



The Kew Society Newsletter • Winter 2020-21

Welcome....

to our first newsletter of 2021. We hope that you managed to have a peaceful Christmas and to see some members of your families and friends even if it wasn't the Christmas you had planned. Having had a successful AGM and a talk about the history of Heathrow using videoconferencing, we are now planning to hold more events online to keep you entertained and informed through these difficult times.

This must be one of the most stressful periods that many of us can remember but we do hope that as more people receive the vaccine and with us all staying at home as much as possible, things will gradually improve.

Kew Village Christmas Lights

lights were switched on, Wednesday 2nd December, the day when Lockdown 2 ended! And what a difference they made to our village on these dark winter days and evenings – twinkling lights strung amongst the branches and between the large trees lining Station Parade and Station Approach, a large lit Christmas tree at the entry to the latter, and another one on Kew Plaza. It was just the tonic we needed to get us in the mood for the festive season.

That the lights went on at all this year when the *Kew Sparkle* event could not be held was due to the remarkable fund-raising efforts of their committee, led

by Andrea Samuelson and ably assisted by Sally, Claire, Caroline and Maxine.

Local businesses, organisations (including *The Kew Society*), schools and members of the community, all gave generously and showed the fantastic community spirit we have in Kew.

Our Chairman – Roger Mason – remarked: “while having a late Sunday lunch in the marquee outside the *Tap on the Line* with our friends from a very posh North London suburb, they told us “we wish we lived in a lovely village like this with such spirit!”



AGM on 21st October 2020

Our first ever online AGM held on 21st October, facilitated for us efficiently by the National Archives as a webinar on Zoom, proved highly successful. Around 70 people attended to hear our Chair talk about the work of the Kew Society over the last year and our Treasurer summarise our finances – further details including slides and papers can be found on our website. Whilst some of us missed the ambience and the conviviality of listening to

the proceedings with a glass of wine in our hands, we were very grateful that so many of you showed your support by logging on. We very much hope to be able to meet face-to-face by the time next year's AGM comes round on 20th October 2021.

We thought you might like to know about who now serves on your Committee and some others who help run our society, so have included photographs of us on Page Eight.

Gardening at St Anne's

In 2019, with the enthusiastic support of Father Nigel Worn, *The Kew Society*, together with the design team at *The Royal Botanic Gardens*, came up with ideas which, while allowing easy maintenance, would further enhance the beauty of St Anne's Churchyard consistent with its existing natural character. The planting was funded with a Civic Pride Award from Richmond Council.

In early 2020, the first phase of the planting and the establishment of a wildflower area on the south side of the church was completed. On 25 November, in a real community effort, volunteers from *The Kew Society*, the *Friends of St Anne's* and the *Holy Mowers* along with a team from Continental Landscape planted over 1,000 bulbs (tulips, fritillaria and snowdrops), a few hundred herbaceous perennials (including



Caroline Brock digs in

hellebores, aubretia and anemones) and some sweet smelling shrubs (Philadelphus, Choisya and Abelia). The project will be completed in spring with the extension of the wildflower area on the south side of the churchyard as well as the planned construction of an insect hotel, in conjunction with the Junior Church.



The selection of plants should provide splashes of colour from January to October at one of the main access points to Kew, supplemented by occasional wafts of perfume from the shrubs.

We hope that you will enjoy the planting when you are in the Churchyard or in that area of the Green

Tidying up High Park Corner

The community garden on the corner of High Park Road and North Road, affectionately known as High Park Corner, is beautifully maintained on behalf of *The Kew Society* by Daphne and John Turner. It has undoubtedly been one of the highlights of many walks taken through the village during lockdown. John and Daphne got a lovely surprise this Christmas when, unknown to them, their grandson Jack decided to have a little clean up of the garden.

He wanted to lend a hand as he thought it was too cold for his grandparents to be gardening and knew how much people looked forward to seeing the results of their work. What a lovely Christmas present for them and for Kew!



Events

There was a great response to our first webinar on 7th December 2020 – **The History of Heathrow Airport** by Anne-Marie Purcell, University of West London Archivist.



