

## The Kew Society Newsletter • Autumn 2023

### Welcome....

to our autumn newsletter. We hope you had a good summer and have been enjoying the good weather in September and October. It was great to see so many of our members at our AGM taking the opportunity to find out more about our activities. As always, we welcome feedback from our members on the newsletters and any ideas for future editions. We have asked before for members to let us know if they wish to opt out of receiving hard copies of the newsletters. However, if there are any members who are receiving a copy only electronically who would like to have a hard copy, please do let us know by writing to [editor@kewsociety.org](mailto:editor@kewsociety.org). If you are not receiving regular email updates from us, please let us know so that we can check your email address.

### The Kew Society AGM

Our AGM took place on Tuesday 17th October. We were pleased to welcome the two new trustees whose appointment was approved at the AGM, though sad to say goodbye to four of our trustees who were having to step down as they had completed their terms of office: Nora Dennehy, Vice-Chair and PR; Alice Shackleton, Lead of Planning Sub-committee; Venetia Harper, Lead of Environment Sub-committee and Claire Bethel, Honorary Secretary (although Claire will continue to edit this newsletter). The retiring committee members were given a gift to thank them for all that they had done for the Society.

We thought you would be interested to know a little about our two new trustees: Russel Hayes, our new PR Lead, and Jeremy Lumbers, Vice-Chair and Environment Lead.

**Russel Hayes** was appointed as a trustee at the AGM and will be responsible for communications. He has lived in Kew since 1990. Russel is a former correspondent for BBC News, where he covered business and economics for TV, Radio and the News Website for a decade. He then changed track to help lead strategic change projects for the corporation, including the move of 7,000 staff from World Service, TV News and Current Affairs, Network Radio and TV production into a new purpose-built HQ at Oxford Circus. Now retired, Russel trained as a volunteer vaccinator during the Covid crisis, working for nine months alongside NHS staff in a regional vaccination centre at the Stoop rugby ground in Twickenham. He joined *The Kew Society* initially to show support for the organisation's work, which he describes as providing an essential independent perspective. He's a keen cyclist, cross-country skier, cook and technology buff, and is also a member of Kew's Police Liaison Group.



It was lovely to see the Mayor of the London Borough of Richmond – Councillor Suzette Nicholson – and her Consort visit Kew Village Market on Sunday 1st October.

**Jeremy Lumbers** was appointed as a trustee at the AGM and will be the Deputy Chair and Environment Lead. He moved from Wimbledon to Kew in 2016. Jeremy is a Chartered Engineer with an MSc in Water Resources (Birmingham) and a PhD in Environmental Engineering (Imperial College). He had a career contracting and later in consultancy before becoming a member of staff in the Civil and Environmental Dept. at Imperial College. He then formed a specialist modelling and software company where he was Chairman until retirement. Until recently he was a trustee of the Friends of Cannizaro Park, Wimbledon, where he was responsible for obtaining charitable status, the introduction



Russel Hayes



Jeremy Lumbers

of a new membership system, and other organisational developments.

Jeremy occasionally plays keyboards in a blues band, sings in the West London Chorus, is a member of Pensford Tennis Club and is the West Wittering Sailing Club representative on the Chichester Harbour Environmental Forum.

After the formal business was completed, we listened to a presentation by Jeff James – Chief Executive Officer and Keeper of The National Archives – who spoke to us about his research in a talk entitled *Workhouse Lives: Lunacy in the workhouse (Punishment and the Mentally Ill)* about life in Victorian workhouses. He described the lack of understanding of mental illness in the nineteenth century which was reflected in the inappropriate placement of people with mental health issues in workhouses. His forensic examination of records such as ‘Punishment Books’ and ‘Lunatic Returns’, which were submitted to the Ministry of Health, as well as the descriptions used for those suffering from mental health problems, revealed that treatment by today’s standards was extraordinary. The youngest recorded inmate to be punished was a three-year old girl, although the largest cohort was over 70. By the beginning of the twentieth century, one in eight of those living in workhouses were classed as mentally ill. We were grateful to Jeff for sharing his research with us.



Jeff James tells us about his research

## Green hubs in Kew

At the end of the small road of Victoria Cottages off Sandycombe Road in Kew, there were raised borders which had been dry and neglected for a long time. Now they have a fresh new look with drought-tolerant plants, herbs and spadefuls of compost. Maggie Mason, of *The Kew Society's* Environment Team, brought this project to fruition with support from Habitats & Heritage – a South-West London urban nature charity, and the help of nearby residents led by Julia and Ruth. We asked them what the site means to them.

