



The Kew Society Newsletter • Summer 2021

Welcome

to our Summer newsletter. We hope that you manage to enjoy the summer now that the restrictions due to the pandemic have been relaxed, although we all know that the virus will continue to impact on our lives for the foreseeable future. We also hope that you are able to get away for a break, whether you are having a staycation or are able to travel further afield.

Meet our new Committee members

We are delighted to welcome two new members to our committee: Shiona Williams, who some of you will know from her role as trustee of Kew Community Trust; and Anna Anderson, who takes over from Richard Jaggard as Head Gardener (see opposite). The Committee doesn't meet in August, but we are looking forward to our next meeting in September, when we hope to be able to meet face-to-face for the first time in 19 months.

Shiona Williams Shiona has lived in Kew since 1977 and has no intention to move anywhere else...now in 'semi-retirement' from her professional work as a career development consultant, researcher and writer, she has become increasingly involved in local activities including being a trustee of the Kew



Community Trust and the founder of 'Meet in Kew'. Married, with two grown up daughters who both went to local schools she is about to become a grandmother for the first time...

I have enjoyed living in Kew for 17 years because it's a beautiful area and I like being close to Kew Gardens. After a career in NHS finance, I now split my time between teaching English to adult immigrants, being a charity trustee and enjoying gardens and plants. Having

Anna Anderson



travelled extensively and visited places with unique flora, I particularly enjoy growing unusual plants. I have opened my garden for the National Garden scheme for 10 years and have helped to look after the beds at the station for the last three years. I'm now looking forward to my new role leading the Kew Society Gardening Team in creating and maintaining attractive gardens for the local community to enjoy.

Gardening update Many of the gardens, which the Gardening team have developed in Kew over the last five years, have now matured into positive profusions of green foliage and beautiful flowers, the station borders and North Road gardens being great examples. This year the project at Saint Anne's churchyard has also really bloomed, starting with the hellebores in February, followed by the tulip display and mostly recently the wildflower areas with their striking red poppies. Next up, it will be the philadelphuses, or should that be philadelphi, which will fill the air with their lovely perfume, especially on those much awaited warm summer evenings.

We have been working with the three main cafes in Kew Plaza on upgrading existing plantings with a more colourful and longer lasting display. The atmosphere in the Plaza has become very vibrant, which is definitely a function of the great coffee and tasty offerings from the cafes, but I would like to think the flowers and plants have played their part as well!

Otherwise, we have had a few members asking what we are doing for sustainability. The gardening work does provide increased bio-diversity in public spaces in Kew, through insect-friendly plant selections in our gardening projects as well as the creation of the wildflower areas on the Green and in the churchyard. We also went peat free in 2020 and are now trying to become plastic free, although this is challenging. We have a few more projects in the pipeline for later this year, and if you would like to join in and help, or if there is a tired area of public space which you believe could benefit from some beautifying, please let us know at gardening@kewsociety.org



Richard Jaggard



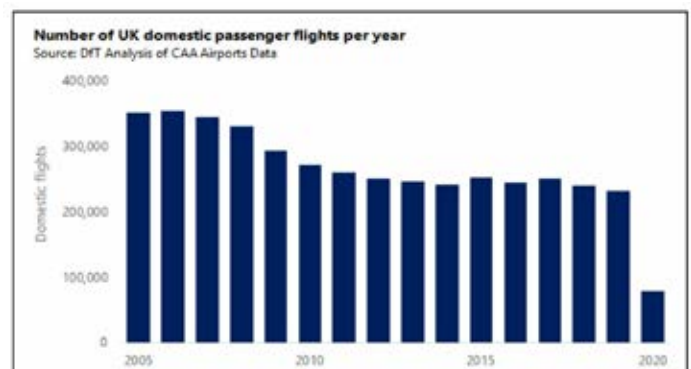
We'd like to thank Richard Jaggard for all he has done as Head Gardener for The Kew Society and as a trustee, as he is leaving to continue his studies in German and hoping to spend time in Germany. Many thanks, Richard (or perhaps we should say Danke schön und viel Glück).

