



The Kew Society Newsletter • Spring 2020

Welcome....

to our Spring newsletter which we hope might help to lift your spirits in these difficult times. Our lives have changed considerably since the Winter newsletter, when the COVID-19 outbreak was news but not something that was impacting on us directly. This newsletter explores how people in Kew are coping with being confined to their homes in order to avoid infection, minimise the impact of the pandemic and prevent our precious services from being swamped. We all look forward to better times but, in the meantime, or at the time of writing anyway, our best advice is to follow the guidelines and appreciate living in Kew as best as you can from the comfort of your own home. You'll be pleased to know that the committee continues to meet remotely to think about some of the issues that matter to those living in Kew – see our feature on the back page, together with the usual contact details.

Kew Society Trustees meet Sarah Olney MP



Roger Mason (Chair), Nora Dennehy (Vice-Chair) and Alice Shackleton (Planning Committee Lead) met our new Member of Parliament in February to brief her on The Kew Society's aims and review some of our current concerns.

We discussed several topics including:

- the Homebase development and concerns about Mayor Khan taking over as the 'planning authority' for it,
- the impact of the Mortlake Brewery development on Kew, and
- the problems of the cumulative impact of large developments on the local community infrastructure.

We also briefed her on the North Road phone-mast application and on the Society's feasibility study for step-free access at Kew Gardens Station (see page 3 for more details). Some of the issues facing our Environment Committee, including air quality and graffiti, were discussed, as were the problems of coach parking on Kew Road.

Describing the work of the Society's Events and Gardening Teams provided a more cheerful note! Sarah Olney said she was keen to interact with the Society, expressed her willingness to engage with issues on which she could help, and asked to be kept in touch with our activities. All agreed that it had been a very useful session, the Chair thanked our Member of Parliament for taking the time to meet us, and we look forward to similar exchanges in the future.

More News on the Plans for the Expansion of Heathrow

Heathrow's expansion project was dealt a major blow by the Appeal Court's ruling in February that the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS) approved by Parliament in 2018 is unlawful.

The judgement ruled that the ANPS did not adequately take into account the UK's legal commitment to the *Paris Agreement* on Climate Change, nor the impact of non-CO₂ greenhouse gases, nor the impact of greenhouse gases after 2050.

The Government, as the defendant, announced that it would not appeal the Court's decision. Heathrow said it would seek permission to do so in the Supreme Court, but it is an interested party to the appeal and not the defendant, and therefore permission to appeal seems doubtful. Were Heathrow successful, then the ANPS would still have to be amended in the face of increasing political concerns about aviation's major contribution to climate change.

The Court ruling, irrespective of any appeal, means that a planning application will be deferred from late 2020 to between mid-2021 and the end of 2022, and therefore the opening of a third runway would not occur before 2028. The re-design of flightpaths to modernise airspace is the subject of a separate airspace process, managed by the CAA, and continues to be scheduled for completion by the end of 2023.

Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) continues to be engaged in the airspace modernisation, and has major concerns regarding the introduction of independent parallel approaches (IPA), performance-based navigation (PBN) and mixed-mode (using two runways at the same time). These could increase the volume of air traffic and the noise impact on Richmond residents.

RHC has recently responded to the following CAA consultations: *Economic regulation of Heathrow's early costs of expansion (CAP 1871)*, *Regulatory framework and financial issues (CAP 1876)*, *Noise modelling (CAP 1875)*, and *Airspace classification*. The CAA is currently consulting on an *Airspace Master Plan (CAP 1887)*. We are also expecting a white paper on Aviation Strategy. RHC is participating in the climate-change debate using its substantial research on aviation and climate change, and has drafted a report demonstrating a substantial economic and environment benefit from abandoning the expansion of Heathrow, not least for UK regional economies.

RHC arranged a meeting with newly-elected MPs Sarah Olney (Richmond Park and LibDem spokesperson for business) and Munira Wilson (Twickenham and LibDem spokesperson for transport) on 24th February 2020 to discuss some of those issues.

Meanwhile, Heathrow has ceased engagement with communities on expansion and has released some of its expansion team. The COVID-19 pandemic and the drying-up of cash inflow must be putting Heathrow under severe financial pressure. It is too early to speculate on the future of aviation, but RHC will resist taxpayer support as discussed in our report in December 2019 on Heathrow's financial resilience.