### Julia's reminiscences ....

“Left as a bombed site after the second World War, this space was acquired by the C of E Primary School, the surface was tarmacaded and fenced with high wire netting, but this ‘cage’ was the much-needed playground for the children. Most importantly, it was adorned with very good roses that flourished on the south side. The bombed house had been lived in by Jodrell (Thomas Jodrell, the founder of the eponymous laboratories in the Royal Botanic Gardens), reputedly an excellent gardener!

“For decades the playground served its purpose and the roses delighted everyone. After the school closed (about 1978), a surge of local enthusiasm ensured that the space was reserved – as was the school, which was renamed St Luke’s House, for community use. Funds were raised to ensure a safe children’s area at one end, but the conditions of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames’ support depended on removal of the roses, as they might prick the children.....after 35 years of safe flowering!

“However, other landscaping did ensure some shady seating, raised beds and planting that have had intermittent local support and some infrequent invasions by the council contractors! Opened as the Jubilee Gardens in 1977 by Dame Beryl Grey, the famous ballet dancer, it celebrated the late Queen’s First Jubilee. The space has lent itself to many informal gatherings, such as book fairs and a children’s farm.”

### And Ruth's hopes ....

“Now the borders are looking a lot more interesting with the new planting. It has been a challenge to keep them going; however, apart from a few failures, most of the plants are still alive including the sages; and hopefully the irises I recently planted will thrive, but only next season will tell. A few neighbours have also been watering but I think what the plants really need is a deluge or two to really soak the ground.

“For the future, as the project evolves, this space could become a welcoming environment for community events. First, we need renewed seating, more shade, pergola structures perhaps, and recognition that it is a welcoming sunny space that is already well used.

“As at the start it will be up to us!!”





## Meet our new gardeners

We were delighted that our recent campaign to recruit additional volunteers to our gardening team led to us finding several new candidates.

There's always room for more, so do let us know if you would be interested in joining the team by contacting [gardening@kewsociety.org](mailto:gardening@kewsociety.org).

This picture illustrates one of the gardeners' regular get-togethers to plan and get to know each other



## Planning

Over the summer there have been a small number of applications. Most have been householder applications for house extensions on which we do not usually comment. Now, however, there is movement on some major proposed developments.

The **Homebase Manor Road** proposal finally came to life again with the recent announcement from the Mayor of London's office of a further revised application for the site and a consultation on these proposals which ends on 26th October. The application, which was the subject of the public hearing in October 2020, was revised in November 2021 and consulted on then, and has now been revised again. The Mayor approved the scheme in principle immediately after the hearing in October 2020. These revised proposals yet again ignore policies on heights of buildings in the Richmond Local Plan 2018 and the draft new Local Plan. The developer had raised a highly technical argument about Richmond's compliance with the London Plan policy on tall buildings.

The revised application takes into account fire safety and flood risk requirements and certain other changes in regulations. The consultation period ends on 26th October, and we expect that the formal planning permission should issue shortly after that, considering the Mayor's prior approval in principle. Despite this, we suggest that members respond to the consultation to make clear the scale of continuing opposition to this overbearing scheme, which will irrevocably change the nature of the area.

**Kew Retail Park redevelopment:** We understand JTP is intending to arrange a public exhibition at the National Archives in mid-November (possibly the 14th) on updated plans for the redevelopment of the Kew Retail Park site. We will publicise more details of this in due course. This will be essentially the first update we have had since September last year, and we encourage Kew Society members and local residents to attend.

The **Mortlake Brewery scheme** was approved by Richmond Council's planning committee on 19th July. As a major development, this decision has been referred to the Mayor of London. Along with other amenity groups, we have requested that the Mayor refuse permission. His decision is awaited. However, at the end of July the Secretary of State announced that all buildings over 18 metres high will need a second means of escape. The applicants for the Brewery scheme are making revisions to the planning application, and these will be submitted to the Richmond Council planning committee for consideration.

The **Kew Biothane Site development** (for a form of elderly care – not a care home but flats with facilities for the residents and also community elements) for which planning permission was granted in September 2020 but which had seemed to be dormant, is being revitalised. Various applications for approval of details which the permission required to be approved prior to construction have recently been made.

We reported in our previous newsletters on **85 Kew Green** (formerly ASK and now Kew Green Preparatory School). The application was for externally illuminated coloured roundel signs on the gable ends. We objected on the grounds that it will be detrimental to the Kew Green Conservation Area. The application has been refused and the signs removed.

