

The Kew Society Newsletter • Autumn 2022

Welcome....

to our Autumn newsletter. We hope you had a wonderful summer and were able to cope with the extremely high temperatures. It was good to see so many of you at the AGM.

We were also delighted to have such a good turn-out for our launch of the Kew Circular Walk, which has been well-received if the numbers taken up from various points in the village is anything to go by. We are sending our members a copy of the leaflet with this newsletter so that you can do the walk yourselves or pass it on to a neighbour.

Once again, we are sending you a hard copy of the newsletter, which seems to have been well-received by our members, but you can opt out by emailing secretary@kewsociety.org. And as ever, your feedback is always welcome.



Mike Adams

AGM

Our AGM was held on 25th October at The National Archives. Our Chair – Shiona Williams – addressed the 90 or so members in attendance, highlighting much of the work undertaken by The Kew Society during the past year. We had a shorter formal session than in previous years, providing members with the opportunity to circulate afterwards and to meet members of the committee (new and old, see below) whilst enjoying a glass of wine. We were sad to see Mike Adams leave us as Treasurer after all he has contributed during the last six years, but delighted to welcome our



Shiona Williams

new Treasurer (see next page) and two new trustees, Diana Ormond and Janet Clarke (about whom more in the next newsletter).



Socialising during the interval

Lord Darroch then provided an insightful talk entitled 'The Ukraine Crisis: Why Putin invaded, why he is failing, and what happens next', explaining the roots of the war in Ukraine and also giving us his

views on the current political situation in the UK.

A lively question and answer session followed which covered a wide range of issues. We were very grateful to Lord Darroch for his contribution to the AGM.



Lord Darroch

Welcome to our new Treasurer – Steve Williams

Steve Williams first lived in Kew from 1988 to 2000 when he went with his wife and two very young children to take up a post working in the Caribbean. On his return to the UK in 2011 he lived initially in Malvern but, when his children went off to university, he and his wife realised that Kew was where they wanted to live and moved back here. Steve is a chartered accountant who spent his career with a number of organisations, including PriceWaterhouse Coopers and Philips Electronics, working as a finance director/chief operating officer.

Steve now undertakes the roles of treasurer and trustee for a number of charities. Two of the charities with which he is associated are local: the *Kew Community Trust* and *Integrated Neurological Services*, where Steve is the chair of the finance committee. Steve is an enthusiastic tennis player (a member of Pensford Tennis Club), a keen choral singer and enjoys music, good food and wine.



Kew Society launches Circular Walk

On Friday 2nd September the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames – Councillor Julia Cambridge – and local MP Sarah Olney attended the official launch of a new circular walk around Kew devised by The Kew Society.

The aim of the walk is to encourage people to explore the local area and discover some lesser-known places of historic interest whilst getting some exercise at the same time and taking in the beautiful sights in and around Kew including the riverside.

The idea for the walk came during the lockdowns in 2020 and 2021 when everyone was confined to their local area and often discovered places that they knew nothing about.



Sarah Olney & some committee members

After the official launch a group of walkers set off from the *Tap on the Line* in Kew Village to try out the 2.7-mile circular walk for the first time. The project was funded by a grant from Richmond Council's Local Area Fund – https://www.richmond.gov.uk/local_area_fund – and The Kew Society.

The map with notes giving details of places of interest along the route is available at various retail outlets and cafes in the village and online at

<https://www.kewsociety.org/2022/06/05/kew-circular-walk/>

For the more technically-minded of you, this QR code should take you straight to the information about the walk. We are sending members a copy of the leaflet with this newsletter. If you would like more copies, do email secretary@kewsociety.org.

The Walk was also the subject of a blog – see diamondgeezer.blogspot.com – on Thursday 20th October 2022. Other feedback also very welcome.



Kew Horticultural Show



The Horticultural Show took place on Saturday 27th August on Kew Green. It was a wonderful day with plenty of sunshine and a range of activities for all the family, including a traditional Punch & Judy show and a



mouthwatering array of different foodstalls. There were 128 exhibitors of all ages (see photos) with more than 700 visitors to the marquee in the afternoon.

Prizes were awarded by the Reverend Giles Fraser – the recently-appointed vicar of St. Anne's Church. The Kew Society's stand was well-attended, and we were delighted that we were able to recruit nine new members.

Gardening



Plants near Café Torelli

This summer we had some lovely salvias, geraniums and erigerons flowering in the replanted planter and bed in the village. They should look even better next year as the other plants get established and we add alliums. But our big challenge has been water, with climate change bringing us extreme high temperatures and drought. We have spent many hours watering and even so, some



Echium Pininana

plants have suffered. I hope the grasses at the station recover in the autumn.

There are some new plants near Torelli at the station – eucomis 'Sparkling Burgundy' with beautiful pineapple like leaves and delicate pink flowers, and some echium pininana from La Palma in the Canary Isles where it is an endangered species (see pictures). The echiums will produce amazing six-foot tall blue flowering spikes next year. The cyclamen we planted last autumn have coped remarkably well with the drought and have been flowering in the woodland bed on the eastbound platform for several weeks.