This was a learning curve for us, and *The Kew Society* Events team and Anne-Marie are so grateful that people took time to log in and learn more about the history of the London Heathrow location and usage from its humble beginnings.

The first flight took off from London Airport in 1946, and the presentation showed Heathrow's importance in over 70 years of aviation history as it grew into one of the world's largest transport hubs, serving more than 200 destinations worldwide.

When normality returns, it will be well worth exploring the Heathrow Exhibition at the University of West London. The University is also home to the Heathrow Archive with its collection of more than 800 artefacts that tell the story of Heathrow's history 1946 – 2016.

We also held a fascinating webinar in January on **Dental History and Plants – The Good, The Bad & The Ugly!** This was presented to us by Dr Margaret Wilson, Honorary Curator of the British Dental Association Museum. Before retiring from clinical practice, Dr. Margaret Wilson was a consultant in restorative dentistry at the University Dental Hospital of Manchester. She is the Honorary Curator of the British Dental Association Museum in London and editor of the *Dental Historian*.



The connections between plants and dentistry may not at first seem very obvious. But on closer examination, plant-based products have been used by dentists for many hundreds of years: for example, cleaning and restoring teeth, in replacement teeth and in the relief of pain and the reduction of inflammation.

Although techniques and dental equipment have changed, many of the products used in a modern dental surgery have evolved from products that were originally plant-based. However, not all plants have been beneficial to oral health: indeed, some have been destructive to teeth and oral tissues. This presentation illustrated how important plants have been to dentistry.

The Kew Society is delighted that on Wednesday 3rd February 2021, Jason Debney has agreed to participate in our third early-evening webinar. He will be talking about the **Arcadian Thames landscape** and projects to help the river reclaim its floodplain in a managed and sustainable way, helping to restore the natural processes and habitats that once governed life along the Thames. Jason's talk will focus on the Old Deer Park area.

Many of you will remember Jason from our boat trips travelling upstream, from Richmond to Hampton Court, and his river walks: Jason's fascinating observations on wildlife, as well as past and future Thames Landscape Strategy plans, are always interesting and exciting!

This will be followed by a joint talk with the Richmond Local History Society on Monday 8th March 2021 – **Five acres, one rood and four perches** – where Stephen Bartlett explores the early history of Kew's Lawn Crescent. **Lawn Crescent** is a conservation area situated west of Sandycombe Road and east of Ennerdale Road. It did not form part of the Selwyn estate like neighbouring streets, but was built as a single estate at the beginning of the 20th century, with houses located around a central enclosed garden.

We are also excited to welcome back Tracy Borman to talk about **Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him** on Wednesday 7th April 2021. Undoubtedly, many will have viewed Tracy on Christmas television delighting us with snippets and stories about London's historic buildings.

Additionally, we are keeping fingers crossed that we are able to participate in the **Kew Village Market** on Sunday 2nd May – this is a great chance to meet and chat to Kew Society members and passers-by about the past work done by the Kew Society (even in lockdown!) and what's on the horizon

Planning On 14th January, the Homebase development on Manor Road opposite Sainsburys was, in effect, given the go ahead by the Secretary of State who has declined to call it in. The reason? "The Government remains committed to giving more power to councils and communities to make their own decisions on planning issues, and believes that planning decisions should be made at the local level wherever possible. The call-in policy makes it clear that the power to call in a case will only be used very selectively. The Secretary of State has decided, having had regard to this policy, not to call in this application. He is satisfied that the application should be determined at a local level".

Local level, apparently does not mean local in this case where the Council and community were overwhelmingly opposed to the development but Mayor Sadiq Khan decided to approve a higher and larger scheme for this developer. The Society had objected to the proposal and the subsequent major revisions allowed by the Mayor, and last February requested that the Secretary of State issue a holding

direction and call in the application.

In the Autumn we responded to the major *Planning for the Future* consultation which would radically change the planning system, importing in effect a “zoning” system of three types of area: Growth Areas in which applications meeting set design standards would be permitted; Renewal Areas (suitable for some development) and Protected Areas. Our concerns concentrated on the centralisation of planning control with local input largely limited to creating a local plan mapping the “zones” and design standards. Permitted Development Rights (PDR) have been much relaxed over the last few years. PDR gives the right to build without full planning permission, subject to meeting certain criteria and conditions. Certain types require notification to the local planning authority with reports on specific matters (e.g. transport impact, flood risk, amenity of occupants and neighbours).

