

MOYA O'HARA, Director of Hammersmith and Fulham Urban Studies Centre



How did you get where you are today? When I was young I was interested in animals and then later in growing plants and I studied and worked in horticulture. Then I decided I quite liked people as well and taught horticulture to adults for a good while and then later got involved in environmental education work with adults and children.

What tips would you give someone starting out in your field? Get as much variety of work as you can, meet lots of people,

learn lots of new things and show everyone what you can doand join LEEF

What inspires you? Or who? Lots of beautiful places inspire me and people like the Victorian plant hunters and Marianne North, fearless travelling botanical artist who left all her beautiful paintings for us all to see in Kew Gardens. Joseph Bazalgette who built his beautiful bridges, the Thames Embankment and the very useful sewer system and at the moment, I'm excited about Tom Rolt an engineer and writer who saved our canal system from rack and ruin after the war. It's the centenary of his birth this year. It's a fantastic cycle along the Kennet and Avon canal —and it wouldn't be possible without his hard work and resolve.

What is a significant memory of being in nature as a child? Growing marigolds in the back yard, walking the dog on Blackheath, picking up chestnuts in Greenwich park and running down the big hill from the General Wolfe statue towards the Thames.

What project are you most proud of? Fundraising for and building a traditional wooden greenhouse in a wildlife garden in south London- with help from lots of other people- that was fun and very useful. Also just generally working on a range of different projects with some great people.

What's your favourite game or activity? I'm not good at remembering games so children can always rely on playing Bat and Moth with me.. (many, many times) . Fortunately its always popular!

I like making treasure trails with rhyming clues and edible treasure.

What's your favourite eco-place in London, and why? I like walking or cycling along the Thames path from Hammersmith to Richmond, enjoying the amazing views, architecture, trees, flowers and wildlife and getting off the beaten track to find unexpected alleyways and hidden rivers.

Do you have a recommendation to LEEF members? Live long and prosper!
(For environmental education I find it's really important to listen to classroom teachers and make sure we are making life easier for them with whatever it is we offer)

What are you working on at the moment? Tales of the Thames Path project, Childrens' Parliament of the Environment project, and there is lots of strategic planning in January for the Urban Studies Centre as well.

How would you like to see Environmental or Sustainability Education develop in the next 10 years? I'd like environmental education to grow in importance within mainstream education and for outdoor discovery and living sustainably to be considered a vital and everyday part of children and young peoples lives (and adults as well).



Profile of a LEEF Fellow

This fellowship was awarded on;

Tuesday 12 January 2016

At the Education Centre, ZSL London Zoo, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY

LEEF fellowships are awarded to recognise excellence in Environmental and Sustainability Education

To find out more about LEEF;

www.leef.org.uk