Finally, the Council is consulting on an updated Appraisal of the **Kew Green Conservation Area** – its extent and features as well as potential harms. You can find the appraisal here:

[https://richmond.gov.uk/kew\\_green\\_conservation\\_area\\_appraisal](https://richmond.gov.uk/kew_green_conservation_area_appraisal)

and feedback can be given at:

<https://caa-richmond23.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/kew-green/step1>

The Appraisal area would include Gloucester Court and would now exclude certain properties on Mortlake Road

and Forest Road. We have some concerns that the exclusion of these properties could make it somewhat easier for unsympathetic development. The appraisal acknowledges the importance of the impact of buildings north of the river on the Area. Feedback to questions raised is invited with a deadline of 27th October.

**Alice Shackleton and John Ricketts, Planning Sub-committee**

## The Kew War Memorial – help needed



**As it was ....**

gates being added in about 1927.

Sadly, the Kew War Memorial has been looking somewhat unloved of late; however, the Parks Department at Richmond Council have this in hand and it will be replanting the surrounding lavender prior to Remembrance Day. Furthermore, local residents have kindly offered to tend to the lavender and keep this historic memorial cross looking its best.

Also, the wildflower planting in the bed that encircles the War Memorial has been extremely disappointing, and nothing has grown this year. The Parks Department is considering whether to return the bed to grass or give it one last chance to flourish by recreating the wild flower area or planting an urban meadow. Alternative suggestions are also welcome. Their decision will very much depend upon whether more local residents step forward and commit to assisting with the ongoing gardening maintenance.

If you are willing to help, please contact [environment@kewsociety.org](mailto:environment@kewsociety.org)

The Kew War Memorial commemorates those of the parish who lost their lives in both world wars. Situated close to St. Anne's Church on Kew Green, the Grade II listed memorial cross is sculpted from Portland Stone and was first unveiled in June 1921 to honour the men who died in WW1: a bronze plaque was added to the memorial's plinth in 1950 to commemorate the dead of both wars. A memorial screen in the church lists the names of those of the parish who gave their lives for their country in WW1 and WW2. Westerly Ware was chosen as the site for a civic memorial and converted into a recreation ground with its splendid



**And as it is now.**

## Station bed razed to the ground



**Before, in full bloom**

have been helpful in trying to find out how this happened, even searching through CCTV footage, and they will help to ensure that this doesn't happen again. We have written to TfL and are awaiting a response.

There are already small signs of green shoots so we hope the plants will eventually recover.

Towards the end of September, one of the beds at Kew Gardens station was – completely without our knowledge – reduced to stubble. The grass bed on the eastbound platform had been looking particularly good, with flowering grasses and lots of lilac verbena bonariensis flowers until the bed was razed to within an inch of the ground. It looks as though this has been done with a strimmer. We have been unable to find out who did this and why: the plants were not in the way of anything.

The local TfL managers



**And after**

**Anna Anderson, Head Gardener**



## Damage at Kew Pier

Many of you will have noticed that a large ash tree alongside Kew Pier fell during the summer. Action was taken to ensure that it was safe. It has left a gaping hole and did a considerable amount of damage to the tennis court fencing and the railings opposite Kew Pier including the fingerpost. The Council have been asked for their plans to restore it and, hopefully, to take the opportunity to improve the area around the Pier. It will unfortunately take some time for the tennis court to be brought back into commission.



## Seven Swans a Swimming \*

Many of you will no doubt have seen and admired the family of swans in the ponds in the grounds of The National Archives. This year has seen the arrival of a brood of five cygnets that hatched in late May. What is particularly unusual this year is that all five have survived.



Members of the swan volunteers from Ruskin Avenue

(the 'pen') protected by the father (the 'cob') to lead their youngsters away from the ponds and into the road in search of vegetation, finding their way into people's gardens in Ruskin and Defoe Avenues, and getting dangerously close to the South Circular, in search of the grass verges. In previous years, the swans have gone a-wandering once or twice in a season. This year, it was happening on a daily basis – sometimes even twice a day – when they were to be found anywhere in the front gardens, pavements or road in Defoe and Ruskin Avenues.

Residents in the surrounding roads were concerned for the welfare of the swans and were also aware of the potential for accidents. A few unfortunate drivers were unable to move owing to the swans sitting in the middle of the road and refusing to budge.

A small group of volunteers who live in Ruskin Avenue (including the editor of this newsletter), the nearest road to the ponds, therefore came to the rescue. They contacted the Swan Sanctuary, whose experts agreed that the likely cause of the wanderings was hunger. They decided to set up a complementary feeding regime twice a day, providing nutritious swan food. Not only would it seem to have stopped their wanderings, but the cygnets have all survived and are thriving. Over the next few months, the youngsters will continue to live with their parents until their flight feathers and wings are developed ready for them to 'fly' the nest. When they are fully fledged, they will – with vigorous encouragement from their parents – fly off to join a non-breeding flock until they are fully mature, when they will then fly off again to find their forever partner.