We have seen a large increase in the number of such applications for home extensions.

PDR has now been extended to facilitate home provision, including the right to make upwards extensions to commercial buildings. The first example in our area is the current application to add ten two-storey dwellings on top of London House next to the BP petrol station by Manor Circus on the A316. The Society is objecting to this application on the grounds of both eligibility and air quality (this is one of the worst air quality areas in the Borough and, in our view, not suitable for homes), design, and adverse effect on the amenity of neighbours.

Another example is 159 Mortlake Road (Jigsaw headquarters building): use of PDR to change the use to 31 flats. This is the second notification, as the Council refused the first: we objected to both, mainly on highway safety grounds as there is only a narrow accessway opening on to a bend in the South Circular.

We are also interested in the impact that planning applications north of the river have on Kew, in particular on the internationally-recognised vistas from Kew Gardens. Northward vistas are already being impacted by new buildings going up in east Brentford. Western vistas are now also at risk: along with many other local organisations, we objected in November to the proposed large-scale redevelopment of the Homebase and Tesco sites at Gillette Corner, involving tower blocks of up to 17 storeys. Unlike the vistas northward from the Gardens, the beautiful views to the west, across Syon Park and beyond, are relatively pristine and we must do everything possible to keep it this way. For further details please see the planning section on our website.



This is the view westward from Kew across to Syon Park and its meadows that would be spoilt by the new tower blocks rising around and above the Gillette tower, which is highlighted by the red arrow.

The Royal Parks movement strategy

In January *The Kew Society* responded to The Royal Parks consultation to give feedback on the trial changes to Richmond Park roads (see map) and gave “cautious support”.

The trial road closures have successfully reduced vehicular traffic to the north (at the weekends) and east of the park. There is general agreement that the overall environment in those areas is more pleasant and so the trial achieved a key aim.

However, we also noted that there was more traffic and greater congestion on the western park roads with significantly increased demand for parking at Pembroke Lodge. Unfortunately, without data we don't know whether these problems arise directly from the trials or from COVID-19 changing established

behaviours and increasing visitor numbers.

We therefore suggested that, until the “new normal” visitor patterns are established, Royal Parks should delay implementing permanent alterations to the network or access to car parking.

Although the Park’s bus service to Isabella Plantation was discontinued owing to COVID-19 concerns we would like Royal Parks to investigate the potential for a year-round operation that connects the park’s periphery with its centre. Subject to funding constraints, the intention would be to give less mobile visitors the opportunity to enjoy Richmond Park without needing a car.

The Royal Parks' Movement Strategy

Richmond Park

Trial reducing cut-through traffic within Richmond Park

Over the next 6-months we will trial the following interventions:

- Restrict all cut-through-traffic between Broomfield Hill Car Park and Robin Hood Car Park
- Close the vehicle link between Sheen Gate and Sheen Cross

Additionally, on weekends we will restrict all cut-through traffic between Roehampton, Sheen and Richmond Gates. This will greatly enhance the park environment for all park visitors and significantly reduce cut-through traffic on park roads.

Weekday car parking and vehicle access
The existing parking provision will remain, and visitors may still drive to the park, with the following access conditions:

- Kingston and Broomfield Hill Car Parks will only be accessible from Kingston Gate
- Sheen Car Park will only be accessible from Sheen Gate
- Cars will still be permitted to drive between Kingston, Ham, Richmond and Roehampton Gates on weekdays

Weekend car parking and vehicle access
The existing parking provision will remain, and visitors may still drive to the park, with the following access conditions:

- Kingston and Broomfield Hill Car Parks will only be accessible from Kingston Gate
- Sheen Car Park will only be accessible from Sheen Gate
- Pen Ponds, Robin Hood and Roehampton Car Parks will only be accessible from Roehampton Gate
- Pembroke Lodge and Isabella Car Park (Blue badge only) is accessible from Kingston, Ham and Richmond Gates on weekends

We are committed to undertaking a 6-month trial of these road closures. Over this 6-month period, we will measure and monitor these trials. This will include:

- In-person park visitor satisfaction surveys (where possible due to Covid-19 restrictions)
- Attaining park stakeholder feedback
- Evaluation of the external implications of our trials in partnership with relevant transport authorities (TfL and local boroughs)
- A formal consultation with all park visitors, residents and stakeholders

All feedback received during this time will be taken into account to determine the final outcome of the trial. The charitable objects of The Royal Parks will also be taken into consideration.