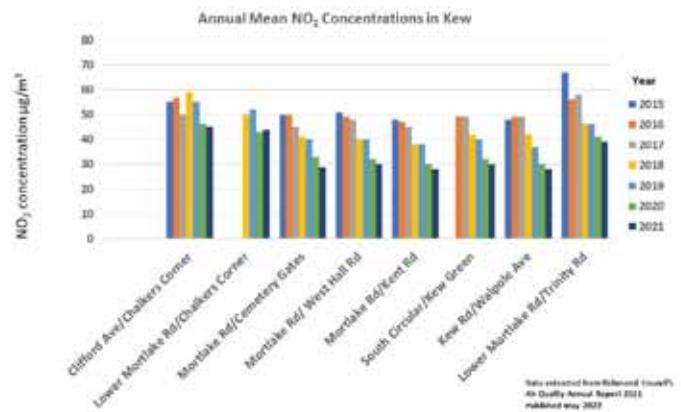
If you like plants and want to get involved with making Kew more beautiful, please get in touch as we urgently need more volunteers. Even if you are not yet a gardener, you could help with watering or other simple tasks. It's fun to do and people always stop to say how much they appreciate our efforts.

Contact us at gardening@kewsociety.org

Reason to be cheerful? Is Air Quality in Kew Improving? An update.

Kew is surrounded by three major roads – the Mortlake Road (A205 South Circular), the Lower Mortlake Road (A316) and the Kew Road (A307). All carry heavy traffic and have suffered marked air pollution, exceeding the UK legal limit for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) – (40ug/m³) – for many years. Richmond Council reports annual mean concentrations of this pollutant in the borough in its Annual Air Quality Reports (https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/25357/annual_status_report_2022.pdf).

The bar chart summarises the results of the Council's roadside measurements of NO₂ concentration at eight different locations around Kew between 2015 and 2021. The colours, listed on the right-hand side, represent the different years.



The chart shows that NO₂ concentrations decreased at each location in the more recent years. In the years 2015- 2017, every one of the eight monitoring sites measured illegal levels of NO₂ but, by 2021, levels in Mortlake Road, Kew Road and the South Circular across Kew Green had reduced to about 60% of the earlier levels, becoming compliant with the UK legal standard. NO₂ levels on the Lower Mortlake Road (A316) only reduced by about 35%, just enough to become compliant. However, those at Chalkers Corner remain above the legal requirement, justifying local residents renaming it 'Chokers Corner'! Richmond Council's most recent raw NO₂ data for January-June 2022 is broadly in agreement with 2021 annual concentrations reported for sites around Kew. Only Chalkers Corner has consistently high and illegal pollutant levels

(https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/25362/no2_diffusion_tubes_q1_q2_2022.pdf).

What could be the reasons for the recent reduction in road-side NO₂ concentrations in Kew? Traffic levels on UK roads dropped markedly in 2020 – the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and 'lockdowns'. However, the UK Department for Transport road traffic statistics indicate that traffic levels increased again in 2021, to 94% of 2019 levels in Mortlake Road and about 84% of 2019 levels on the other main roads in Kew (<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/#6/55.254/-6.053/basemap-regions-countpoints>). This suggests that additional factors may be involved in lower NO₂ pollutant levels in 2021 such as:

- A significant decrease in the market share for new diesel cars. Although newer diesel engines have improved exhaust emissions compared to older ones, they still emit more nitrogen oxides than petrol cars.
- Strong growth in the sale of both electric cars (zero NO₂ emissions) and in hybrid electric-petrol cars (lower NO₂ emissions) over the last four years. Some home-delivery van fleets have also been electrified recently and all-electric buses are used on some routes.
- The introduction of the Central London ULEZ in April 2019 resulted in a decrease of 44,000 highly polluting vehicles being driven in the zone every day compared with 2017. Many of these were scrapped or sold on outside London, so are no longer driven in neighbouring areas like our own. The extension of the ULEZ to the North and South Circular Roads in October 2021 may have further reduced the number of polluting vehicles on our roads, even ahead of its introduction. If a further extension to outer London occurs in August 2023, as planned, this trend should continue with further improvements in Kew air quality. The Kew Society fully supports that extension (<https://www.kewsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Transport-for-London-Consultation-on-Extension-of-the-ULEZ.pdf>)

Whilst the recent reduction of NO₂ levels is welcome, there is no room for complacency! The UK legal limit for NO₂ remains unchanged at 40ug/m³, even though the Environment Act of 2021 stated that it would be revised. Exposure to 40ug/m³ for a year leads to respiratory symptoms like coughing and difficulty in breathing and to an 11% increased risk of disease-related mortality. WHO

has recommended that 10ug/m³ should be adopted as a safe level. (https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/238956/Health_risks_air_pollution_HRAPIE_project.pdf). The only area in our borough where such levels are currently recorded is at Holly Lodge in the middle of Richmond Park! We still have a long way to go to achieve such levels on our main roads.