And then the process for mum and dad begins all over again.

All mute swans (the main type which are found in our lakes and ponds) are royal birds and are therefore protected in law. This means that anyone causing harm to the swans or damaging their natural habitat can be prosecuted. They are also ringed individually for identification purposes, prior to the 'swan upping' which takes place in July. The swan upping is a census of swans on the River Thames, a historical process dating back to medieval times.

Their natural diet is pond vegetation augmented by grass. This year has been unusual, since the temperatures have been extraordinarily high and their natural grazing around the pond was therefore parched. This encouraged the mother



Swans in Defoe Avenue

\* See 'Stop Press' on the back page.

## More on our recent AGM

For those of you unable to attend our recent AGM, we thought it might be useful to include some extracts from the Chair's Report, along with a few of the beautiful illustrations provided by new Trustee Russel Hayes (see Page 1). Shiona reports:

I have now completed my first full year as chair of *The Kew Society*, during which I have been constantly gaining knowledge about how Kew works – and sometimes doesn't work – and how, or if, the Kew Society should be involved. Our charitable remit is quite clear, and the focus of much of our work over the past twelve months has been to review what we currently do in order to agree our future priorities.

The purpose of the Trustees' report is to provide an overview of our activities over the period 1st August 2022 – 31st July 2023. Our trustees and other committee members work together to deliver a broad range of activities for the benefit of everyone who lives in, works in, or visits Kew. We aim to make a positive contribution to both our built and green environments and to provide a range of talks, outings and events for our members.

In the main body of my report, each trustee has provided an overview of what they and their colleagues have done – and achieved – over the past twelve months. You will see that we deal with a mixture of regular commitments and 'one-off' projects that are impossible to predict. Life is never dull!

To give a flavour of the range of our work over the past year...

Alice Shackleton and John Ricketts have provided consistently high-quality information and advice relevant to our 'built environment and planning' remit, which is aimed at maintaining the unique character of this area. This takes a great deal of background work and the ability to balance an acceptance that things cannot always stay the same with trying to ensure that any change is as positive as possible. At our 'Coronation Drinks' in May, a retired Richmond councillor said to me 'When *The Kew Society* makes a comment, the planning committee really sits up and listens'. We intend to maintain that reputation.

We have an increasing policy of 'not reinventing wheels', and so are working to develop and maintain mutually-beneficial relationships with other local groups by sharing knowledge and expertise. Roger Mason – a hugely respected scientist, and my predecessor in this role – has, for example, advised on the air quality implications likely to result from the development of the Mortlake Brewery site. And, needless to say, he has also applied his knowledge and expertise on behalf of our own members.



Tasty treats outside Kew Gardens Station



Some of our wonderful allotments

Along the same lines – and boosted by the offer of a grant to participate in Richmond Council's 'Big Green Week' – we conceived and organised a 'green networking' event to introduce and connect representatives from an impressive diversity of organisations, charities, and volunteer groups relevant to our local green environment. Thanks to the incredibly efficient organising skills exhibited by Venetia Harper – and aided by the beautiful invitation created by Dora Williams, wife of our treasurer – more than 40 people joined us for a Pimm's on a summers' evening. Conversation buzzed along, cards and phone numbers were exchanged, and productive connections were made. The success of this event (and the subsequent benefits for *The Kew Society*) have inspired us to run others to a similar format, including one to link us with the people running other local amenity societies.

Some of our most visible – and most appreciated – activities result in the much-admired planting around the village and the station platforms. Anna Anderson leads a great – and growing – team of volunteers who work to maintain the beds, which we know make a real





**The National Archives (TNA) Globe**

'Meet in Kew' – a monthly get-together for anyone who lives or works in Kew. Over the past year, these much-appreciated gatherings have benefited the local community, which leads me to mention our hugely creative and highly organised Events Team, led by Mary Done and very ably assisted by Sue May, Jane Hogan and Heather Wakefield. Many of our talks take place in the National Archives, and we are very grateful for their generosity in allowing us to use these wonderful facilities – and great staff – at a very modest cost. Over the past year, Mary and her team have masterminded a very interesting – and well received – programme of talks, outings, and social events. For the first time, we are beginning to collaborate with the Avenue Club to organise outings of mutual interest. A visit to Bletchley Park was a real success.

I mentioned at the start of this report that we are beginning to explore ways to try to grow and diversify our membership. Our longstanding membership secretary – Michael Fletcher – took the decision to retire early in the year, and Janet Clark very quickly offered to take on and develop the role with the intention of making it easier for people to join and easier for her and our treasurer to manage.

