

# On Kew

## AGM

We were delighted to be able to hold our AGM in October in the unique surroundings of the Musical Museum in Isleworth. Recently moved to a new location, the Museum offers an interesting insight into the variety of musical instruments that have been used over the years.

Our Chairman, Michael Glazebrook, led us through the Agenda and Juliet Thompson, Treasurer presented the accounts. If you were unable to attend the meeting and wish to receive a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts, please either visit our website [www.kewsociety.org](http://www.kewsociety.org) or write to us at 25 Chelwood Gardens, Kew, TW9 4JG.

The Committee will remain largely unchanged for the coming year with only Sue May replacing Felice Oxborrow as Membership Secretary. Felice, whilst no longer serving on the Committee, will now be producing the Newsletter. Also Sally Sutton is changing her role to become Events Secretary: we therefore have a vacancy on the Committee for a Minutes Secretary and would be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested (please see Contact Us section overleaf)

After the AGM, members and their guests enjoyed a buffet Supper and were then treated to a marvellous medley of musical numbers by Donald MacKenzie on the Wurlitzer in the main hall. Saved from a closing local cinema, this organ has been meticulously restored and Donald was able to display its range to excellent effect. Donald's performance ended with him accompanying a Buster Keaton silent movie – an amusing end to a very enjoyable evening.

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## Local campaigning

You will most likely be aware that as a Society we take an active interest in any local issues that arise and where appropriate provide a considered opinion to relevant authorities on behalf of our members.

Several issues have engaged us recently: the proposed felling of trees along the Mortlake Road, the proposed change to usage of Kew Green and the repair to the revetment east of Kew Bridge.

A local resident made us aware of plans to cut down several of the beautiful trees on Mortlake Road, having received a letter from Transport for London, giving very short notice. The reason given was that the trees were a danger to traffic. Residents staged a protest on Mortlake Road and we immediately contacted the Council's Trees officer and TfL to insist they reconsider. TfL confirmed to us that, having made a site visit, the plans would be put on hold until a more detailed study has been carried out. They have promised to keep us informed and we will let you know when we hear more.

We have been in discussions with the Council and Kew Green Prep School about the school's increasing use of Kew Green for sports. We are concerned that the use of the Green by a

private school for its curriculum activities is impacting on the public enjoyment of the Green, which is a public open space. We are supportive of children getting plenty of exercise, but feel that there are other locations which are more suited to organised sports, such as those used by the other schools in the area including Old Deer Park and the Westminster University Sports Ground, located just across Chiswick Bridge. In spite of our reservations, the Council has now decided to formalise an arrangement with the school, granting 12 hours per week in return for a fee, to be rotated around five different areas of the Green. One aspect of this arrangement that concerns us is that Kew Green, a designated public open space, is being hired out by the Council to a commercial organization with the result that access for members of the public is restricted. We would be interested to hear members' views on this issue. Please email [planning@kewsociety.org](mailto:planning@kewsociety.org) or write to us at 25 Chelwood Gardens, Kew, TW9 4JG.

The repair to the revetment east of Kew Bridge, carried out by the Environment Agency (EA), was completed recently. It took a lot longer than anticipated and was an engineering challenge for them. We made a number of suggestions to the EA regarding the design, coordinating closely with the Thames Strategy Kew to Chelsea and the West London River Group, of which we are a member. The EA were very supportive and incorporated all our suggestions, changing the design to be more in keeping with the existing towpath, adding five bench locations, on granite setts, of which three are by the railway bridge, and landscaping and replanting along the landside of the towpath and around the railway bridge. We are very pleased with the finished article and hope you enjoy it.

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## Planning update

### Kew Bridge site, Brentford

The St George scheme approved by Hounslow Council has commenced work, despite our joint efforts with Brentford Community Council and the Strand on the Green Association in writing to the Government Ministers and requesting it to be called in for reconsideration

### Inland Revenue Site

The application went to appeal and we attended the appeal hearing to present our objections to the Planning Inspector. We expect the outcome to be announced shortly.

### Sandycombe Rd Tin Building

Developers have now withdrawn their proposal for 8 one bedroom flats after the application received a number of objections.

### Sandycombe Rd Car Garage Site

We understand that a number of unsuccessful attempts at reaching agreement on a sensible scheme between the new owners and LBRUTs planning officers have resulted in no planning application being made yet.

### South Avenue

Developers have entered into a subject to planning agreement to purchase the Widmans buildings next to the railway. We and a number of local residents have met with the developer to discuss the scheme in order to encourage an appropriate development which is likely to be mixed use. Determination on their outline application is due imminently.

