



The Kew Society Newsletter • Summer 2015

Welcome...

to our new Facebook page, an added feature of The Kew Society's make-over: do "Like" it. As we trend towards electronic and social media we take care not to lose sight of what we are all about, caring for our Kew community in its neighbourhood. At national level, we may have a new government and new emphasis but one interesting aspect of the election hustings, held jointly with The Richmond Society in April, was that the candidates were, for the most part, pushing the same buttons. They took care to

interpret their parties' election manifestos in ways relevant to our local concerns. One such concern is the long-awaited report by Howard Davies's Airports Commission covering the future of Heathrow – on which see much more below. Meanwhile, the Society has continued to keep an eye on developments, from the towpath to schools, from helping visitors find their way around to planning issues. Throw in some interesting events and there is a recipe for fun too.

Heathrow Expansion – what are the facts?

The report of the Airports Commission is due to be published soon and is expected to recommend one option from the three still on the table (two at Heathrow and the other at Gatwick). Government will then make a decision, so the next few months are critical to influencing the outcome. We continue to work with the Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) to oppose expansion of Heathrow and are looking at how to bring the mass of data assembled into digestible form for the press and the Parliamentary decision makers.

The Airports Commission's brief was "to examine the scale and timing of any requirement for additional capacity to maintain the UK's position as Europe's most important aviation hub". Its interim report said that the evidence supported the need for expanded capacity and that this should be achieved through additional runways. The expansion should be in the South East, not other regions. Is the Commission right? We think not.

Here are some key facts.

Building a third runway at Heathrow would, according to the Airport Commission's own data, have no impact on growth of the UK aviation market because:

- It would be fed by taking away growth from regional airports, sucking more activity into the over-heated south-east;

- It would not increase the total number of UK passengers or the economically important sectors of business travel and tourists from overseas;
- There would be no growth in the number of UK flights, just a greater concentration in the south-east to the detriment of the regions and increased noise and pollution for a large swathe of the population;
- There would be no increase in the number of destinations served or frequency of flights to improve UK connectivity with world markets.

The Airports Commission says that the Regions have 60% spare capacity for flights. There is widespread agreement that the Regions need to grow relative to the over-heated South East for all sorts of economic and social reasons (jobs, housing, transport etc.). Why not use this capacity instead of sucking more into the South East?

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The Airports Commission calculates that a third runway at Heathrow and related assets will cost £18.5 billion, excluding surface access investment. £34.5 billion additional debt and equity will need to be raised. Is this a good investment given the alternatives?

Jobs are needed throughout the UK. At Heathrow, jobs are driven by passenger numbers, not runways. Growth of 23 million passengers (30%) to reach passenger capacity limits within the existing number of flights will generate more local jobs, not less as some have claimed.

A third runway at Heathrow would mean:

- An estimated 1.5 million people affected by aircraft noise based on World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines. The RHC is campaigning for implementation of these guidelines to replace current more lax standards. Even using current standards 725,000 are already affected by the two runways, three times more than by any other European airport;
- More noise pollution for those currently under Heathrow flight paths from loss of respite periods;
- * Continued breach of EU air quality standards for healthy living with poor prospects for compliance with those standards.

Individual aircraft have got quieter over the years through improved technology but:

- More flights mean more continuous noise on the ground;
- The rate of noise reduction from improved aircraft technology is now a fraction of what it has been;
- There is now a trade-off in design between noise reduction and reducing carbon impact.

Demand for road and rail transport in London is set to rise very significantly:

- 50 million passengers currently end or start their journeys at Heathrow. This, without a third runway, is

set to rise to 65 million. With a third runway it will be 100 million – a 100% increase;

- The Mayor forecasts a 37% increase in the population of London by 2050.

The Airports Commission focusses on increased transport capacity from Crossrail, HS2, the Western Rail Access via Reading, the Airtrack for southern Rail Access (Staines-Richmond-Waterloo) and “smart motorway” upgrades. For Airtrack, no solutions are offered for local traffic constraints at rail level crossings.

The Commission estimates £5.7 billion will be needed for improved surface access for a third runway at Heathrow. This forecast is to 2030 only, ignoring later growth in demand. Even with this substantial investment the Commission predicts that:

- On parts of the Piccadilly Line and the new Crossrail demand will exceed the number of seats available by 4 times;
- There will be no improvement in access to Heathrow from 33 London boroughs and a marginal reduction in service for 10 boroughs. Only 8 boroughs experience any improvement.