Throughout the year, we communicate directly with members in a range of ways, including our newsletter, which we know is much appreciated by many members. Claire Bethel, whose skills and wisdom will be hugely missed, is also the editor of the newsletter. She is aided by her husband Paul, whose technical abilities also benefit the management of our membership database. Prompted by a member, we now print on recycled paper, and have dispensed with envelopes. 70% of our newsletters are now hand delivered.

Nora Dennehy – our Deputy Chair – has continued to lead on all our communications, including social media, and is also a talented photographer. We will miss her editorial advice... and her photos!

As you will see, our finances are in very good shape and, as our strategies begin to be implemented, we intend to invest in a number of initiatives of benefit to our members. Steve Williams took over the role of treasurer after the AGM last year and – as well as getting us onto online banking – has brought in considerable knowledge and experience from his work with other charities. All our accounts must be scrutinised by an independent examiner, and we would like to thank Claire Satow for so generously giving her time and expertise to fulfil this requirement.

All our work is all done by volunteers: we enjoy working together, and over the past months we have all gained genuine satisfaction from 'putting something back' into the area where we all love to live. If you have a little time to spare and would like to contribute to any of our activities, please drop me an email.

Finally, I would like to publicly thank our patrons for their continuing support and advice throughout the year. I have no doubt that during the year 2022 – 2023 we have fulfilled our charitable objectives.

**Shiona Williams**

contribution to the wellbeing of people who live in or visit Kew. Thank you to the whole team – and especial thanks to John and Daphne Turner, who double-handedly look after 'their garden' at the junction of High Park Avenue and North Road, providing a little haven on what, not long ago, was neglected land.

Three of our trustees – Venetia Harper, Claire Bethel and Mary Done – created a 'Historical Walk'. *The Kew Society* was awarded a grant from the council to help with the design and production of what is now a very popular publication, especially appreciated by visitors to the area. We launched the walk and map at an event which attracted some very high profile and appreciative guests, including our MP, the Mayor of Richmond and the Director of Kew Gardens.

One of our aims is to 'connect' members and people across Kew. Before Pam de Goris or I were involved with *The Kew Society* we – supported by the Kew Community Trust – led a team of volunteers to host



**The railway bridge and a TNA Advertisement**

## Heathrow

Plans for a third runway at Heathrow are on hold, and the more pressing concern for residents of Richmond and Kew are plans for Airspace Modernisation (ASM). The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Department for Transport (DfT) are introducing ASM with the aim of reducing delays, improving punctuality and increasing airspace capacity. To achieve these efficiencies, satellite-based Performance Based Navigation (PBN) will replace ground-based navigation. Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) is concerned PBN will lead to greater concentration of flights and noise. RHC has consistently argued for greater dispersion of flights. Heathrow will consult on a final set of flight paths in 2024.



RHC is concerned with Heathrow's ASM option selection process and inadequate assessment of the health impact and need for respite. There is also a possibility that modernisation could lead to flights departing over Kew and Richmond for the first time. It is also possible that PBN night-flight arrivals could join the final approach over Richmond, with increased noise from aircraft on the turn. RHC continues to be involved in the evaluation process.

Noise from night flights is for many local residents one of the most acute Heathrow issues. The government is re-assessing UK night flights, but progress is slow. The DfT is undertaking a new night noise study. Heathrow and the community are scoping a study of night flight economics. RHC's response to a recent DfT consultation on night flights again sought a deferral

of all night flights between 11.00pm and 7.00am until the daytime, and reductions in late runners after 11.00pm, and reductions in dispensations and in morning air traffic from 6.00am to 7.00am.

RHC and other local communities are discussing with Heathrow the commissioning of independent research on the impact of noise on health including sleep disturbance and annoyance.

RHC undertook substantive work in 2021/2022 on aviation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Heathrow, including its flights, is the single largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter in the UK. Heathrow has offered to discuss with RHC CO<sub>2</sub> and the trade-off with noise in airspace modernisation. Longer term, we believe the increasing failure to meet climate change targets, and the doubtful reliance on biofuels, will put a ceiling on aviation growth and hence Heathrow expansion, but Heathrow remains strongly opposed to management of demand.

RHC has made several submissions to Heathrow and the DfT on the amount of pollution and harm caused by aircraft and surface transport – arguing that pollution and its harm is underestimated, with serious consequences for peoples' health.

In the last year RHC has responded to four consultations and attended 30 Heathrow-related meetings. RHC is keen to recruit residents to participate in its work. For more information please contact Peter Willan – Chair – at [action@richmondheathrowcampaign.org](mailto:action@richmondheathrowcampaign.org) or visit our website <https://www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org>.

