

Photo Diary



In 2008 the strip was very overgrown and unloved



The huge task to clear the area was undertaken by Ernst Young & Co through Volunteers in Action



They worked tirelessly throughout the day



The grand entrance takes shape

A what a fine job they did!!



Construction gets started



Mat working the digger



Jeff getting started on the archway entrance



SMMS Country File

Issue 1
Feb 2010

Welcome to the first edition of St Mary Magdalene Country file. This newsletter will keep you up-to-date with developments in our environmental strip.

Who's Who?

We have commissioned **Maddy Bell** of Bloomingbells Gardening Services to oversee the design and construction of the environmental area. Maddy took her inspiration from Mrs Keeble's ideas and designed an area that is fitting for our school. Maddy will ensure our vision is respected and will oversee the work of the entire area.

We have worked with Maddy on projects before, one being the raised bed in the playground. Maddy assists us with the maintenance of the area and I'm sure you will agree the results are really pleasing.

Jeff Higley, local sculptor, has already worked on very successful projects in the school - the main one being the 'Friendship Bench' situated outside Year 2. Jeff worked closely with the children to create a wonderful sculpture for the playground. Jeff also sculpted the large seats in the raised bed area.

Jeff has designed and carved the entrance arch to the environmental area. He will also be adding a few more eye catching sculptures in the strip.

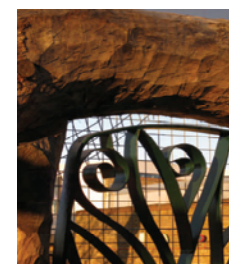
Arthur Mowbray, local artist, is well known for his carpentry and woodwork skills. He also worked along side Maddy and Jeff during the construction of the raised bed area, constructing the round seating area.

Arthur is the main force behind the construction of the raised pond, bedding trims and the eventual construction of the seating area in the environmental area.

Mat Kemp is an all rounder often lending a helping hand with construction when needed.

Without their true dedication and working in all weathers the construction of the strip would not be progressing as it is.

We would like to say a big 'THANKS' to them for their hard work so far.



A view of the main entrance archway

We NEED You!!!

Our vision for the environmental strip is one that involves the whole school community through involvement and support from pupils, parents/carers, governors and local businesses.

How?

We would like volunteers to form a **working party** to help with the maintenance and up-keep of the area. The working party will meet half termly (every 6 weeks) to review what is needed and discuss ideas for the planning cycle for the strip. For the most part the strip will be self maintaining and need little intervention however if we are to successfully grow our own produce we will need help with preparing the soil and the planting.

A working party is a really important factor in a successful project like this.

We will set after-school clubs for parent/carers and children to work together.



When?

March/April - We are expecting the construction to be completed by the end of March. This is when planting will need to take place. Staff are looking at timetabling each class to help with this task however, time is precious and they will not be able to give much time to this stage of the project.

Planting of seedlings and seeds will be class based, so we are looking to you for your help - can you spare an hour a week to help prepare the ground and start the planting cycle? Maddy will be on hand to offer advice and guidance for those parent/carers with limited gardening experience



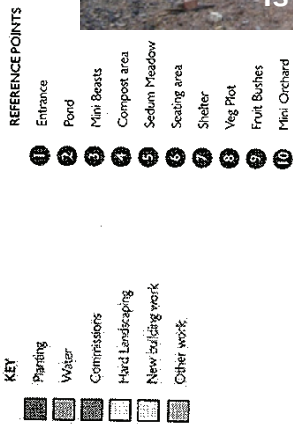
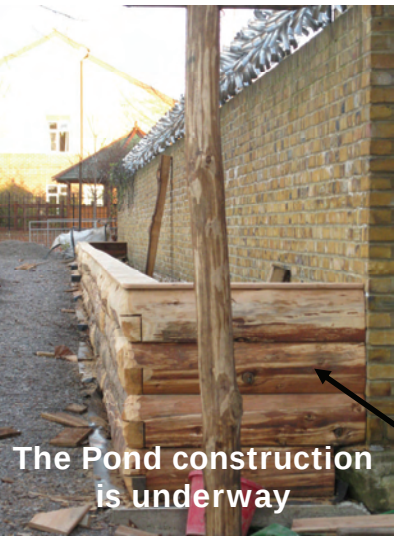
Why?