Stay up to date
To ensure that all park stakeholders are informed of the process and progress of each project, we recommend signing up to the Movement Strategy mailing list through our website: www.royalparks.org.uk/movement

Key Dates
Trial start date: 15 August 2020
Consultation dates: November 2020 – December 2020
Trial Conclusion: February 2021

www.royalparks.org.uk

Update on Heathrow Airport

Third Runway

Following the Supreme Court’s decision in December 2020 to uphold the Transport Secretary’s decision in 2018 to allow Heathrow’s expansion, progress at the planning stage can recommence which Heathrow has welcomed. But further legal challenges are being considered and, more importantly, the case against expansion is broadening on other fronts.



One view of the proposed third runway

The Climate Change Committee’s (CCC’s) Sixth Carbon Budget, December 2020, highlights the necessity for constraining aviation growth. The CCC also says an increase at one airport means a reduction elsewhere – i.e. Heathrow’s expansion would be at the expense of the regions. This is contrary to the government’s political aims and contrary to the Treasury’s recent National Infrastructure Strategy and the Net Zero Review (Interim Report). The UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow in November 2021 should place political pressure on the UK government to curb aviation carbon emissions; and an incoming American president – with climate change high on his agenda – should help. We are still waiting for the DfT’s delayed National Aviation Strategy and Aviation Decarbonisation Strategy, which should shed more light on the future of the expansion of the airport.

Aviation’s recovery will take several years, and an operational third runway has been deferred well into the next decade. Richmond Heathrow Campaign and other communities have a virtual meeting with Heathrow at the end of January, and we shall seek to learn about Heathrow’s plans.

Airspace Modernisation

Now more pressing for local communities than expansion, modernisation implementation is being re-planned by the CAA and DfT through to 2030. The aim is reduced delays and improved punctuality and resilience but RHC and others see this as an excuse to increase airspace capacity for growth in the absence of a third runway. A main feature of modernisation is the transition from ground to satellite-based navigation using Performance-Based-Navigation (PBN), which is similar to the Sat Nav in a car. It facilitates and even dictates very accurate flight paths. The problem is that PBN will very likely worsen noise. PBN means there is more concentrated noise over a smaller area whilst RHC has consistently argued for dispersion so that the effects are spread over a wider area. Reduced aviation growth should

reduce the need for modernisation and RHC is seeking an updated cost/benefit appraisal from the CAA and DfT. Modernisation creates uncertainty for Kew and Richmond residents with the possibility of flights being moved and concentrated in addition to an increase in number.

Activities

RHC has responded recently to the CAA on Heathrow's economic regulation and the Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise on its Strategic Plan. We are updating plans for dealing with airspace modernisation and preparing a response to the DfT's consultation on the next five years of night flights. We will be seeking a ban from 11.00pm to 7.00am.

Peter Willan, Chair, Richmond Heathrow Campaign

Meet One of our Patrons – Sir David Durie Sir David Durie has had a long and varied career in public service. Amongst his postings he has been Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Gibraltar and UK Deputy Ambassador to the EU. He was born in Scotland, but has lived in Kew for many years.

How did you come to live in Kew?

I was working in Paris in the mid-70s and when we were due to come back to England we were looking for somewhere closer to London than our previous home in the Chilterns. I was terribly busy working, but my wife, Sue, saw a house advertised in Kew and came to look at it and although she didn't like that house she really liked the area and in 1977 we moved into a house I'd never seen and have been happy here ever since. Our three daughters all went to Queen's School.

You've spent your life working in public service: was that something you always wanted to do?

