Design ideas for this element are welcome. The initial ideas for this include:
 - A river where people write pledges on paper in the shape of fish and other wildlife and then attach them to the Wandle.
 - A tree with pledges on leaves.