Our vision is to develop a truly wonderful place of experience and learning not only for our children but for future generations.

If we want the strip to be truly successful we need as much support and help as possible to ensure our children experience a little bit of the countryside in the heart of London. This project will also give children and their parent/carers an opportunity to work together on a really fun project



This is a copy of the proposed plan for the environmental strip.



1. Entrance

The main entrance to the environmental strip will be via the carved arch at the top of the ramp. A second smaller entrance through memorial garden is also available.

2. Pond

A large but safe pond with raised area to allow the same access to wheelchair users. Suitable planting in the pond attracting local wildlife and encouraging natural development. Due to the natural slope of the site the position of the pond will be beneficial for irrigation.

3. Mini beasts

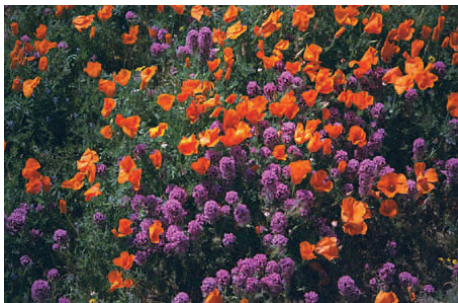
A perfect habitat for mini beasts will be provided by filling this area with rocks and wood that will feature built in handles, allowing the children to lift them up exposing the beasts beneath! We expect there to be a range of mini beasts for the children to study i.e. snails, grasshoppers, beetles, worms, ants, spiders, slugs, caterpillars, centipedes, earwigs, woodlouse etc

4. Compost area

Compost brings a vital lesson for all budding environmentalists - it's production provides the very building blocks of nature's life cycle. We feel that the composting area will not only be ecologically, environmentally and educationally beneficial, but will also provide the garden with its own supply of compost!! – a must for any self respecting garden and the logical neighbour to our Minibeasts.

5. Sedum Meadow

This is a wonderful contemporary organic product that will combine the natural habitat of a wild meadow with the huge advantages of minimum maintenance. These tiny spreading plants produce a blaze of colour when in bloom and are a welcoming sight for bees, bugs and butterflies to name a few.



6. Central seating area

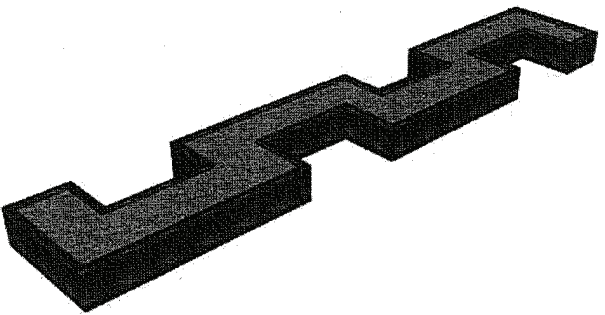
The heart of the garden is the ideal place to collect the pupils together for lessons and other activities. The proposed area will consist of simple benches surrounded by a circular pergola to give the garden a focal point.

7. Rainwater collecting shelter

Arthur De Mowbray has been commissioned to build this seating and shelter unit. It will be crafted into a functional construction and due to its cleverly crafted shape it will also collect rain water for use in the garden. It will be designed to part feed the built-in irrigation system, which will in turn help to maintain the garden all year round with the minimum effort.

8. Vegetable garden

We aim to provide raised beds for the vegetable garden as we feel this will maximise accessibility for all users. A unique design of the raised beds will allow unrestricted access to every part of the bed for everyone, especially smaller children or wheelchair users.



9. Fruit bushes

A selection of hardy native soft fruits with different colours and tastes to inspire young gardeners, and more than likely attract some of our feathered friends to the space!

10. Mini orchard

Dwarf stock fruit trees provide bountiful yields of fruit without the need to climb a ladder! Perfect for even the smallest children to get that magical experience of being able to pick a lovely red apple straight from the tree.



Proposed plan