

On Kew

Old Deer Park – the future?

The Old Deer Park, Richmond is familiar territory to many who live in the area and those that visit.

An area that has been defined for well over a century, the entire park consists of over 300 acres and falls within the freehold ownership of the Crown Estate. It is rightly designated as a conservation area in its own right, included with Kew Gardens at grade I on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and formally recognised by UNESCO as a 'buffer-zone' to The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew World Heritage Site. Whilst some of the area remains scenic parkland, over time it has also become the home for amongst others London Welsh Rugby Football Club, the Richmond Athletics Association, the Pools on the Park complex, the Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club, the Car Park south of Twickenham Road and of course the Post Office Sorting Office site. A long-term lease has generally been afforded to those areas that have been let, but the bulk of these expire in April 2016.

In the light of this situation, the Kew Society has taken part in the formation of a working group. With fellow members such as the Richmond Society and the Friends of Richmond Green a proposal is being prepared for the Crown Estate and Council. We are hoping to publish our proposal in March and invite our members and other residents to comment. We will post the document on our website and make copies available. In the meantime, if you have any particular views or suggestions for the future of this site, do please let us know by contacting us using the contact details at the back of this newsletter.



...And elsewhere in the Kew area

The National Planning Policy Framework mentioned in our last Newsletter is due to be re-issued soon by the Government following a consultation to which the Society contributed. Our local MP, Zac Goldsmith, has made a positive contribution to the discussion on this subject and was recently interviewed on "Newsnight" on the subject. It remains to be seen whether the Government will modify their approach enough to protect the country from unacceptable overdevelopment.

While construction of the St. George's Kew Bridge development proceeds apace, efforts to protect and restore Kew Bridge Station continue. We are pleased to report that our patron, Sir Donald Insall and the Brentford MP, Mary Macleod are taking an active interest here.

And while on the topic of bridges, the footbridge by Kew Gardens station has its centenary this year. This Grade 2 listed structure was restored in 2004 and is a rare surviving example of a reinforced concrete structure built using a pioneering technique devised by the French engineer François Hennebique. The bridge has a narrow deck and very high walls, designed to protect its users' clothing from the smoke of steam trains passing underneath.

The Kew Society were proud to be part of this restoration and further details of the project can be found in Donna McDonald's article in our Spring 2004 magazine that can be viewed on our website. Alternatively, if you would wish to receive a copy of this article, please write to 25 Chelwood Gardens, Kew TW9 4JG

Kew Gardens Season Ticket changes

Following advice from HMRC, we understand that Kew Gardens have recently undertaken a review of their Premier Friend membership scheme to ensure that it would be compliant with Gift Aid regulations going forward. As Gift Aid represents an important part of Kew's income, this review was an understandable priority.

In the light of the then identified requirement to make changes to the membership programme, the decision was taken to review the membership schemes in their entirety and consider whether it was sensible to continue to offer two levels of membership. In the current economic climate, we have been advised that Kew is

under constant pressure to increase the revenue it generates for itself and reduce its reliance on government funding and therefore the move was made to simplify their membership scheme and have just one scheme to administer. Further to some research amongst a representative sample of the membership, the decision was taken to offer only the Kew Friend membership and ceasing to offer the Season Tickets. Russell Le Page of the Kew Foundation says "Being able to visit, and bring in a family member on each occasion, for less than 20p per day, was seen to be excellent value for money and offered the benefits that our members wanted."

Kew Library

The Council has invited community groups to take over the running of three libraries in the borough, one of which is Kew Library. The community group would receive an annual fee from the council, new book stock each year and would pay a subsidised rent on the property. The Committee has discussed this and decided not to submit a proposal for two reasons; it was felt to be outside the Society's remit to run a library and as a matter of principle, our view was that a local library is an essential service that the council should be providing. We would be interested to hear members' views on this. The council's proposal can be viewed on our website.

Kew Village Market update

We understand that with the 3 month trial period of the Kew Village Market now completed, Richmond Council has given the go-ahead for it to continue into 2012. There was a largely positive response to the question of whether the staging of the Market was good idea and in general, the trial Market days were well-attended.

The Market will therefore continue to be held in the village on the first Sunday of every month. As noted in our Autumn newsletter, the market is being run by a local volunteer committee with any profits made being distributed to local charities or volunteer organisations. The Kew Community Trust and the Kew Out of School Club have been two notable local charities to benefit so far. As its popularity grows, we have been advised that the market has also been given permission to expand first along Royal Parade and then over to the other side of Kew Gardens Station onto the Piazza side.

Richmond Society event news: Lord Watson talks about the Diamond Jubilee

THE DIAMOND THAT WILL REALLY GLITTER! Lord Watson of Richmond is playing a critical role in organising the Commonwealth and USA dimension of the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee** including the Royal River Pageant. He will take us behind the scenes and also talk about his new book *The Queen and the USA*

The talk will take place on Wednesday, 25th April at **7.30 pm in the Main Auditorium of Duke Street Church, Richmond**. Kew Society members are welcome to attend, no ticket required. Many thanks to the Richmond Society for this.

Events

It was cold outside (not snowing this year), but warm in the hall at St. Anne's for our Twelfth night drinks. A good crowd caught up with old friends and acquaintances whilst enjoying a delicious selection of canapés and wine. Many commented on the enjoyable start to 2012!

February saw the staging of a Bridge night in St. Luke's. Aply hosted by Mark Hopkins, the evening was given a special lift by the kind donation of some Houses of Parliament playing cards and a bottle of House of Commons whisky signed by David Cameron for the raffle by Zac Goldsmith, our local MP. The evening moved seamlessly from a quiet atmosphere whilst card-playing was in progress to a lively buzz during the breaks and back again! Proceeds from the evening were donated to the Vineyard Community Trust.

Members will recently have received details of our forthcoming visit to the Orange Tree Theatre in late March. We are delighted to report that the opportunity to hear Sam Walters, the theatre's Artistic Director, speaking about his career and the "Actor's theatre" that he founded followed by a performance of two one-act plays, has proved very popular and is sold out.

Our diary of events for the year continues with a Wine Tasting evening to be held in May. We are privileged to have Pippa Hayward, Wine Educator based at the Kew Good Wine shop hosting the evening. There's a firm intention to have fun whilst learning about the variety of wines to both serve and give as gifts in the Summer of celebration that is coming up. The event will be held at the Barn Church, with all proceeds going towards the Church. Full details to follow separately.

Contact us

We are presently seeking some support for the maintenance and updating of our website. If you, or someone you know, would be able to spare some time to assist with this important task please contact the committee as below.

Your Committee

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------------------|
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JOIN NOW by visiting our website

You can write to us at:

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