Heathrow: Aviation Taxation

the Chair – Peter Willan – prepared, with input from members of the Committee, a response to the UK Treasury's current consultation on Aviation Taxation (see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971943/Aviation_Tax_Reform_Consultation.pdf). The current situation is that aviation is significantly under-taxed compared to other sectors of the economy. It is exempt from fuel duty and VAT. Air Passenger Duty (APD) is low (about 9% on a full one way UK ticket) and international to international transfer passengers (25% of Heathrow's passengers) are exempt from APD.

The Consultation covers options for reducing APD for domestic flights and options for restructuring APD on international flights to better reflect the increase in carbon emissions with distance. Extraordinarily the Treasury favours a reduction in APD on domestic flights (which would reduce the cost of a ticket and potentially promote an increase in flying) at a time when the UK Government has ambitious plans to radically reduce carbon emissions to counter climate change.

Following a meeting of the Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC) in May when this was discussed,



Painting the High Park Road bridge



Before



And After

the railway line on High Park Road for more than six months. Some frustrated Kew Society members, led by Caroline Smee, wanted to take on the task themselves. The Kew Society stepped in and asked Network Rail for the paint and for permission to paint over the graffiti: eventually this was agreed. Cllr. Lotte Campanale chased the delivery of the paint and organised the Council to provide the pedestrian barriers whilst The Kew Society rounded up ten willing volunteers on 9th



Terry working his magic

July. Terry Causer – a local painter/decorator – was the star of the show: he had already covered the graffiti with primer before the volunteers arrived and ably organised the group, offering tips on painting technique along the way. Some three hours later, one side of the road was finished. Terry almost single-handedly took on painting the other side of the road

early the following morning. Now the bridge looks smarter than it has in years!

Many thanks are due to the volunteers: Caroline Smee, Christian Pashley, David Noakes (LBRuT Community Safety Officer), Kathy Thexton, Cllr. Lotte Campanale, Mary Done, Olivia Pashley, Richard Hankinson, Terry Causer, William Lyth and to committee member Venetia Harper for organising.

Planning

The planning subcommittee reads all planning applications for the Kew Ward and the part of North Richmond ward in Kew, as well as those in Hounslow which could affect Kew and, in particular, our heritage assets such as Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. As a matter of policy, we do not comment on domestic applications, e.g. for loft or side return extensions, unless there is a public interest in the case. Over the last few months, most of the planning applications have been for domestic extensions, but there have been a small number of applications of general interest and concern, as well as ongoing or potential developments on which we keep an eagle eye!

An application was submitted to develop 32 Haverfield Gardens (21/1575) by demolishing the 22 garages and one house on the site and building five houses. The developers do provide for a public turning facility as well. Whilst recognising the positive aspects of development for housing, we supported local residents in objecting to the proposals as they stand, and suggested a possible mitigation to reduce the effect of the side-on view of the development looking down Haverfield Gardens. This will go to the planning committee for decision.

More recently, Kew Cricket Club has applied to replace the two bay cricket nets on Kew Green (which are in need of repair/replacing) with a three-bay much larger set-up surrounded by high fencing which is to be locked. The new facility is to be used by the Club and two private schools – one on the Green and the other a sister school in Chiswick/Brentford for cricket – but also for other physical education in autumn and winter, with other local schools given access if time permits. The Society has objected strongly to this application on design grounds and also loss of a public facility to private use. (Council reference 21/1090.)

A new application has just been submitted to extend Caxton House, 110 Kew Green (21/2221) which the committee is now considering. The previous application was refused by the Council.

The GLA have now set a date for the Public Hearing of the Former Stag Brewery, Mortlake



redevelopment: this is due to be held on Tuesday 27th July at 2.00pm in the Chamber at City Hall. It will be open to the public, subject to a limit of 250 people, and we encourage people to attend if they are able to. The Kew Society has objected to the developments, largely on the grounds of the increased traffic and pollution levels that will certainly be generated by a scheme which is likely to increase the population in Mortlake by around 90%.