Roger Mason



Pollinating London Together

As members of one of the London livery companies, we were invited to a talk and tour in September at the Royal Botanic Gardens to hear about the excellent work in progress on pollination. This is just one of so many amazing projects in progress on our doorstep aimed at understanding different aspects of biodiversity and some of the reasons for its alarming rate of decline. Increasing the evidence base in this important area is crucial if we are to find ways of stopping biodiversity loss.

The tour was arranged by *Pollinating London Together*, a Pan-Livery initiative part-funded by the City of London Corporation through a £230,000 grant, to raise awareness of biodiversity and pollinators and the serious implications of their recent decline. Led by a collaboration of a growing number of the livery companies, they have several pieces of work in hand, including auditing existing flora and pollinator habitats in City green spaces; creating a baseline of insect and pollinator counting as part of building a citizen science database; advice and practical assistance to owners of existing City green spaces and awareness-raising campaigns with schools. They arranged the tour of RBGK to look at the work in progress led by **Dr. Hauke Koch** (see picture



above). He described the importance of all 107 bee pollinators, their diet and the work they are doing in the Jodrell Laboratory to analyse the bees' nectar. Some of their discoveries are summarised in signs around the gardens – for example, telling visitors of the importance of the nectar of heather which protects bees from parasitic infections. Heather is apparently the second most protective nectar plant for pollinators in the UK. They are carrying out further research into the chemistry of nectar and pollen.

Other interesting and somewhat more technical questions they are looking at focus on the importance of cholesterol for bees and their difficulty in producing it from plant sterols – apparently needed to maintain the flexibility of their cell membranes. We learned a great deal about bees, including the fact that it is only the females that sting (the picture above shows a male), and the fact that there are thought to be at least 20,000 types of bees in the world – they are the most important pollinating species in the world. Although we may assume that bees live in hives, many of them are solitary – in England, it is thought that around 90% of bees are solitary (including our much-loved bumble bee). More information on *Pollinating London Together* can be found on <https://www.pollinatinglondontogether.com/>

How you can help? The final part of our walk around the gardens found us completing a 'FIT count' (Flower-Insect Timed count) – a survey set up by the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme. It takes ten minutes of your time and involves collecting data on the number of insects that visit a small patch of particular flowers between April and September (see <https://ukpoms.org.uk/fit-counts>). This is then logged (using an App on your phone) and put together to see how pollination is taking place. It is also a very relaxing way to unwind from the pressures of the day for ten minutes: strongly recommended.

Claire and Paul Bethel

How Green is our Waste? A Practical Guide

What you can and can't recycle. Are you confused?

Following the spring edition of the Newsletter and the article on *How green is our waste?*, we thought we would provide you with a practical guide on what we can do to recycle more effectively and contribute to a better environment.



Firstly, most items with this logo can be recycled:

PLASTICS and GLASS – Black box

Probably the most confusing and challenging of all recycling categories. There's so much of it and so many different types – what we can recycle and what we can't...

Yes to yogurt and soup pots, plastic milk bottles, shampoo and shower gel bottles, ice cream and butter/margarine containers. "Yes" to all those water and fizzy drink bottles – crunch them up to reduce volume (don't forget to put the top back on afterwards!).

Yes to all those raw and cooked meat containers, take-away dishes and fresh fruit punnets and vegetable trays – even those eye-catching chocolate and biscuit moulded plastic liners can go into your Black box.

Yes to all those glass bottles whatever size and colour, jam jars and any other glass containers.

No to plastic packaging, clingfilm and absorbent pads

No to plastic toys, expanded polystyrene (sadly) and any film coverings from pots or food trays. These and ordinary plastic bags can be recycled but at specialist locations only.

No to plant pots and garden plastic trays, though local Squires Garden centres will recycle them on your behalf.

The important thing to remember is to make sure these plastic items are put into your Black box CLEAN – don't run expensive hot water to do this, just rinse them at the end of your normal washing up.

METAL ITEMS – Black box

Metal items include all drink cans, food tins, aluminium foil and empty aerosol cans. Please make sure items are clean; but as with plastic items, rinse out only when you are washing up – don't waste increasingly expensive hot water!

PAPER & CARDBOARD – Blue box

Board and paper items are much more straightforward – magazines, newspapers and other wastepaper need no explanation but don't forget those other cardboard items, egg boxes, loo rolls, other boxes of all shapes and sizes – but please break them down as best you can to reduce the volume. Remove all sticky tape, staples and paper clips wherever possible, it just makes for purer and easier recycling.

FOOD WASTE – Small bin or caddy

This can be a little challenging, as it is another bin which needs to be kept clean! But it is really rewarding as you can recycle all your solid food waste, be it animal or vegetable, with very few exceptions. Chicken and turkey carcasses are fine but **NO** large bones please.

Eggshells, plate scrapings, tea bags (excluding plastic ones) and even compostable caddy linings (with the EN13432 seedling logo) can go. Liquid food waste cannot be put into your food waste bin. If you do not have the space for the caddy in your kitchen, use a small container and empty into the caddy regularly.