**Nora Dennehy**

## Misery at Manor Circus: roadworks to last until June 2024

As residents will be well aware, Transport for London (and Cadent) began works at Manor Circus on 13th September. Severe traffic congestion was caused on both the A316 and neighbouring residential roads, with tailbacks on the A316 stretching from beyond Chiswick Bridge on the east and Twickenham Bridge on the west, as well as towards Manor Circus itself. Residents suddenly found themselves trapped in Raleigh and Windham Roads as sat-nav systems directed traffic down these roads to Manor Circus to avoid the congestion on the A316.

TfL 110 bus stops were closed and the 110 and the R68 and R70 routes changed without notice, leaving residents (and bus drivers) at a loss as to where to get on and off! Buses (both TfL and school) that ran were caught in severe delays, thus affecting school children getting to school and then getting home, as well as workers and others. Parents who drove children to schools both in and outside the area were caught, one parent taking three hours each way to get her child from Hampton to Hammersmith.

Raleigh Road and Windham Road have room for only one line of traffic, so once cars crowded in trying to get out to Sandycombe Road and then to Manor Circus, residents found it almost impossible to drive in or out of those



roads. Traffic blocked Raleigh Road and Windham from very early in the morning, as early as 6.00am on some days. During the worst of the congestion, Windham Croft Centre nursery was blockaded by traffic queueing in the single lane, with minibuses for the children facing long delays to get close to the school. The congestion was such that businesses appeared badly affected, with Sainsbury's car park showing much reduced usage.

Residents called on councillors and Sarah Olney MP for urgent action. These representatives took up the cudgels on behalf of residents and the Windham Croft Centre for young children; we would like to thank the councillors and, particularly, Sarah Olney MP, for their assistance. Residents suggested emergency traffic orders to make local roads resident-access only, and this was eventually done.

The situation eased considerably once TfL realised the extent of the apparently unforeseen traffic standstill and disruption caused by changes to bus routes without prior announcements.

A Zoom meeting for residents was then held by TfL, with the contractors, councillors and MP in attendance. Nick Owens of TfL admitted from the start that TfL had 'got it wrong'. From what was said and not said, it appeared that little if any consultation (or meaningful consultation) had taken place between TfL, the local council and the contractors to mitigate what could have been foreseen. Questions from residents were raised, and some answered. One resident asked how many meetings had been held between the Council and TfL before the works began: this was not answered, but the then current ongoing co-operation was stressed. A resident asked why the work was not done or started during the summer, and the answer was that this was owing to rugby fixtures.



Work being carried out is threefold:

- Urgent structural repairs to the bridge deck beneath the roundabout, which had been planned for summer 2020 but which were delayed owing to the pandemic.
- Replacement of the gas main by Cadent, which should reduce gas leaks and prepare the network for the transportation of hydrogen. This is one area of co-operation between authorities in the works.
- Works originally consulted upon in 2014 to improve cycling and walking around Manor Circus. These include upgraded pedestrian crossings, wider footways and cycle facilities, involving the removal of the third lane of the A316 heading west (which leads round Sainsbury's to Manor Road and takes some of the traffic backlog when the level crossing is down).

These works are planned to end in June 2024. Local residents remain on the alert.

**Alice Shackleton**

## **Kew Gardens step-free access: decision expected soon**

On the Tube Map, Kew Gardens Station is listed as 'step-free' meaning there are no stairs, escalators or gaps between you and the train door. That is strictly true, of course; but you have only to spend a short time in the station to realise what a false impression that gives of a lot of people's experience of actually using it. It's not just those in wheelchairs or with limited mobility: how many times have you seen or helped parents of young children struggle down the stairs with a pushchair and then up the other side? It feels almost cruel to have to tell them that if they walk or wheel themselves almost half a kilometre along a circuitous route with narrow and uneven pavements obstructed by tree trunks and up and then down a long incline, they can avoid the steps. It's for this reason that *The Kew Society* has been strongly supporting Richmond Council (LBRuT) in its latest application for funding for what might be called proper step-free access: in other words, without the half-kilometre walk if you happen to be in the wrong side.

### **Who pays?**

The money comes from the Department for Transport's 'Access for All' fund, which invites bids every five years. Sidonie Forrest-Brown – Senior Transport Planner for Richmond Council – told TKS that we should find out whether the current bid has been successful this autumn, probably in October. The fact that the station serves such nationally important destinations as the Royal Botanic Gardens and The National Archives is hugely in our favour, but she cautions that bids are submitted from across Great Britain and often stations with no step-free access at all are given priority. A previous application in 2019 was rejected.