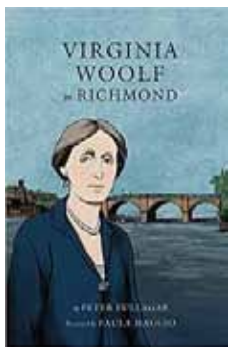
North of the river, we are waiting to hear when the planning applications for the proposed Homebase/Tesco redevelopment in Osterley, approved by the Hounslow Council Planning Committee in April, will be submitted to the Mayor of London for his decision. The Kew Society objected to this scheme due to the materially harmful impact the new tower blocks would have on important historical views from Kew Gardens. In addition, we are expecting to see a new planning application submitted to Hounslow Council soon for a tower block of 21 storeys or so – to be named ‘Holly House’ – on the site of the proposed 32-storey ‘Chiswick Curve’ tower block, adjacent to the Chiswick Roundabout. The Chiswick Curve application was finally turned down on appeal by the High Court in March 2020, not least on grounds of the adverse impact it would have on surrounding heritage assets, including Kew Gardens. The same developer – Starbones – carried out a ‘community consultation’ on the proposed Holly House scheme earlier this year, and the results can be seen on their new website (<https://hollyhouse.communityuk.live/>).

Events

Our webinar offer for members currently continues, and we hope you are enjoying these. If you missed any webinars, they can be viewed again on the Kew Society website, under “News”. Webinars are free to all viewers, and thank you to those who have tuned in.

Excellent presentations since April have covered:

- o *Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him* – Tracy Borman.
- o *The Flowering of Kew Gardens In Art* – Chris Mills.
- o *A Natural History of Tonic Water* – Mark Nesbitt and Kim Walker.
- o *Connecting Virginia Woolf to Kew and Richmond* – Peter Fullagar



The Kew Society extends enormous thanks to The National Archives team and Nick Hutchings (our webmaster) for their technical expertise which helps to ensure the smooth running of webinars.

Events remaining for 2021 include:

- o Saturday 28th August 2021 – The Kew Horticultural Society Show where we hope to have a stand.
- o Sunday 5th September 2021 – again we hope to have a stand at the monthly Kew Market.
- o Saturday 11th September – We are planning for a balmy



evening Members’ Picnic event in the grounds of the National Archives.

- o Wednesday 15th September 2021, 7.00 pm – webinar – *The Gardens of Windsor Great Park* – John Anderson, Keeper of the Gardens, Crown Estate, Windsor Great Park.
- o Set your alarm clock to join our planned guided tour of the WWT London Wetland Centre on Sunday 26th September 2021, 10.00 am

Autumn webinars include:

- o Friday 8th October, 7.00 pm – Sarah Rutherford - her talk will focus on high-rise developments which impact on Kew’s landscape, the Arcadian Thames and Capability Brown’s vision.
- o Friday 12th November, 7pm – Marian Mollett - *Kew’s War Memorials*.
- o Friday 26th November, 7pm – Leila Redpath - *Kew and The East India Museum*.

Last, but not least, the Kew Society AGM is planned for the evening of Wednesday 20th October. We are hoping that it will be possible to hold this at The National Archives. The AGM will be followed by a short talk from a celebrated local resident!

We need your support; and a huge advance "Thank You" from the Events team: Sue, Jane and Mary.

E-scooters come to Kew

Transport for London (TfL) initiated their 12-month trial of electric scooters for hire on Monday 7th June, with Richmond Council volunteering to be a test borough. The trial is part of a national effort to determine whether people will use this alternative form of transport and learn more about their use.

The rented e-scooters are limited to 12.5mph and are the only way legal way to ride an e-scooter on public roads. They must not be ridden on pavements at any time, although they can use cycle lanes. Riders must be 18 or over, hold a driving licence and can receive penalty points for infringements. The rented scooters are "geofenced" and will not therefore work in locations prohibited by the Council (the towpath, for example).



The three types of scooter

the Green. Three operators are participating in the borough trial, namely Lime, Dott and Tier; and each has a different livery (see picture). An all-black scooter is likely to be privately owned, making its use on local roads illegal.

TfL is running a public consultation during the trial which can be found at the following site:

<https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/e-scooter-trial>.

Should you have concerns that relate to a specific operator then please contact them direct through one of the methods below.