GARDEN WASTE – Biodegradable sacks or 240 litre recycling bins

All green garden waste can be collected and recycled including grass cuttings.

A pack of 10 biodegradable sacks can be purchased from the LBRuT for £16.40 – no other sacks are accepted. These can be left outside your property with the other recycling boxes and will be collected every two weeks. Alternatively, you can purchase a 240-litre bin from LBRuT at one-off cost of £29.

The annual charge for collection of these bins is £67 or £50 if you are 75 or over.

In Summary....

Most of your household waste can be recycled, but it is important the right stuff goes into the right boxes and is as clean as possible. If in doubt, put it into your household waste.

Further information can be found on the LBRuT website:

[www.richmond.gov.uk/services/waste and recycling/](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/waste%20and%20recycling/)

Next time: How to help recycle items you cannot put into your household bins, including crisp packets!

Kew Society Events

Since June 2022 we have had two fascinating talks – hosted by the National Archives.

Tracy Borman offered a stimulating talk related to her newest book *Crown & Sceptre: 1,000 Years of Kings and Queens*. Tracy offered an excellent, lively talk – if you missed it, maybe catch up by reading her intriguing book – excellent bedtime reading!

Another talk, jointly organised with the Richmond Local History Society was entitled 'Saving Kew and Old Deer Park and other adventures – the W. H. Hudson story'. The speaker, Conor Jameson, worked his magic and we thoroughly enjoyed a hugely entertaining hour hearing about the life of W.H. Hudson – you can still catch an audio recording of the talk on The Kew Society website

<https://www.kewsociety.org/events/?date1=2022>

In July and early October, Helen Bartolome's City of London walks provided us with interesting snippets of history, starting and ending at Tower Hill tube station. Helen is a Kew Society member and an excellent Blue Badge guide. The circular route was only a mile long, but we now understand far more about the unique background to this historic area – the tour included wonderful views over autumnal London from the roof garden on Level 15 of 120 Fenchurch Street.

JTP Architects have provided two opportunities since July 2022 to link with The Kew Society on community input to the proposed Kew Retail Park development. We encourage you to take this on board and keep abreast of plans as they develop – it will affect the future of the Kew area and be left as a legacy for your children and grandchildren. Please take time to think about interesting opportunities which could enhance plans for the site – developers want to make a profit !! The Kew Society wants to ensure Kew Retail Park area becomes an attractive, well-used, safe area, whilst understanding the impact on the area both during development and once the developers have left.

Most of us probably remember watching the formal procession of horses and military accompanying the coffin of HM Queen Elizabeth II on its final journey travelling slowly up the country road and turning towards the Long Walk to St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Directly opposite this turn was the unmarked farm road which, on a beautiful afternoon last August, was the route our coach took to reach Frogmore House and Gardens. Here, we received marvellous VIP treatment and were given wonderful guided



Admiring the Tower Hill Memorial commemorating the thousands of Mercantile Marine casualties who have no grave but the sea



Tour of the gardens at Frogmore

and potential new members who stop to say 'hello' and want to know more about what we offer. Several non-members who took a keen interest in our colourful display boards focused on planning, gardening projects, events etc., have joined the Society as a result. Thanks to Sue and Jane for providing such attractive images and the 'you cannot lose' card game where players of all ages (mainly adults!) tried their luck to win Love Hearts, Parma Violets or satsumas.

September and October 2022 tours of the King's Observatory in the Old Deer Park provided opportunities to look around this local hidden gem, built by Sir William Chambers in 1758 for King George III to observe the 3rd June 1769 phenomena – The Transit of Venus (where the planet Venus crosses the Sun). Calculations collected at the time helped estimate the distance between the Sun and Earth – providing an idea of scale for the rest of the solar system.

We end 2022 with a tour of the 'Poppy Factory' in Richmond on the 3rd November, and a free talk from Craig Ruddick LBRuT Head of Arboriculture on 'Street Trees in Kew' on Friday 18th November (please email events@kewsociety.org in advance of the meeting with specific queries).

We are also finalising details for a November walk linked to the draw-off of the Thames with The Thames Landscape Strategy and a further update meeting on Kew Retail Park development plans.

Events at the beginning of 2023 will include a tour of the National Theatre, the History of the Abbeyfield home in Kew by Simon Fowler on the 18th January, a talk by Lucinda Ganderton on 24th February *The Time Traveller's Guide to Richmond and Kew in 1937*, an Arcadian Thames walk beginning and ending at the Eel Pie Island Museum, another City Walk with a different route, an early evening guided Tree walk around RBG Kew, plus several other social events which are still in the planning stage – to be firmed up shortly. This includes reinstating a summer outing by the Windsor Steam Train from Victoria offering the option to visit Windsor Castle.

If you have any interesting ideas for future tours/talks to attract all ages, The Kew Society Events team would be delighted to consider them.

Finally, a huge thanks for your support.

tours. At the time we had no idea of the significance that country road to Frogmore would play in the final journey of Her Majesty the Queen.