### Will it happen?

Roger Mason, who has led our campaign, believes we have a strong case this time. Unlike some more complex stations, Kew would actually be relatively simple to fix by installing a new pre-fabricated footbridge linking the platforms, with a lift at each end. As part of the bid, he brought together other key stakeholders such as the Director of Royal Botanic Gardens – Richard Devrell; Sarah Olney MP; Nick Rogers – the local GLA Assembly member, and other local charities, all adding their supporting views to our submission.



### How long will it take?

If the bid is accepted this time, planning and assessment would start next April followed by design around a year after that, before any construction could begin. So, any change won't be quick but even so, getting the go-ahead for this long and much needed improvement would be a great step forward to step-free access for those affected. We will keep you posted. The background to the Step-Free Access Campaign is in the news section of our website.

**Russel Hayes, trustee**

## Tidefest and the quality of water in the Thames

Tidefest is an annual celebration of the importance of the River Thames. This year's was lower key than usual owing to a lack of sponsorship, but provided an opportunity for people to try their hand at activities such as Seine netting with the Institute of Fisheries Management (IMF) (see below), an annual angling competition, and kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding with Active 360. Sponsored by Thames Water, there were also some fascinating displays including one of Thames artefact discoveries.

There was a wonderful display organised by the IMF showing the fish swimming in our stretch of the Thames – seeing how many there were and how many different types was very encouraging after all the negative publicity about the discharge of sewage into our rivers. Steve Colclough, from the IMF, was on hand to show and talk about the fish that had been netted earlier that morning near Kew Bridge. These included roach and perch.

The offer of a (nearly free) guided kayaking session proved too much of an opportunity to turn down for your editor, who will definitely be trying it out again (despite getting soaked from the dripping oars).



**Steve Colclough, from the Institute of Fisheries Management**

**Claire Bethel**

## The Kew Society's Events

*The Kew Society* Events team currently consists of Jane Hogan, Heather Wakefield, Sue May and Mary Done. We quite often try to rustle up extra help for events, so please do contact [events@kewsociety.org](mailto:events@kewsociety.org) if you are keen to assist in any way.

In July, we were educated about the work of Nick Ovenden in the Amazonian rainforest and how the future initiatives within his YAKUM project (<http://yakum.org>) continue to focus on global climate change and restoration work – his enlightening presentation engaged the audience in why such critical global work cannot be ignored. We all hear the news – changes are imperative. Nick is now back overseeing projects in Ecuador but will return next year to update us on progress. A donation from ticket money has been sent to aid one of his projects.

In August, we enjoyed a fun morning learning more about the Arcadian Thames area, with an excellent guided tour of Marble Hill House and landscape. Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk – occupant of Marble Hill, architectural patron, outstanding figure of Georgian court society and long-term mistress of King George II of



Great Britain and Ireland – is our link into history, and it was a treat to learn more about her gorgeously restored landscape.

The Kew Horticultural Show was as much a delight as ever, despite the downpour as the Veg Auction reached its climax. *The Kew Society* was pleased that its donation to support the Show via the well-used tea tent (for tea, cakes and subsequent shelter) was happily accepted.



Ramping up a quiet Sunday afternoon in September, *The Kew Society* thoroughly enjoyed a Summer Picnic in warm sunshine in Pensford Fields. Children and adults alike were delighted to be entertained by the splendid Mr. Magic Bubbles and the jolly Ukulele Band. However, we must have missed a trick, as we had hoped that far more families would turn up. Families who did arrive had a fantastic afternoon, lolling in the sunshine, catching bubbles and enjoying the delicious Pimm's on offer.

Pensford Field is a hidden gem within the built environment of Kew. It is a haven for nature conservation – a fantastic green space which needs to be preserved. We are losing green spaces and this offers brilliant opportunities to gently work with wildlife in their natural habitats.



The work of *The Kew Society* Events team eased off a little in the summer but we restarted our autumn offer with a brilliant talk by Stephen Fielding – Acting Projects Manager, Habitats & Heritage – with a Talk on Sir Joseph Bazalgette – ‘The Great Stink and the Water Supply of London’ – we now know much more about sewers and where our water comes from.

Mary Done and the Events Team

## New Pétanque Piste at Westerley Ware

Have you played on the Westerley Ware Pétanque Piste yet? Funded by Warner Brothers and Richmond Civic Pride Fund, the piste is free to use, with no booking required – just turn up and have a go. Boules can be borrowed from The Greyhound pub nearby. Pétanque is a sport which people of all ages, genders and abilities can play together.



The basic rules are easy to learn, but one can spend years perfecting the art of the game. It's fun and sociable and a great opportunity to get some fresh air and gentle exercise, even in the winter months. Why not invite some of your neighbours for a game?