Membership Cards

Following a review of their usefulness and their environmental impact, the Committee has decided to discontinue the production and use of membership cards. You will therefore no longer be sent a card each year with your newsletter, but all the benefits of your membership will continue as usual.

Kew Society Events

Early in 2020, Members enjoyed:

- A fascinating insight into the history of Windsor Castle and life within its walls. Sophie Jones, Guide Lecturer, Historic Royal Palaces, gave a splendid talk, whetting one's appetite for a future visit to Windsor Castle.
- Many members attended the joint event with the Richmond Local History Society – Martin Stilwell provided a most interesting talk to a large audience on "The industrialisation of Kew and North Richmond in the First World War".
- Until the closure of Turner's House in mid-March, Members enjoyed guided tours which included five of Turner's original oil sketches of the Thames, Isleworth to Windsor.

The following events have been postponed until we get "the thumbs up" – they will be rescheduled as soon as possible:

- "The Lost Francavillas of Kew – the story of 13 exquisite Italian statues ordered by Frederick, Prince of Wales"
- "The History of London Heathrow"
- Guided tour of the WWT London Wetland Centre, Barnes
- Guided tour of Hampton Court Paddocks and Water Meadow
- Guided tour of Wren Churches in London
- The Kew Summer Fete 2020 is cancelled – but keep the date of 19th June 2021 free for the 2021 Kew Summer Fete

The Events team will continue to review events scheduled for June – August 2020. If any postponement is required, ticket holders will be contacted.

June – August 2020 events currently include:

- Guided visit to Gunnersbury House, Park and Museum (10th June 2020)
- Steam Train to Windsor with optional visit to Windsor Castle (30th June 2020)
- Guided tour of Syon House and Gardens (21st July 2020)
- TKS stand – Kew Market (2nd August 2020)

The Kew Society Events team look forward to reinstating our 2020 events - ideas for future adventures are always welcome. Keep well and keep safe. Very best from Mary, Sue and Jane.

Step-Free Access at Kew Gardens Station

Our 2019 Autumn Newsletter reported that The Kew Society had been awarded a grant from Richmond's Community Fund to commission a feasibility study on providing step free access between the platforms at Kew Gardens Station.

After drawing up a technical brief for the study with advice from senior officers at Transport for London / London Underground, we invited tenders and received bids from three London architect firms.

A panel of expert senior officers from London Underground, Network Rail and Richmond Council's Transport Department, and three Kew Society Trustees (Roger Mason, Nora Dennehy and Stephen Speak) chose TC Architects (TCA) to carry out the study. They had previously worked on similar projects. We wanted to examine all possible options for step-free access at the station and, in Stage 1 of the study, TCA outlined eight possibilities. These included schemes for lift access to the present tunnel or footbridge and proposals for lifts positioned either inside or outside the station to new footbridges crossing the railway. Each option was assessed for technical feasibility, impact on listed buildings or other structures which would affect planning permission, legal compliance and also who would manage and maintain it in the future.

The Panel was unanimous in selecting for further study a new footbridge serviced by two 23-person lifts located on each platform. It would be located south of the existing listed pedestrian footbridge. We are looking at ways in which these lifts could be accessed by residents as well as passengers. Other options for step-free access were less feasible owing to engineering difficulties, impact on listed buildings, non-compliance with legal requirements, security, etc. TCA will now draw up detailed plans for the selected option, accompanied by costings by specialist estimators London Bridge Associates Ltd. The Kew Society then plans to progress the project by further engagement with stakeholders and by raising funds.



Plaque showing the Kew Society's support for the 2004 bridge restoration



Coronavirus – what does it mean for the Kew community?