It had been extremely blustery weather for the Kew Society stand at the February 2022 Kew Village Market. Everything was pinned down though one of our new notices was blown away, never to be seen again; however, interest remained high. Calmer weather arrived for our stands at the June Kew Summer Fair and the Kew Horticultural Society Summer Show during the late August Bank Holiday.

Having a presence offers great opportunities to chat to existing

Mary Done

Planning

The **Kew Retail Park** community engagement process continues. The Kew Society arranged a meeting on 14th September at the National Archives for the architects – JTP – to present the vision for the scheme and update on the engagement process, primarily for members. At that stage, there was not a great deal that was new in the talk by Charles Campion. The Chair of the Kew Society in her introductory remarks diplomatically yet pointedly spoke to the main concerns of residents – the height and density of the built part of the scheme – which had not yet been addressed by the architects. That aspect is still not settled was the response. Further updating was expected in November, but it seems that there is not enough new developments to merit this.

The **Homebase** Manor Road formal decision by the Mayor of London has still not been made, although the public hearing was as long ago as October 2022, when the Mayor said he would be granting permission. We have written to each Secretary of State asking that the case be called in so that they would decide the matter in place of the Mayor, but each time we have been told that the case should be decided at local level. Technically, the Mayor has stepped into the shoes of Richmond Council (which refused the application) and so becomes the local authority, but this disregards the real locals. We are writing again and have posted to our local MP – Sarah Olney – a template letter so that members can also write and express the strength of local feeling.

We have given further assistance to local groups dealing with the revised **Mortlake Brewery** proposals, providing an updated air quality review by Professor Roger Mason.

As always, we continue to scrutinise proposed developments north of the river to assess the potential impact on Kew and, in particular, on the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.



The Kew Retail Park Complex

In September, we were invited by the developers of the site of the SEGA building on the Great West Road in Brentford to a presentation of their proposals and timeline of their engagement with Hounslow Council. This development was initially for four blocks 17-23 storeys high. The architects and other consultants expressed their concern not to damage the *Outstanding Universal Values* of the World Heritage Site and had, indeed, altered their scheme. The scheme had contained a very tall building that would have appeared almost as a spear arising out of the top of the middle of the Orangery. This block was then moved to the other side of the site. Heights of other proposed buildings had been adjusted. Nevertheless, there still remains a shorter spear of building that would be visible over the Orangery from the Broadwalk. That scheme is not at planning application stage. We liaise with RBGK's planning consultant on this and other such matters.

Alice Shackleton

Chief Executive and Keeper of The National Archives



Jeff James is Chief Executive Officer and Keeper of The National Archives, a non-ministerial government department. He is responsible for providing inspirational strategic leadership to his staff who deliver high-quality innovative services to visitors worldwide. The needs of visitors range from members of the public building their family trees to academics using the collections of The National Archives in their research.

An experienced Chief Executive Officer with a career in the public, private and charity sectors – predominantly in learning and knowledge institutions – Jeff started his career as an electronic engineer in the Royal Navy. He has held operational management roles at the University of Leeds, Swift Research and the British Library. He spent six years as Director of Operations and Services at The National Archives before joining the Chartered Institute of Housing as Deputy Chief Executive. Jeff returned to The National Archives to take up the role of Chief Executive and Keeper in July 2014.

Jeff has three young sons – including twins –

and is currently studying for a PhD at Nottingham Trent University, researching punishment in Victorian workhouses.

Can you start by telling us what made you apply for this role?

I'd previously worked at The National Archives (and before that at the British Library) so I knew first-hand what a fantastic job it was. The opportunity to work again with an amazing group of colleagues looking after one of the greatest archival collections in the world wasn't something I was going to let pass by.

Can you please tell us a little about your role as Chief Executive and Keeper of The National Archives?

Well obviously I'm biased, but it really is the best job in the world! I'm the latest in a long line of people to lead this institution (dating back to 1838), and so as the current Keeper of Public Records I'm the custodian of an absolutely remarkable collection of historical records in every format you can imagine, literally from Domesday Book to Downing Street tweets. I lead over 500 staff, and together we provide services to 100,000 on-site visitors and 20 million on-line visitors. We're here for anyone who has a need to consult the official record of government or is inspired to learn more about our collective histories. So, if you come to The National Archives on any given day, you'll encounter people building their family trees, academics looking for fresh insights, school children encountering records for the first time or maybe someone visiting for one of our talks, events or exhibitions.

Formally, The National Archives is the official archive and publisher for the UK Government and for England and Wales. As well as Keeper of Public records, I hold several other positions: Historical Manuscripts Commissioner, King's Printer of Acts of Parliament, King's Printer for Scotland, Government Printer for Northern Ireland and Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office. I'm responsible for overseeing the integrity of the public records system of England, Wales and the United Kingdom, and

for providing advocacy and support for all archive services in England. We have a very wide remit!

What do you do in a typical day?

It's a bit of a cliché, but there really isn't a typical day at The National Archives! Obviously, there are a lot of meetings with colleagues, other parts of government and the many external partners we work with, but the conversations are incredibly varied. A conversation about the revitalisation of our public spaces might be followed by a discussion on a really technical aspect of our work to preserve the digital record. Or, I might find myself visiting one of the many (c2,000) archives across the country, and they're hugely diverse too: charities, religious groups and businesses all generate valuable historical records and we work really hard to help them keep these records for future generations.