### Cambridge Rd

A proposal by local resident and successful Engineer to develop a set of derelict garages disused for years and prone to fly tipping into a modern private residence for himself has received the support of the society.

### Thameside Centre

A proposed development to "continue the regeneration of" Brentford riverside by St. George. We will be looking into the detail of the scheme.

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## Volunteering at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Many people commit their time, talents and energy for the benefit of the Gardens at Kew and Wakehurst place and help promote Kew's mission, to conserve plant species and ecosystems worldwide. We were interested to learn more about this subject and thought you might do too.

Kew started using volunteers formally in 1983 when the National Heritage Act changed the gardens status into that of a Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB) and it was granted charitable status. The responsibility of the gardens was taken over by a volunteer Board of Trustees and volunteers were recruited to help support Kew's work in a wide range of settings.

Today the volunteer work is largely driven by the goals and needs of the gardens, the Kew environment and the law and national standards for volunteering. There are approximately 550 volunteers working at Kew and Wakehurst Place. They work throughout the gardens.

There are Horticultural Volunteers who assist staff by carrying out basic horticultural maintenance, pruning, weeding, mulching, planting and in the Gardens' shops. There are guides who do the daily tours and some do specialist walking tours. Volunteers man the Visitor Information Desk while others answer and forward phone and email enquiries. Some drive or guide on the Discovery Bus. There are Learning Programme Volunteers who assist Kew staff and teachers with groups of school children. Some help in Climbers and Creepers as workshop assistants.

Volunteers also work in the Kew Foundation helping provide administrative support. In the Herbarium, Library, Art and Archives, volunteers support the staff with data basing, handling delicate specimens, geo-referencing, scanning, indexing, labeling, managing loan returns, cataloguing, printing labels, filing, laying specimens in the correct locations, literature research, curation and information compilation. Volunteers also help support the scientific research work of staff in the Jodrell Laboratory and the Millennium Seed Bank and in other areas too numerous to mention.

Volunteering in Kew Gardens clearly encompasses a wide and varied range of opportunities – a subject that has been fascinating to bring into focus.

## Kew Summer Events

It would not seem right for this Newsletter to not report on two significant community events that took place in Kew over the Summer and in which the Society was involved.

The first Kew Music Festival was held for a week in June. With concerts ranging from small gatherings in local houses to large events in local venues, the Festival aimed to bring a wide variety of music to a wide range of locations. The Society was keen to support this new initiative and therefore sponsored the final Concert at St. Anne's church on Kew Green. The event was well-attended and a fine Summer evening allowed the concert-goers to enjoy the interval on the Green.

Fine weather had also previously helped to make the Kew Midsummer Fete held in June a tremendous success. The Kew Society along with many other local groups had a stall at the Fete. A number of visitors to our stall used the opportunity to become members, ask questions, and sign up for our advertised events.

One of the advertised events was our Boat trip which took place in September. A packed passenger boat took members and their guests from Kew Pier to Tower Bridge and back again. As evening fell, the illuminated buildings along both banks provided a singular view of London which was enjoyed by all.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Kew village will come alive again when the annual Kew Sparkle evening will be held on the 3rd December. Please look out for and come and say "hello" to the Kew Society stall.

We're pleased to announce that our "Twelfth Night" drinks will again be held on – Twelfth Night! We very much hope that you will join us to bring the Festive Season to a close – details of the event are being published separately.

Another evening to look forward to in the New Year is our Bridge Night on the 6th February - details of the event are being published separately.

## Contact Us

We do welcome your comments. One member e-mailed us to request that we reconsider the use of colour on the banner of the Newsletter. In consequence we have reversed the colours used – so giving a "greener" version as our latest look.

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## Your Committee

Chairman	Michael Glazebrook	chair@kewsociety.org
Vice Chairman	Barney Smith	
Hon Treasurer	Juliet Thompson	treasurer@kewsociety.org
Planning	Giles Dixon and Ben Knight	planning@kewsociety.org
Environment	Simon Owens	environment@kewsociety.org
Membership	Sue May	membership@kewsociety.org
Website	Gillian Horne	webmaster@kewsociety.org
Events	Sally Sutton	secretary@kewsociety.org
Other members	Rob Sheldon, Ulrike Bulle	
Patrons	David Blomfield MBE Sir Donald Insall CBE Baroness Tonge of Kew	

## JOIN NOW by visiting our website

**You can write to us at:**

The Kew Society, 25 Chelwood Gardens, Kew, TW9 4JG