The closure of schools, colleges, the majority of workplaces and community facilities since mid-March has impacted on us all in so many ways – not only in Kew, but throughout the world. Despite the terrible statistics emanating daily, the challenge of working from home whilst schooling children expressing a new-found longing for school, and the anguish of not being able to see loved ones, we are also seeing people at their most resourceful. Many roads and communities have established WhatsApp groups, a huge number of residents have volunteered to provide support to people who are self-isolating, people are participating in previously unimagined activities – online exercise classes, virtual dinner parties and pub quizzes, swapping the latest hilarious videos with friends and neighbours – all intended to lift our spirits during the pandemic. Many of us come out at 8.00pm on a Thursday evening to clap for the NHS and those working in other vital services, including those keeping the supply chain going. Some have even welcomed the slower pace of life which is enabling them to catch up on those long-delayed household chores and to have the time to indulge in leisure pursuits for which they previously had little time. It seems hard to imagine that we will emerge from this situation the same people that we were before.

Information on how to access help and support can be found online on the KewTW9 and Richmond Council websites.

To find out, we've interviewed some of our local residents

We thought we would find out directly how some of our residents are dealing with the pandemic, so we sent our not-so-roving reporter out (virtually, of course) to find out how – and what – people were doing.

Alex Simpson, aged 13, Ruskin Avenue

How are you finding life during the lockdown due to the pandemic?

It's OK, although I find it harder to focus on school work. The school sets classwork and homework which is due on a specific day which I then send back. It would be difficult to do it without a computer. The school was planning to have lessons online, but it hasn't been able to do so. I play with my friends and read books, and I use WhatsApp to keep in touch – we play Fortnite and have a good laugh and talk about things.

What plans have you got for the holidays?

I have been set work to do for the holidays. I also have exercises to do which the PE teacher sets to keep us fit. It's hard for me as a keen swimmer – I want to go back to swimming and I'm concerned that this break might affect my

whole swimming career.

Are there any good things for you about having to stay at home?

I get to spend more time with my family. I try to be more independent and focus on what I'm doing and figure out what the answer is myself instead of asking classmates. My mum is teaching me to cook new things.

What are the main challenges for you?

Not seeing my friends, not being able to swim, nor being able to go to church where I have friends, although we are attending online recorded church services. Being bored is really annoying – I like doing stuff, and swimming keeps me entertained. I also worry about my teachers' safety – I don't know if they are OK, and I'm not in touch with them other than when they set the work.

What would you say to other people your age they should do to occupy themselves during the lockdown?

They should try to read a book, or try to play board games with their family, and learn new skills – perhaps something like drawing.



Christine Barclay – Stall Manager, Kew Market – has lived in Ruskin Avenue, Kew for 21 years

In 'normal' times, as Stall Manager at Kew Village Market, much of my time is taken up with handling the 'back office' functions that enable the market to happen (general administration & record keeping – new applications, bookings, insurances, licensing, planning, communications) and managing stall activity on market days.

However, in these 'exceptional' times, since sadly we have had to cancel the market for the foreseeable future, I have time on my hands to tackle personal matters – mundane chores like housework & spring cleaning (no cleaner), queueing for fresh food, cooking to freeze, washing, ironing and packing away winter clothing, tidying the garden, trying to keep fit etc. No doubt, just like you!

In the few moments left for relaxation, I am currently reading the beautifully written 'Little Red Chairs' by Edna O'Brien. Thoroughly recommended.



When all of the boring domestic chores are done and I am fit with the effort of making my house and garden sparkle, I plan to relax with Hilary Mantel's Tudor trilogy (a 'War & Peace' commitment) and to explore the wonderful 'online' culture, courtesy of The National Gallery, British Museum, National Theatre and so on.



Professor Basil Kardasis, West Park Avenue, resident of Kew for 50 years.

How would you describe your rather unusual professional role?

I am a creative and hands-on tutor in the design and textile world. My father was a tailor and my mother was a weaver – learning these trades has taken me into every art, enabling me to create a range of products without having to rely on anyone else. As well as tutoring postgraduate students, I design products working with any material that the earth has given or that we have made ourselves. Much of my work has been overseas – I was working in Vancouver before the virus struck.

How are you occupying yourself during the lockdown?

I have carried on working using teleconferencing, but also students are sending me their portfolios electronically. I don't work at my desk, but get ideas whilst I am pruning or reading.