How has the Archives' work been affected by the pandemic?

It changed a lot of the ways we work and challenged us to rethink how we connect with our audiences. Almost overnight, we closed our building and moved from a predominately on-site operation to working from home. We had to very quickly learn how to work together from our kitchen tables and living rooms and to make sure we had the technology to support that. A small team stayed on site to keep the building going and to support staff working remotely. Every member of staff across the business worked incredibly hard to keep things going: we saw lots of innovation and an organisation that really rose to the challenge. We provided free access to digital records on our website, giving access to everyone everywhere. We moved our events programme online, and it was so rewarding to see talks that would have accommodated 250 on-site delivered to an audience of thousands across the globe. That was the biggest change for us really and the thing we've been building on since – we found a bigger global audience and so that's become a much bigger part of our thinking about how we deliver our services and connect people with our collection. When restrictions allowed, we reintroduced access to our building and physical collections and restarted our on-site events. I should also say that as the official archive of the UK government, we are also collecting the official record of the pandemic, and throughout we've been very conscious of that responsibility too.

Do you live in or near Kew? What would you say is the significance of the location of The National Archives to Kew?

I don't live in Kew, but it's always been really important to me as Keeper that The National Archives is a part of the local Kew community and contributes to the life of the area. We recently hosted the Kew Retail Park consultation. We're also the home for Q2 players, host The Kew Society and work closely with the local police, including facilitating meetings. Recently, we held a local history weekend where we invited residents of the area to come and view records relating to Kew and its surroundings – some even made surprising discoveries about their homes and previous residents. I'm very aware that we are a national institution in a residential area and we want to be a good neighbour of the residents of Kew.

The National Archives – or The Public Record Office as it was then known – has been in Kew for over 40 years and the site we occupy has a longer history than that. Thinking about our peer organisations overseas, a number of which I've been lucky enough to visit, I don't think there are many located similarly in a residential area and part of the texture of local life in the same way. Kew is a great destination to come to and we have visitors from all over the world who add to the economic life of the area. I can't pretend it isn't sometimes challenging as a national institution that we're much more physically accessible to our audience in the South East than elsewhere, but we're working hard (with the help of The National Archives Trust) to find ways of taking our exhibitions and collections to other parts of the country. The ideal is that we'll find a good balance between our site in Kew, which we're continuing to invest in and transform, and the things we do elsewhere to ensure that we're relevant and accessible to people across the country.

What would you say are the highlights of your job? And what are the key challenges?

Archives play such an important role in society – they have a truly unique relevance in preserving the diversity of our nation's documentary heritage. We could not trace our ancestry, explore our collective

and individual identities, or challenge established views of the past. Without this collective memory the evidence store for our histories we could not hold governments and organisations to account. The impact of archives is felt across society: inspiring art and literature; influencing product design and branding; enabling insightful and pioneering research; and informing decision-making in organisations of all types. I'm fortunate that I get to work in a sector with incredibly dedicated and skilled professionals, working tirelessly on behalf of their users. In terms of challenges, continuing to ensure that archives remain relevant in an increasingly digital world.

I notice that you are working on a PhD: can you tell our readers a little about that and why you have chosen to write about punishment in Victoria workhouses?

I've had an interest in crime and poverty for some time. I was fortunate to undertake a Master's degree with the University of Hertfordshire a few years ago, and my dissertation was on records within our collection relating to early nineteenth century Prison Hulk Refusers (inmates who refused the offer of a Royal Pardon to serve in the army abroad). I also researched poor law relief in Hertfordshire at the same time and this sparked an interest that continues to today with my PhD with the Nottingham Trent University. The PhD allows me to use archives at Kew and across the country to better understand the lived experience of workhouse inmates, through the prism of punishment. Workhouse punishment is, in many ways, the ideal vehicle for researching the development of the poor law. It raises fundamental questions about the Victorian attitude towards the treatment of the poor and allows the researcher to explore the nature of the relationship between the state and the pauper through its intermediaries.

Jeff James, as told to Claire Bethel

Local history weekends at The National Archives: Editors discover house's history

The National Archives held two local history weekends in September and October – these were joint events with TKS, Richmond Local History Society and The National Archives. On the night of 19th June 1921, approximately 38 million people in 8.5 million households completed census returns. Analysis of these returns has enabled us to form a unique snapshot of life in England and Wales at the time. A small team of archivists looked at the 1921 Census records to see what they could find out about Kew.

Free access was given to the 1921 Census results, enabling visitors to discover who lived in their house or street at the time, with guidance given on how to carry out a search. A variety of fun craft activities were provided for children as well, and pop-up talks and webinars were given on a range of issues, such as *Housing in Kew in the 1920s* by Martin Stilwell from the Richmond Local History Society.



