



The Kew Society Newsletter • Autumn 2018

Welcome...

to what can only be described as an Indian Summer, with many warm days as the leaves begin to fall.

The AGM took place on Monday 22nd October at the National Archives and was well-attended. We were really sad to see Caroline Brock, who has chaired the Society for six years, give up the chair as her term of office has come to an end but delighted to welcome Professor Roger Mason as our new Chair. After a summary of the busy year that the Society has had under Caroline's leadership, she was thanked for the huge contribution she has made to all of us living in Kew and her impeccable leadership of the Society and wished well in her new ventures. We were then treated to a fascinating talk by Paul Davies, Operations Director of the National Archives, entitled 'The Changing Face of Kew'.



Mike Adams Treasurer, presenting Caroline with a bouquet

Richmond Society Awards

Caroline Brock and Roger Mason attended the Richmond Society Annual Building Awards Ceremony on 20 September to see the restored Great Pagoda and Temperate House, at the Royal Botanical Gardens - both Kew Society nominations, win the top Bronze Plaque awards. We had not forewarned Sir Donald Insall, one of our Patrons, that we were nominating the Temperate House, renovated by Donald Insall Associates.



Staff from the Royal Botanical Gardens receive the award for the Temperate House renovations

Join the Community Conversation



The first in a series of "Community Conversations" with local Councillors will be held on Monday 19th November from 18.30 at the Kew Community Centre, St Luke's, The Avenue, TW9 2AJ.

All three of our Kew Ward Councillors will be present and there will be an exhibition, open from 18.30, on the current 20mph speed limit consultation. The "Conversation" starts at 19.00. We hope you will come along to discuss local issues. Questions do not need to be submitted in advance.

Beautiful Kew

We do live in a beautiful borough. This has just been reconfirmed as Richmond Borough won Gold awards in multiple categories in the 2018 London in Bloom awards. Kew played an important part in this success, and it was therefore not a surprise that at the awards ceremony for the Richmond Borough in Bloom 'Best Village in Bloom', Kew won an overall Silver Gilt award while areas of the Village also won individual awards for the beauty of their gardens.



The gardening team receiving the Silver Gilt award for 'Best Village in Bloom'

In their overall comments, the judges acknowledged the continuing development of existing gardens in the Village, such as the Station gardens, High Park

Corner, and the Pocket Park at the National Archives. The judges were interested in new initiatives and developments, acknowledging these with a Gold award for Kew Riverside's landscaped gardens, a Silver award for Neighbourhood Cafe Yukari's transformation of the corner of Kew Plaza, and a Silver Gilt award in the Community Building category for the lovely gardens at the Barn Church. Not surprisingly, the judges were dazzled with the beautiful, colourful presentations on the pubs on the Green, with both 'The Coach and Horses' and 'The Botanist' taking home Gold awards, while the displays at 'Maids of Honour' also impressed, gaining a Silver award. In addition, individual front gardens were recognised with a Kew resident taking home a Gold award, winning this category. Congratulations to all the winners.

The wide range of success across almost all the categories of the competition is a testimony to the hard work that many put in, often voluntarily, to make Kew such a lovely place to live. The Kew Society wishes to thank them all for their hard work, particularly in keeping their gardens so pretty in the tough drought conditions this summer. Of course, if any other Society members are interested in giving up some of their precious time to help with the gardening effort in making Kew even more beautiful, please would you let Richard Jaggard know at environment@kewsociety.org.

Events

The Kew Society Events Diary is racing towards 2019 and local events, are being firmed up. We hope these will provide opportunities to meet new neighbours, friends and residents and also learn more about Kew, its village and riverside. Many events provides us with some nuggets of information to learn more about Kew's history. The Events team is always grateful to receive new ideas for consideration. Contact us with any suggestions via events@kewsociety.org

Over the summer and autumn:

- A good time was had by all at our summer party – thanks go to Priory Park Tennis Club who were splendid hosts and Pomegranate Catering for their excellent canapés. Congratulations also go to the winners of the quiz.
- There were two excellent guided tours of Turner's House.
- We had a most interesting and informative guided tour of Westminster Abbey and the new Queen's Diamond Jubilee Gallery. The Gallery houses an Aladdin's cave of artefacts linked to the Abbey's history

and you can get a magnificent bird's eye view of the building from on high.

Events coming up :

- Sunday 4th November – three further tours of Turner's House.
- Saturday 10th November – guided visit to the London Museum of Water and Steam, Brentford.
- Monday 14th January 2019 – joint event with Richmond Local History Society – Stephen Bartlett talks about Royston House and the building of Victorian Kew.
- Friday 25th January 2019 – talk at the National Portrait Gallery linked to their exhibition 'Gainsborough's Family Album'. There will be an opportunity to view the exhibition after the talk.