I could sit down and design a collection for a specific label if I have a subject to work to. When I moved house recently, the removal company who packed my books said that I had more than 6,500 books. They are currently in storage, so I have to rely on my memory now. But how often do I get the luxury of time when I am working? I can sit and listen to the whole of one of Wagner's operas now, which is an opportunity I don't

usually have.

What would you say to someone who is struggling to occupy their time during the lockdown?

When do we ever have the time to sit on our hands and do nothing? Take advantage of the fact that you have all this time and it's yours to do the things you want to do. It is the most wonderful luxurious time you will ever get. If you have a garden, use it, grow some seeds, read as much as you can, take the opportunity to learn to cook something new. Be mindful of the fact that you are well, get in touch with people around you, put a note through people's doors to see how you can help them, be mindful of other people around you who need a bit of morale lifting or help.

Meet one of our Patrons – Sir Donald Insall

We thought it would be interesting to interview (while we were still able to go out) one of our esteemed patrons – Sir Donald Insall – a renowned conservation architect who has lived on Kew Green for many years. Sir Donald was born in Bristol in 1926, and secured a place at the Royal West of England Academy School of Architecture where he began his studies in 1942. His professional life has included a vast array of projects in the field of conservation, serving on many international and national committees including that of English Heritage. But perhaps just as significantly, he has influenced the whole approach today being taken towards conserving our heritage.

How long have you lived in Kew?

We came to Kew from Chelsea, where we lived when we first married and until our family grew. We were lucky enough to find a house on Kew Green in 1973, and here we still are.

Can you tell me about some of the restoration work that you have done, in and around this area?

Our most recent project was to restore the lovely Octagon Room at Orleans House in Twickenham; nearby in Hampton, we had earlier helped to restore Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare. The recently completed restoration of the Temperate House in the Royal Botanical Gardens was especially exciting; and also in Kew we have helped to bring both Kew Palace and the Marianne North Gallery back to life. Overlooking the Thames and at Richmond, we restored Asgill House, built in the 1760s for Sir Charles Asgill, then the Lord Mayor of London.

What first attracted you to conservation architecture?

I was lucky in being awarded a Lethaby Scholarship of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings – a six-month travelling scholarship for young architects. This is still running and very effective, as it enables one to spend time learning from direct contact with craftsmen such as masons and bricklayers, as well as visiting quarries, learning more about stonework, climbing over a thatched roof and that sort of thing. All this was the start of the trouble!

I was part of the movement in the early days after the War, when we were all helping to make up for years of decay and neglect, as well as undertaking much-needed repairs from bombing and destruction. Everyone began to realise the importance of our architectural heritage, and to address such questions as the distinction between putting things back as they might have been or helping to protect and continue their lives. I think it all involved something of a new recognition.

What would you say were your greatest achievements?

Perhaps one of our team's greatest achievements has been our influence on thinking in this field of activity, in that we have been pioneers in the movement of conservation architecture. But I have always and above all been one of a team; and I think our mutual exchange of enthusiasm has been a key to any success.

Of individual buildings, there have been so many! Windsor Castle takes precedence of course, by virtue of its scale and significance and immense history, and of the awful fate it nearly met. It was a true privilege to be involved in rescuing Windsor, and to feel that the Castle is now in better health than it ever was.

Dealing with buildings is like helping relationships between people – each one is individual and has its own special qualities. We try to recognise what's significant and what's important before we begin to make any suggestions as to what can best be done. That involves understanding its history, its structure and its life. I do regard every building as something that lives and changes. Each reacts with the people who live in it, who use it and who enjoy it. Our job is to ensure that it has the happiest possible continuing life. All life is in constant change anyway; and that is true of buildings as well as people. We change every day in our outlook, our values, and what we feel to be important. The key is, as we say in our Family Motto, to find that, and to "Bring forth the Best".

What do you think are the main challenges in conserving some of the beautiful buildings we have around us in Kew; and how can these be overcome?

Kew has the same concerns, values and assets as anywhere else – but it is rather special in some way! I think it is wonderful that The Kew Society is so alive and thriving, and so influential in helping us to recognise what is special about our place. Many of the threats we are up against come from traffic and pollution, and the



short-termism which prevents us from taking the longer view. Climate change is especially a challenge – for example, the way rainfall is increasing and rainwater-disposal arrangements become more vital every day. Climate change is leading to water-level changes; and we are going to be very much under threat. I do feel we should be much more aware of the fact that the Thames Barrier is quite elderly: we have yet to face up to that. Then, the scale and overambitious density of some recent developments across the River, and their lack of environmental provisions, are worrying, as is the lack of social facilities in so many recent plans.