Wall Map showing various places of interest

Of particular interest to your editors was an exhibition in one particular room on a randomly-selected officer in the First World War: Lieutenant Despicht, and his family. The archivist apparently selected this particular family partly because of their unusual surname, which made it easier to find records from several different sources. Detailed information was presented showing the officer's war records, his medals (which included the award of the Military Cross), his hospital admissions following injury and, finally, his untimely death in battle on 11th February 1917, as well as the Census entries for his families. We were amazed to see from the Census records that he and his family lived in our very own house at 13, Ruskin Avenue (the registered address of The Kew Society!). Following his death, his mother must have moved to Sandycombe Road, as the 1939 Register records a Lucy Despicht living there.

It was really amazing to find out so much about the family who lived in our house 100 years ago and we were very grateful to the archivist for all her painstaking research.

Claire and Paul Bethel

Do you know someone who could host a Ukrainian family already in Richmond?



Following up the article from our Summer edition, *Refugees Welcome in Richmond* who operate the WhatsApp group mentioned in the article have asked us to circulate the attached appeal for new hosts for Ukrainian families.

Replacement hosts are urgently needed for a small number of displaced Ukrainians. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, over 600 refugees have found sanctuary in our borough under the Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme thanks to the goodwill and compassion of local hosts. They are accessing healthcare,

schooling, language tuition, applicable benefits and seeking work. A range of support and welcoming activities has been put in place by the Council and voluntary groups across the borough.

Six months on, there are now 30 cases where refugees need to move on due to illness or unforeseen changes in circumstances in their host's household. Under the *Homes for Ukraine* scheme, hosts will receive a monthly payment of £350 for the remainder of their guests' first year in the UK.

If you know anyone who could offer one or more spare rooms under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, please urge them to contact Refugees Welcome in Richmond or the Council to find out how the scheme operates.



Useful Contact Information:

Websites:

homesforukraine@richmond.gov.uk

refugeeswelcomeinrichmond.org/ukraine



Central Kyiv

Telephone Numbers:

020 8891 7687

07710 981243



The future of care homes for older people in Kew

Currently there are two care homes for older people in Kew: Victoria House in Ennerdale Road and Cecil Court in Priory Road. Kew is fortunate that both these homes are run by voluntary sector providers – *The Abbeyfield Society* runs Victoria House and *Central and Cecil Housing Trust* runs Cecil Court.

On 8th October 2022, Victoria House celebrated with residents, relatives and friends, forty years of being a care home with (29 beds) in Kew. The celebration was marked by a tea party in St. Luke's, The Avenue and by the launch of a book, *At the heart of the community: Victoria House, 1980-2020* *.

Short speeches were made by the Abbeyfield CEO Paul Tennant, MP Sarah Olney, author Simon Fowler, and Caroline Poland, whose mother was a resident for fourteen years until her death in April. The celebrations were also an occasion for sadness, as Abbeyfield had announced the previous week a month of consultation over closure of Victoria House following an adverse report from the Care Quality Commission in April 2022.

Cecil Court in Priory Road opened as a care home in 1978. It has provision for up to 46 residents and a recent report from the Care Quality Commission (February 2022) rated it Good, with Outstanding Leadership. This means that closure is most unlikely under the present manager, but Cecil Court is also in an old building with similar limitations to the houses in Ennerdale Road.

MP Sarah Olney emphasised at the Victoria House celebrations that the social care sector faces stark challenges, particularly in staff recruitment.

Good managers and good staff are crucial to good quality care, but it is neither easy nor financially lucrative to run, or to work in, a care home. The history of Victoria House concludes:

'The great strengths have lain in the staff, and in the links with the wider community in Kew'.

The threat of closure of Victoria House shows that we cannot take for granted the future of care home provision in Kew.

There are plans for a private 'extra-care' development on the Riverside development, but this is not the same. The number of people in Kew aged over 85 is forecast to grow. So too is the number suffering from dementia.

We need a Kew-wide conversation about social care in our community.



Victoria House in Ennerdale Road



Volunteers, including Sue Sheffer (3rd from left), convenor of the Friends of Victoria House, with the book

* Available from *The Kew Bookshop* and *The Open Book* in Richmond.

The history of Kew Pond

We asked Diana Dunrossil, the Chair of the Friends of Kew Pond, to tell us about its fascinating history.

Not many passers-by or those who stop to feed the ducks realise that Kew Pond is possibly the most ancient historic site in the Borough of Richmond Upon Thames and dates back to before the Norman Conquest. It is thought to have originally been a natural pond fed from a creek on the Tidal Thames which was enlarged to serve as a fishery in the 10th century. It is believed to date back to a grant made in 996 by the Saxon King Ethelred to the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Winchester and to be 'a fishery at 'Kaio juxta Braynford' mentioned in historical accounts and charters from the 11th and 12th centuries. From the 1350s onwards, the fishery was leased to Merton Priory. The last mention of the fishery in these accounts was made in 1533 when it was unlet, and it does not appear in the survey of the Priory's accounts made in 1536 following the dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII. It is believed that King Henry VIII's barge was moored in the creek leading to the pond in 1530 when the King moved from York Palace to Richmond Palace.