Additional walks and talks for 2019 are in the final stages of planning so keep an eye open for further information on our website.

Planning and Environment Update

The planning team has been very active over the summer including work on three major development proposals outside Kew itself, but with multiple (and largely adverse) implications within.

We made objections to the initial 'Stag' Brewery phased redevelopment proposals in Mortlake because of the traffic/congestion/pollution consequences for Kew. The Council is continuing negotiations with the developers.

We appeared as a 'Rule 6 party' at the three-week Public Inquiry into the Chiswick Curve 32 storey tower block proposed in front of B&Q at the Chiswick roundabout. Again we emphasised the compounding of existing traffic pollution dangers whilst Historic England and Kew Gardens took up the issues of damage to heritage buildings, conservation areas and the World Heritage Site. All questioned the design quality claimed by the developer. A decision will be made by the Secretary of State later in 2018 or in early 2019.



Impressions of the proposed Chiswick Curve tower blocks

More recently we appeared at a hearing in front of the London Mayor following his taking over an application on the former Citroen garage site on Capital Interchange Way, Brentford (to the rear of the Fountains Leisure centre). Here Hounslow planners intended to refuse

consent on the ground of design, height and impact on heritage assets including the Royal Botanic Gardens but the Mayor intervened to negotiate even more flats (and a higher "affordable" proportion) within a higher building envelope which, at the time of writing, he intends to consent subject to agreement from the Secretary of State who we believe needs to consider this application alongside the Chiswick Curve.

Back in Kew Village near 105, North Road, the usual tension is clear between major telecoms operators proposing additional aerial masts for improved services and residents concerned at its visual and other consequences. We have suggested to the Council that a more proactive planning stance on their part might better reflect the balance between most residents' wishes for better mobile reception and their wish to preserve Kew's unique environment.



Heathrow

Redesign of the air space over London currently underway may have big consequences for us, with or without a third runway. The Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) made a presentation to the Heathrow Community Noise Forum (HCNF) to ask for clear principles to be adopted so that any increases in noise are shared fairly. Our presentation was made on behalf of eight other community groups across London who support our approach. The Government and Heathrow are likely to be at odds with our proposals - they want a concentration of noise to minimise the numbers of people who are overflown, which would mean increasing the number of flights in existing corridors, including over Kew. We propose dispersion

so that more people have less noise and there is no additional noise for those already impacted. Heathrow submitted their proposals for approval by the Civil Aviation Authority on 28th September, only one week after publishing them, allowing no time for consultation.

We also met the newly established Heathrow Community Engagement Board (<https://www.hceb.org.uk>) to present our case against a new runway and to voice our concerns over issues such as air quality and the need for investment to improve surface access to minimise congestion, and to limit polluting car use. We also raised the poor quality of the consultation process on airspace design principles.

The Temperate House



Sir David Attenborough re-opened the Grade I listed Temperate House, the world's largest surviving Victorian-era glasshouse, on 3rd May 2018 after it had been closed for 5 years.

Designed by Sir Decimus Burton, and twice the size of the Palm House, construction began around 1860 and took nearly 40 years to complete. The two octagons and centre block, glazed with green-tinted glass, were opened by 1863, and sit on a 1.8m high mound of gravel and sand – spoil from Kew's Lake. Following financial problems, the wings were added, and the glasshouse opened in 1899.

Some restoration work was required in the 1970s; however, the years took their toll, with further substantial restoration work being recognised as an urgent requirement, and the building closed in 2012. The masonry walls hide iron pillars that hold the weight of the building and these were rusting away.

500 plants were rehoused with a few trees being left and protected in situ. 69,000 individual elements were removed to be cleaned, repaired or replaced. 116 urns and 15,000 panes of glass were replaced and computer-controlled heating and ventilation introduced. This restoration project, Kew's largest, cost £41m.

The building is now restored to its former glory, housing over 10,000 plants in a spectacular setting – including 1,500 species from temperate regions of the world with a focus on rare and threatened plants

The Temperate House is a jewel in Kew's crown.

In the first four weeks of opening, Kew welcomed 219,000 visitors who wanted to view this magnificent cathedral that houses a range of lush, colourful and exotic plants. Youth Explainers offered stories about the plants and the scientific work that Kew does behind the scenes using world global plant science and conservation techniques.

Mary Done

Contact us

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website:

www.kewsociety.org

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