The Westerley Ware Association would love to hear from anyone interested in joining or setting up a pétanque club – please email [info@westerlyware.com](mailto:info@westerlyware.com). And if you would like to find out more about WWA, please see their website [www.westerlyware.com](http://www.westerlyware.com). They have volunteer gardeners in the park every Thursday (new volunteers always welcome!), spend about £1,000 a year on plants and projects, and are always looking for more ideas to improve this lovely space. They also need someone to manage their website and social media – please get in touch if you could help.

## And Finally ....

As mentioned earlier, we said a fond ‘farewell’ to four stalwarts of your Committee:

### From left to right:

- Claire Bethel
- Nora Dennehy
- Shiona Williams (Chair)
- Alice Shackleton
- Venetia Harper

We wish them all the very best for the future, and know that they will remain loyal supporters of *The Kew Society*.



## KEW DIARY 2023 / 24

## 2023

27th October	Turner's House - Seeing the Light' – Late View with tour	The Kew Society
2nd November	Carolyn Quinn in Conversation with Kim Darroch	The Kew Society
2nd November	Meet in Kew at Kew Community Centre	TKS & Kew Community Trust
9th to 11th Nov	Bullshot Crummond at The National Archives	Q2 Players
13th November	The building of the Priory Estate in Kew, by Stephen Bartlett	Richmond LHS
21st November	Air Quality and Climate Change in Kew, Roger Mason et al	The Kew Society
November (TBC)	Draw-off Walk along the River Thames	Thames Landscape Strategy
7th December	Meet in Kew at Kew Community Centre	TKS & Kew Community Trust
16th December	Boston Tea Party, with Daughters of the American Revolution	The Kew Society

## 2024

4th January	Meet in Kew at Kew Community Centre	TKS & Kew Community Trust
31st January	'Kew Garden Girls' & 'Kew Garden Girls at War' with Kerry Barrett	The Kew Society
1st February	Meet in Kew at Kew Community Centre	TKS & Kew Community Trust
16th February	Guided tour around Mogden Sewage Works with Joshua Callaway	The Kew Society
21st February	Is it possible to live a carbon zero life?, by Michael de Podesta	The Kew Society
March	Talk on Elizabeth David, by Jack Andrews	The Kew Society
3rd March	Our stand at The Kew Village Market	The Kew Society
7th March	Meet in Kew at Kew Community Centre	TKS & Kew Community Trust
13th March (tbc)	Walking tour from Sloane Square. with Helen Bartolome	The Kew Society
4th April	Meet in Kew at Kew Community Centre	TKS & Kew Community Trust
17th April	Guided walk around Barnes Common with Jackie Marie	The Kew Society
30th April (tbc)	Coach trip to Denbies Vineyard, with The Avenue Club	The Kew Society
May 2024	Kew Horticultural Society – Visit to Gardens of Cheshire	TKS & Kew Horticultural Society

For full details of Kew Society events, see our website: details below.

## STOP PRESS

On Friday 13th October (lucky for them ??!!), we were told that the Swan Sanctuary

( <https://www.theswansanctuary.org.uk/> )

had been in touch to advise that two of the cygnets had been relocated to the River Thames on account of the aggressive behaviour by their male parent: it is likely that they were male too. The volunteers will continue to look after mum, dad and the other three cygnets until the remaining cygnets move on.

At least they are now safe and – probably – happier as well. Meanwhile, we look forward to welcoming another clutch of baby cygnets any time from March 2024 onwards.

If Hand-Delivered:

For Address Label

## Contact Us

## Your Committee includes:

Chair	Shiona Williams	chair@kewsociety.org
Vice-Chair & Environment	Jeremy Lumbers	environment@kewsociety.org
Hon. Secretary	Diana Ormond	secretary@kewsociety.org
Hon. Treasurer	Steve Williams	treasurer@kewsociety.org
Membership Secretary	Janet Clark	membership@kewsociety.org
PR/Press/ Communications	Russel Hayes	russel@family-hayes.co.uk
Planning	John Ricketts	planning@kewsociety.org
Events	Mary Done	events@kewsociety.org
Gardening	Anna Anderson	gardening@kewsociety.org
Website	Nick Hutchings	webmaster@kewsociety.org
Newsletter Editor	Claire Bethel	editor@kewsociety.org

## Patrons

Nick Baird CMG CVO  
Sir David Durie KCMG  
Sir Donald Insall CBE

## JOIN NOW by visiting our website:

[www.kewsociety.org](http://www.kewsociety.org)

Charity Number: 1173016

## You can write to us at:

The Kew Society, 90 Forest Road, KEW, Surrey, TW9 3BZ



@kewsociety