With the development of Kew Green in the 17th and 18th Centuries, the 'fishery' changed to being a village pond situated in the north-eastern corner of Kew Green which was used for watering livestock and cleaning carriage and cart wheels. The pond is clearly shown in the 1771 Manor Survey of Richmond where it is referred to as a pond rather than a fishery. In 1824, a herdsman was appointed, one of his duties being to drive the cattle to water at the pond on Kew Green. In the same year, the creek was partly filled in and built over to give access to the King's School which was built that year to the north of the pond. As the pond has no natural inflow, it could only be filled once a month from the river when the tide of the River Thames was exceptionally high. This resulted in low-lying water levels within the pond, especially following evaporation in the summer, and frequent insanitary conditions from the exposure of a muddy smelly pond base. In 1887, the Commissioner of HM Works proposed to fill in the pond as it was now considered a health hazard, but local residents appealed against the idea. In the early 1890s, in an attempt to rectify this problem a concrete ramp was built and the walls were concreted over. The bottom of the pond was concreted over in 1934/5. At the same time, railings were erected round the pond. Following flooding in 1965, the remainder of the creek was filled in and a network of drains was constructed to allow street drainage from the surrounding area to flow out to the river and river water to flow into the pond through sluice gates when a heavy iron flap, which can only be accessed from the riverbank at low tide, is opened.

Richmond Council experienced difficulties in keeping the pond filled; and by the mid-1950s, the pond was being used as a car park, a playground and a rubbish tip, and many complaints were received from neighbouring houses about noise disturbance at night. By 1978, there was a serious threat that it would be filled in and turned into a car park. At that point, The Kew Society, together with local residents, put forward plans to restore the pond to a natural state.



After some delay, Richmond Council finally called a meeting in Kew Parish Hall In 1981. The meeting was well-attended and, after much discussion, it was decided that as the process of filling the pond depended on the height of the tide on the River Thames, the only solution was to allow volunteers to take this over on a regular basis. Names of volunteers who came forward were recorded and a date set for instruction. Unfortunately, tide times very often fall outside normal working hours, and the only two volunteers able to attend on a regular basis were Peter and Bridget Wait who lived in one of the houses overlooking the pond. For the next thirty years, volunteers led by Bridget Wait operated on an informal basis and gained considerable expertise in managing the pond.

In 2010, largely for health & safety reasons, Richmond Council decided that a more formal arrangement should be negotiated with the volunteers. After a series of meetings with the Council, the Friends of

KEW DIARY

News of forthcoming events in and around Kew

2022

Date	Details	Organiser
Nov (Date TBC)	Draw-Off-The-Thames walk – Arcadian Thames	Kew Society
3rd Nov	Guided Tour of the Poppy Factory	Kew Society
10th-12th Nov	<i>It Runs in the Family</i> in The National Archives	Q2 Players
14th Nov	Sandra Pullen on the history of Sudbrook Park	Richmond Local History Society
18th Nov	Kew Street Tree Presentation – a talk by Craig Ruddick	Kew Society
23rd Nov	Coffee Morning & Bring-&-Buy Sale, 10.00am to 1.00pm	The Avenue Club
2nd Dec	Kew Sparkle	Claire Cree & Sally Jackson
12th Dec	Nick Higham on Public Greed, Public Good: A History of London's Water	Richmond Local History Society

2023

7th Jan	Guided tour of the National Theatre at 11.30am (to be confirmed)	Kew Society
18th Jan	History of the Annyfield Home – a talk by Simon Fowler	Kew Society
24th Feb	Time Traveller's Guide to 1937 Kew – a talk by Lucinda Ganderton	Kew Society
Mar (Date TBC)	A new City of London Walk, with Helen Bartolome	Kew Society
19th Apr	Arcadian Thames Walk from Eel Pie Island Museum	Kew Society

Other events will be shown here as and when they are announced. For full details of Kew Society events, see our website: details below

Kew Pond was formed, a constitution was adopted and a management plan and filling protocol were agreed. Since then, more volunteers have come forward, and there is a regular group who open and close the valve into the river every month. Volunteer workdays are held twice a year in the spring and autumn when the reed beds are cut back, rubbish is removed and the fallen leaves are swept up. Powdered chalk is added to the pond during these workdays to inhibit the growth of algae by balancing the pH factor. This year, the Trust for Conservation Volunteers will come in over a two-week period in early October and a major clean-up will take place. The pond will be emptied, the reed beds will be cut back and the silt on the bottom will be thinned out. This work will be funded by Richmond Council. The last major clean-up took place in 2007 and the phragmites reeds and flag irises, both very invasive species, now need to be drastically culled.

Kew Pond as we know it today is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, and it provides a habitat for a variety of waterfowl including swans, mallards, crested ducks, coots, moorhens, pochards and occasionally more exotic visitors such as mandarin ducks and Egyptian geese as well as invertebrates including dragonflies and damselflies. It is enjoyed by young and old alike who stop to admire and feed the ducks.

Diana Dunrossil

Contact Us

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website:

www.kewsociety.org

Charity Number: 1173016

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