I read physics at Oxford and loved it, but I wasn't very good at it, so I decided if I couldn't have a career as a scientist I would look for something else, and that's how I went in to public service. I said I'll give it a try and I went on giving it a try for the next forty years. The whole thing was very exciting and varied: I met the most interesting people and I had the opportunity to make a difference so that kept me going. I was based mainly in the Department of Trade and Industry, but I also served in the Cabinet Secretariat. I always had an interest in foreign affairs and went overseas from time to time with the Foreign Office. I went to Paris as part of the UK delegation to the OECD, and then in the early 90s I was chosen to be the Deputy Permanent Representative to the European Union. I spent 3½ very busy and stimulating years in Brussels working out deals for Britain in what had become the EU.



Sir David Durie

You were also the Governor of Gibraltar for a time, how did that happen?

After my Brussels posting I returned to the DTI, but after a time I started to get itchy feet and out of the blue I was asked to be Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Gibraltar. It was a wonderful opportunity and I jumped at it. As Governor, one is the Queen's representative on the ground, so it was a huge privilege.

You were in Gibraltar at a difficult time: was that your most challenging post?

It was a very tense time because the British and Spanish governments were negotiating the future of Gibraltar. I wasn't part of the negotiations but I was caught between the Gibraltarians and the British Government who both wanted me to represent their interests. I tried to steer a course in the middle that worked for everybody. It was a difficult period, but I think my most challenging posting was in Brussels. I was working on so many different aspects of the EU from the single market to science, research and the environment. For about three months twice a year, I was working eighteen hours a day six days a week, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Since you've retired from public service, how have you become involved with the local community?

After my posting in Gibraltar ended in 2003 we came back to Kew. I was looking for something to do in the local area when I heard that there was a vacancy for a governor at Queen's School. I've been a Governor for many years now and for a time I was Joint-Chair. I've loved the contact with the school. For many years, too, I was on the Advisory Council at the National Archives. I'm also a patron of Kew Community Trust and take part in their activities when required.

What is it that you love about Kew and has kept you here for so many years?

I think it's that feeling that everyone who knows Kew understands; it's a community in itself. Because it's surrounded by the river on three sides, it's a very natural community, it coheres, the people are very friendly, you've got the churches, the schools and shops which all make for a community that works. My wife and I have been very happy in Kew for over forty years, and long may that last.

Supporting local businesses

The past year has been a very difficult one for small businesses, with non-essential shops, pubs, restaurants, hairdressers and beauty salons spending so much of the year closed. Though 2021 promises to be a better year once vaccines are rolled out, we are not out of the woods yet; and as we begin another national lockdown, non-essential shops, restaurants, pubs and other hospitality venues will be severely impacted again.



We are very fortunate to have a wide variety of independent shops, restaurants and independent services all right here in Kew. Let's make sure they come through this difficult period intact. Please support them whenever possible so that we help keep the businesses we all love right here in Kew.

Our local shops are finding creative ways to support the communities that rely on them, and many shops have set up websites to take online orders – and some will even deliver to your door. So before you

Some of our parade of lovely local shops

automatically go to the larger online retailers, perhaps consider whether you can find what you want closer to home. Even though pubs and restaurants are closed, many are offering a takeaway and/or delivery service.

We've seen many examples of communities coming together during the Coronavirus pandemic, and many local businesses were at the heart of this. If we want to keep the unique character of Kew intact we need to continue to show our support for them to keep our wonderful community alive.



So please do what you can to Shop Local.

Photographs of the Committee and helpers of *The Kew Society*

As we haven't had the opportunity to meet up face-to-face for some time, we thought we might remind you who is on the Committee this year and what we all look like. We are always looking for feedback, so do get in touch with us if there any subjects that you would like us to focus on.

Indeed, if there is anything you would like to discuss, just email secretary@kewsociety.org



Roger Mason – Chair *



Nora Dennehy – Vice-Chair & PR / Press *



Mike Adams – Hon. Treasurer *



Claire Bethel – Hon. Secretary & Newsletter Editor *



Mike Fletcher – Honorary Membership Secretary



Mary Done – Events Sub-Committee *



Sue May – Events Sub-Committee



Jane Hogan – Events Sub-Committee



Stephen Speak – Environment Sub-Committee *



Venetia Harper – Environment Sub-Committee *



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