Lime Lime Green and White. Phone: 0800 808 5223. Email: support@li.me

Dott Blue and Red. Phone: 0800 048 8993. E Mail: support@ridedott.com

Tier Turquoise and Black. Phone: 0151 317 4276. Email: support@tier.app

It is a hire requirement that the e-scooter be returned to a designated station, and several of these have popped up by converting one or more car parking spaces. In the Kew Society area, there are currently two scooter spaces on Kew Green, one at Station Approach, one on North Road between the station and High Park Road and another at Stanmore Road, with the possibility of more to follow. We expressed concerns about the spaces on Kew Green owing to the recently-introduced one-way working. The only legal exit is on to the South Circular, with added risks for a rider arising from the council's insistence that coaches to Kew Gardens also use



Scooters by the station

Interview with local artist, Diana Armfield

her life and career. Diana studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in 1940 and the Central School of Arts and Crafts after the war. She was Artist in Residence in Perth, Australia in 1985, and in Jackson, Wyoming, USA in 1989. She started her career in textile and wallpaper design in partnership with Roy Passano: they contributed to the 1951 *Festival of Britain* and examples of their work are in the permanent collection at the V&A.

After teaching at the Byam Shaw School of Art for some years, Diana turned to painting in 1965 and has pursued a successful painting career ever since. She has published several books, and is the subject of a recently published book by Andrew Lambirth: *Diana Armfield: a Lyrical Eye*, describing her personal and artistic journey with over 200 reproductions of her work.

Can you tell us a little bit about your earlier life and how you became an artist?

I grew up on the edge of the New Forest above Ringwood. Andrew Lambirth has written in my forthcoming book about the influence of my father's family: engineering, quaker, craftsman and artist

We talked to local artist, Diana Armfield, to find out more about

family members. On my mother's side, the Uttleys: the wonderful garden she created out of four acres of gravelly sandy soil, which gave me endless subjects for design after a year at the Bournemouth Art School. My mother's father owned a cotton firm: 'Lawrence Sugdon' in Manchester. Every year, the firm sent her their new pattern books, one for home trade, one for South Africa. It was those destined for South Africa that my sister and I chose from for our cotton frocks, to be made up by my mother. They were full of exciting colours and less conventional patterns than those for the home trade. Those patterns were an inspiration, so textile and wallpaper design became my first career.



What have been your proudest achievements as an artist?

Each new step right from having the first work hung in an open show, to being elected Royal Academician brings a boost and a bit of new confidence, much needed by all artists working alone, I think! I was proud to be invited to paint at Highgrove, the result of showing a modest landscape with a vista (on my first visit, I fell over, it was a wet day and I was wearing worn out heels!). I was then taken on by Browse and Darby Gallery – a big thing for me – with a show in 1979.

Can you tell us what first brought you to Kew and when?

Bernard and I were younger than my sister Kay and her husband, who were established with their family in Belsize Park. I was installed in a huge studio at the bottom of their garden. There were few facilities save for a gas stove on which I cooked my suppers and warmed my feet in the oven. Changes were made when we married, when we lived in one of the Watson's upstairs flats in 1952 with baby Andrew. When they moved to 17 Lichfield Road in Kew, we – with baby David as well by then – were taken along with the furniture!

In 1956 with the addition of Bob, we moved into our own house, with friendly neighbours on both sides – I could hear Robert Thomas, an opera singer, practising from the bathroom window.

Can you describe some of the main changes you have seen in Kew Village in the 70 years you have lived here?

We have lost too many special shops: two bakers, one on each side of the railway. *Fisks* on the East side made its famous home-made macaroons. There were two ironmongers of the kind that stocked everything; *Robins* delivered paraffin oil for our oilstoves in all weathers. We exchanged an interesting antique shop for a cut-price shop run, at first, by the brother of the gifted well-known cartoonist, James. He in turn gave way to the present *Olivers*.

Kew is more neighbourly now in the way of many societies for like-minded people – music, singing, arts, poetry, tennis and others. There are fewer personal eccentric shops and shopkeepers!



Which features of the village that you can remember from the early days do you miss?

The shop I really miss was the haberdashery. It had two counters, each served by one of two sisters. Each had curly permed hair, reminding one of the shop in *Alice in Wonderland* run by two sheep!

Having a bobby on the beat. Such a reassuring presence and always good for a chat.