How do you think organisations like the Kew Society can help to improve the conservation of an area and stop ill-thought-out development?

Above all, by continuing to encourage awareness, and by promoting a balanced approach to coping with the problems. One mustn't fail to see the long-term dangers, like those of flooding and climate change, and of changing social requirements, in as balanced a way as one can. We are so lucky to have the astonishing assets that we do. In the political field, there is a risk that we see the nearest things and miss out on their longer term impact.

Where should we focus our efforts?

Promoting awareness and foresight, and achieving a balanced approach. Matching changing social needs with the conservation of what is so special.

Planning Updates

Here is a roundup of some of the planning matters since the last newsletter, starting with the welcome good news:

- Chiswick Curve (at Chiswick Roundabout): The High Court has dismissed the developer's application for judicial review of the Secretary of State's refusal of planning permission. The Court refused leave for the developer to appeal the Court's decision.
- Doctor's Surgery, Levett Square: Richmond Council approved the application by the surgery to extend its opening hours to 8.00pm on weekdays and 5.00pm on Saturdays. This is a much welcome community benefit.
- Mortlake Brewery development: Richmond Council approved two of the three applications for this massive development (those for the actual development), but did not approve the application to make changes to the road access at Chalkers Corner. The Council's officer had recommended approval of all three. This must be referred to the Mayor of London both as a major development and because aspects of it did not comply with the London Plan. He will decide whether to allow the Council to carry on as planning authority (and thus proceed with its decision) or to take over as planning authority and decide the application.
- Homebase, Manor Road: The Mayor of London was due to hold a public hearing of the application which he had called in but this was postponed, initially as the Mayoral election was due to be held on 7 May; now it is unlikely that it can take place at least until the coronavirus lockdown ends. The Kew Society had, in the meantime, written to the Secretary of State asking him to make an urgent holding direction and call in the application, which was under consideration.
- Kew Biothane (Red and Yellow): The Mayor of London has decided to allow Richmond Council to decide this application for an extended care facility (which the Council had indicated would be approved) on the basis that harm to Metropolitan Open Land was not sufficient to outweigh the benefits.

We continue to monitor all those planning applications, decisions and appeals that would or might affect Kew.

We may be in lockdown – but your Committee continues to meet !!



A screen-shot of the Committee Meeting on Tuesday 7th April 2020

TOP ROW: Roger Mason, Claire Bethel, Alice Shackleton

MIDDLE ROW: John Ricketts, Nora Dennehy, Venetia Harper

BOTTOM ROW: Nick Hutchings, Mike Adams, Mary Done

Even in these troubled times, your Committee continues to meet to keep your Society on an even keel and to try to plan for the future once things have returned to normal. Using our various computer skills (some newly acquired !!), we met online at the time and date previously planned. It took a little while to get used to not being together – but at least our individual surroundings were familiar. (Stephen Speak had sent his apologies.)

Nothing stops Spring !!

Though we have had to stop our gardening as a group at Kew Gardens station, some gardening continues on an individual basis whilst this is still permitted, and the plants have not stopped growing. Maybe some weeds too but we will deal with that later! We managed to trim the grasses and verbena at the station before the lockdown, so these should do well again this year. The bulbs we have planted along Kew Road, on the bank at the station sloping down into North Road, in the bench/planter and the low bed by the Kew Greenhouse café, are all looking good this year. We hope you have had a chance to see them during your daily exercise.

Bulbs at the war memorial on Kew Green and in St. Anne's churchyard have also been planted, and will show through soon, with an even better display next year we hope as they get established. We are finalising our full planting scheme for the churchyard so that we can submit final costings to Richmond Council within our successful grant application bid. If we don't plant this year, we hope to do it in 2021 when we emerge from the hiatus in outdoor activity.

Contact Us

Your Committee includes:

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website:

www.kewsociety.org

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