Transport for London (TfL) calculate an investment of up to £20 billion is needed, not £5.7 billion, to include high speed links to central London and Canary Warf. The consequences of inadequate investment are poor travelling experience on public transport and increased resort to road transport, generating more air pollution beyond EU standards and traffic congestion on main and local roads. The Government has been told, in a ruling last week by the UK’s Supreme Court, that it must draw up an accelerated plan to comply with EU standards it is failing to meet.

If you have contacts with the press or MPs, do please make use of these facts. They are backed up in the Airport Commission’s reports and in the reports of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Heathrow and the wider economy. More information is on www.richmondheathrowcampaign.org and on www.heathrowappg.com.

Planning and Environment Update

Brentford Stadium

At the time of writing we have not yet been advised of a date for the Secretary of State’s Inquiry into Hounslow Borough’s proposed Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to allow the Club to acquire all the remaining land it needs. Our Planning Counsel has been asked to review the merits of Hounslow’s Statement of Case in support of the CPO. We continue to liaise with other local residents’ groups north of the river who share our concerns about the scale of the proposed “enabling” residential development, the traffic and pollution consequences etc. We await the decision of the Information Commissioner

regarding our request for disclosure by Hounslow of the financial viability analysis it reviewed before making its decision to grant the hybrid planning permission. We are pressing Transport for London (TfL) to clarify its plans regarding Cycle Safety Improvements and a new Cycle Superhighway affecting Chiswick Roundabout and Kew Bridge (and the intervening roads) which clearly have implications for the Stadium proposal. We hope that many members will have got to the public exhibition on the proposals held on 15-16 May.

Deer Park School to open in Kew

Proposals to open a new school at the former office premises in London House, 243-253 Mortlake Road on the A316 by the Manor Circus roundabout were not widely publicised in Kew. They were met with some consternation at two meetings organised by Zac Goldsmith where the proposers, Bellevue Place Education Trust and Richmond Council's head of School Place Commissioning for Richmond, answered residents' questions.

The meetings were told that, whilst a new school in central Richmond would be preferable, an extensive search by the Education Funding Agency, responsible for site acquisition, had identified no affordable alternative sites. We will be watching for the planning application expected soon and will engage with any pre-application discussions. Clearly the site, on a busy trunk road, is far from ideal for a school. More information is on our web site.



Proposed school location on the A316

We have also made representations to Richmond Council on the Planning Application (15/0073/FUL) for rebuilding **Queen's School** and await the Council's decision.

Towpath: Tree and Vegetation Works

The Port of London Authority (PLA) have completed their intended works along that part of the towpath they control. The works they carried out were selected on three main criteria:

- The health of the tree and/or risk to users of the towpath;
- Improvements to navigational safety of river users;
- Maintenance of the structural integrity of the revetment wall.

Most of the work was principally located in the revetment and little replanting was planned for this season. Bartlett's were the retained firm for the PLA and, as Richmond Council retains them as well, they may also have carried out work on the landward side of the towpath for Richmond. The Society have enquired as to Richmond's plans for replanting.

Events

Highlights of the year so far have included an excellent talk by Susanne Groom in February entitled "When The Grand Tour Came to Kew". A large audience greatly enjoyed her accompanying stories and anecdotes. Kew Gardens had kindly offered a venue for this talk and we returned to the same location in early March to hear RBG Kew's Director, Richard Devereill, update local communities on forward plans for the Gardens.

Jason Debney, Co-ordinator of the Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS), led a Kew-to- Richmond towpath walk later in March. Participants were able to view some of the improvements TLS has already put in place along the river route. We are hoping to work further with TLS later this year on volunteering and refurbishment opportunities for the towpath – which still deserves more "tlc" at the moment. A new earpiece communication system was trialed and proved to be a very successful way to ensure those at the back of the line could hear Jason's commentary.

Hounslow's Local Plan

We spoke, alongside other civic societies across the river in Hounslow as well as the Royal Botanic Gardens and Richmond Council, at the independent review by the Planning Inspectorate of Hounslow's draft Local Plan. Whilst we welcome the regeneration, including Watermans and Brentford Town Centre, we have concerns over the height of new buildings in an area which is predominantly low rise and low lying. We fear that views from the many historic sites in the area may be compromised. The scale of the regeneration projects also threatens traffic gridlock and increased air pollution which we are not confident the Plan addresses. And we have concerns over the increasing use of illuminated advertising. The Inspector has now concluded his public hearings and we are invited to look by 8 June at the proposed modifications to the draft Plan in response to our representations. You can see the consultation document at www.hounslow.gov.uk/consultations and add your representation too. But be warned – you may need a wet towel round your head to get through the lengthy documentation!