Can you tell our readers a little about your collaboration and partnership of over 70 years with your husband, Bernard Dunstan?

I had always included the Royal Academy in my world, as my uncle, Maxwell Armfield, sent his works in for the summer show. A first visit after the war revealed a Bernard Dunstan on the wall. A postcard of congratulation brought a visit to my studio, and the rest is history. We each had our own studio space. Until the boys left home, I had a shed in the garden with a glass window to enable us to signal either way the need for a cup of coffee!

We were both 29 when we married. By that time, we had established our way of life, which relied on love and support both ways. I also think our work hangs together well, different subjects mostly, but we had something of the same outlook. It was marvellous to be able to chat about the paintings in progress, exploring fertile ideas etc; it is one of the things I miss most.

You ran an art competition to encourage local people to paint who may never have done so before – can you tell us a little bit about that?

Richmond Arts launched a drawing competition for me, in memory of Bernard. He and I both regarded drawing as one of the most rewarding activities, teaching one to look and see, good for the eyes, the brain and the hand. What better memorial for him?

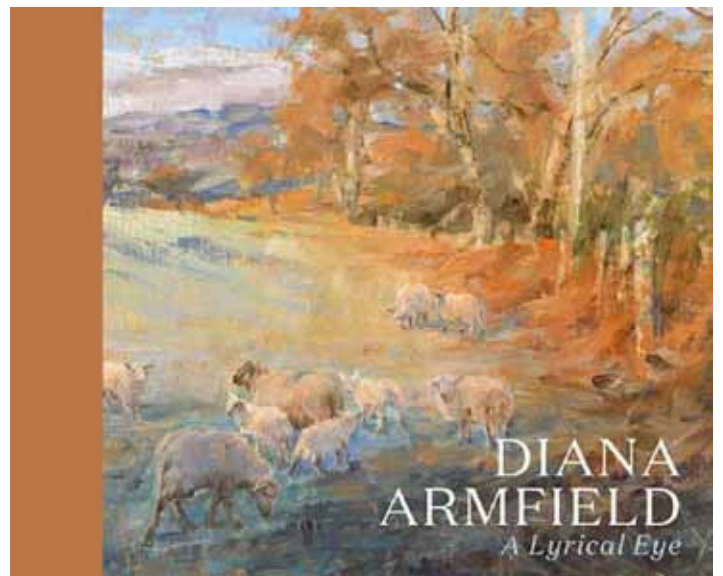
Then with lockdown starting last year, I thought it could give hours of pleasure to be absorbed in that activity; time just melts away! This year's show was held in The Barn Church in mid-July.

I should love to get those who say 'I can't draw a line' to have a go but, judging by the high standard of the submissions last year, they weren't first efforts so I haven't yet succeeded!

Interviewed by Claire Bethel



The Barn Church



Kew gardens open as part of the National Garden Scheme

On Sunday 30th May and Sunday 11th July, some Kew residents opened their gardens to visitors as part of the National Garden Scheme to raise money for various charities. Here's some pictures which illustrate their beauty, variety and sheer hard work.



No 31 West Park Road



No 28 Taylor Avenue



A Garden on Kew Green

Volunteers Needed!

Citizen Science Volunteers are needed to help monitor water levels in the Old Deer Park. As part of the Thames Landscape Strategy *Rewilding Arcadia* project (see our Autumn 2020 newsletter), a hydrological survey is being carried out to find out how water enters and moves about the Old Deer Park floodplain. Water levels in 20 boreholes need to be measured, for a six month period starting in August. We are looking for volunteers to train up to carry out this vital task. There is no set number of readings that should take place but the more readings we can take, the better the data will be. Measuring is very simple and should take around two hours to complete. Volunteers will need to go out in pairs. All we need at the moment is a pool of people who would like to help and an indication of how much time you could spare. If you would like to help with this ground breaking project, please contact Jason Debney the Coordinator of the Thames Landscape Strategy on jjrdebney@gmail.com. If you would like to find out more, you can also phone Jason for a chat on 07761169343

Contact Us

Your Committee includes:

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JOIN NOW by visiting our website:

www.kewsociety.org

Charity Number: 1173016

You can write to us at:

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Jason Debney
Co-ordinator Thames Landscape Strategy