Grim weather did not deter visitors to The Kew Society's gazebo at the monthly Sunday Market. It is always good to meet existing and prospective members to hear views and offer updates on local issues.

Events

April saw Colin Lomas, local historian and guide, lead a small group around Osterley House and grounds. Later in the month, there was an excellent turnout to the General Election Hustings on 22 April at Duke St Church. About 300 people came along to question all five candidates standing for Richmond Park and North Kingston, a closely contested seat where the majority at the last election was just under 4,000 votes. As Charities, we are apolitical so in a good position to facilitate this kind of debate.

In **May** we were treated to a privately guided tour of Sandycombe Lodge, once home to JMW Turner, the famous landscape artist. The house is in its 'pre-conservation' state and fundraising is underway to conserve this important building as a monument to Turner.



Coming up in **June**, the Kew Society will have a stand at The Kew Midsummer Fete on **Saturday 20th**. This year we will be displaying the winning photographs from the photographic competition initiated by the Society and currently on offer to Key Stage 1 and 2 children in all local Kew schools. Professional judges will be selecting the best entries from three subject categories. So, budding young photographers – get snapping! The deadline for submission is 20th May.

Following the success of the Introductory Wine Course run by The Good Wine Shop last year, a follow up course is offered featuring a more detailed look at four classic European wine regions. It will run 8pm-9.30pm on four consecutive Monday nights starting **Monday June 22nd**. As before, Wine Educator, Pippa Hayward, will lead the course.

This year, The Kew Society and Pensford Field Committee are jointly organising the Summer Party at Pensford Field. Hold **Saturday 27th** for a fun afternoon and evening of music and entertainment. Look out for details on how to obtain your tickets.

Later in the year, other events planned include a second tour, due to popular demand, around Osterley House and Gardens, a possible visit to The King's Observatory, a visit to Sandhurst, a tour around the Poppy Factory plus further walks and talks linked to the local area.

Finally, please keep **Wednesday 14th October** evening in your diary for The Kew Society AGM. This year we shall be in The National Archives and are planning a speaker following the official proceedings.

We very much look forward to seeing you at our events. It's a great way to improve your knowledge of the local area

and meet new friends. If you would like to help with planning events in any way, please do get in touch. Further details of all events will be posted in the Events area of The Kew Society website - <http://kewsociety.org>

And finally....

- As you can see, we are very active! We have a number of volunteers who are not Trustees: Nicholas Armour as Newsletter editor, Jane Hogan and Christine Dymond helping organising events, Susan Craig helping on membership, Nick Hutchings on the website and emailing the membership and Robert Smith for our Facebook presence. We would welcome more volunteers and Trustees. We are particularly looking, on the Committee itself, for help with publicity, making more people aware of what we do and encouraging growth in our membership, and our website management. We also still have a vacancy for a Vice Chair. Helpers are also needed for our expanding and very popular events programme. You may have ideas for other roles too. Please contact Caroline Brock at chair@kewsociety.org for a no-commitment initial chat about how you might help so that the Kew Society goes from strength to strength.
- We also need to keep growing our Membership. Remember that New Year resolution to recruit one new member each! Join Us at www.kewsociety.org or contact membership@kewsociety.org.
- Thank you all who have switched to receiving Society communications by email. It saves the time and effort of volunteers as well as funds that could be used to further our work. Please do let us have your email address if we don't have it already.
- "Like" the Kew Society Facebook page and invite your friends, neighbours or extended family to do so too. By joining the Society and reading the updates on our Facebook page we hope you will be better informed about our work and encouraged to debate the issues that are important to Kew residents. Our thanks to Robert Smith for setting up www.facebook.com/KewSociety.

Contact us Your Committee

Chair	Caroline Brock	chair@kewsociety.org
Hon. Secretary	Mary Done	secretary@kewsociety.org
Hon. Treasurer	Janet Clark	treasurer@kewsociety.org
Planning	Caroline Brock	planning@kewsociety.org
	Martin Taylor	planning@kewsociety.org
Environment	Avril Dalglish	environment@kewsociety.org
Membership	Teresa Hartley	membership@kewsociety.org
Website	Sue May	website@kewsociety.org
Events	Mary Done	events@kewsociety.org
Patrons	David Blomfield MBE	
	Sir Donald Insall CBE	
	Baroness Tonge of Kew	

JOIN NOW by visiting our website:
www.kewsociety.org

You can write to us at:

The Kew Society 32 Alexandra Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2BS