



The Kew Society Newsletter • Autumn 2016

Welcome...

to autumnal Kew with The Kew Society's Annual General Meeting on Monday 10th October to get us back in the mood. One man who helped generate the Kew mood over decades was our Patron David Blomfield, to whom tribute is paid below, but we

can all play our part from big to small in caring for Kew the place where we love to live. In that context, we welcome as new Patrons Sir David Durie KCMG, Nick Baird CMG, CVO and Gudrun Edwards.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID BLOMFIELD MBE

by Jenny Tonge

It was with great sadness that we had to tell members of the death of our Patron, David Blomfield this summer after a short illness. Jenny Tonge gave a tribute at the Barn Church celebration of his life. The Barn was packed to the gunwales. This is an edited version of what she said:



"Looking back on David's life with his wife Caroline and his children, I have tried to determine what made the man I knew as a friend and political colleague over 40 years my GURU.

After school David did National Service as a Captain in the Royal

Artillery and followed up with 10 years in the Territorial Army in the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars. He wrote their history years later. He then read Mods and Greats at Oxford.

Anyone who knew him recognised his depth of knowledge of literature. Just wonderful and accurate. I am always misquoting things, still do. David would gently correct with a 'Yes of course'. He would then repeat the correct version without commenting on the mistake.

Surely his classical education must have made him the brilliant and innovative Editor of condensed books at Reader's Digest. A position he held for 28 years and where he met his wife to be, Caroline.

The Kew Liberals team certainly benefitted from his brilliant and painstaking editing skills, especially on Kew Comments and election literature, where some of us laboured and yawned into the night round the Blomfield dining table to get every sentence perfect and punchy. I remember once around 1 am demanding a G&T if I had to stay much longer and some gin appeared—no tonic was found so we made do with water. They were desperate times.

He was a councillor in Kew from 1971 to 1986 with a year's break in 1978, when David and Leslie Worth and I, as the new candidate, lost Kew because of a campaign from the local Tories who had accused us of supporting hell and damnation for Kew if the Bail Hostel came here. David was devastated. As Leader of the Opposition on Richmond Council, he blamed himself entirely; we never knew what for. He consulted and told the truth. There was no danger to Kew—the Bail Hostel is still there.

David carried on helping everyone in Kew and was re-elected. That was a great moment.

But that was not all that he did. He was a local magistrate; a patron and great adviser to the Kew Society; chair and then President of the Richmond Local History Society (still doing talks for them until a few weeks before his death); Chair of governors at Darrel School and a governor at various others. He was Chairman of the Orange Tree Theatre

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in Richmond, a Kew Studio Trustee and Thames Explorer Trustee and a leading member of the Barn Church development committee.

He was even a shop assistant in Kew Bookshop under boss Caroline!

After leaving the Digest he did years of free-lance editing and even some ghost writing, notably the biography of David Penhaligon and Alma Cogan. But then from 1990 onwards he found his niche writing about history and local history in particular, but not before he wrote "Lahore to Lucknow" based on his grandfather's Indian Mutiny journals.

He wrote many local history books taking particular delight in working with his friend Chris May on 'Kew at War'.

I think the greatest of David's talents was his ability to help and encourage without damaging criticism, to guide and promote without any thought to his own advancement. I benefitted, if you can call it that, as his political colleague. He always pushed others, never himself.

He was awarded an MBE in 2000, for 'services to the community' thank goodness, but how much better if he had been given a life peerage. His contribution and experience across many fields would have been immense.

When he retired as a ward councillor in 1986 I gushingly said of David, "This was the greatest Roman of them all. All the rest acted out of jealousy of great Caesar. Only he acted from honesty and for the general good. His life was gentle and the elements mixed so well in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man.'"

David of course with his usual tact pointed out to me a couple of days later that whilst that was a lovely quotation, it was totally undeserved because he would never ever stab anyone in the back, whatever the provocation!

He was right, he never would".

The Kew Society are planning a commemorative bench for David and any members wishing to contribute please send them to our registered address: 32 Alexandra Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2BS.

Planning and Environment Update

Kew Gardens Station Platforms Planting



Launch on Kew Plaza

With Energy Garden and the Royal Botanic Gardens, we held an engagement event on 17th June on Kew Plaza to get comments on the plans, drawn up for us pro bono by the Royal Botanic Gardens, to re-plant the four rather sad looking open areas at Kew Gardens station and to recruit volunteer gardeners to work with Energy Garden on planting and

Energy Garden and with a contribution from us. The project is fully funded and we expect the work to start this Autumn, probably in November, after final sign-off of the plans by the Area Station Manager acting for Transport for London (TfL) and London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL).

maintenance. We had a very positive response, greatly helped by a former drama student working for the Royal Botanic Gardens who had the perfect voice and manner to encourage people to come and talk to us as they stepped off the train on their commute home. We now have about 25 volunteers keen to be involved, some becoming new members of the Kew Society. We also successfully bid for Civic Pride Funding from Richmond Council to meet some of the costs, in the main met by

Graffiti

The Richmond and Twickenham Times ran a piece on the efforts we have been making to get removed by Network Rail the graffiti along the rail track from Richmond to Kew and beyond. Some improvements have been made to security to prevent trespass on the track. Network Rail promised that the clean-up would be completed by 4 September. This didn't happen and we asked Zac Goldsmith MP to raise the issue again for us with the chair of Network Rail, Sir Peter Hendy. The latest graffiti by Kew Gardens station has now been removed as well as some on the pillars supporting the road bridge but we are still chasing for action to clear up the graffiti on the walls facing North Road and on into Richmond.

Telecoms Equipment

We reported in our last Newsletter that we had been trying to engage with telecoms providers, with little response, to help find suitable locations for new telecoms masts and equipment to boost speeds and reception in the area. New equipment is being put on the roof of the National Archives this Autumn and we have supported applications at St Anne's church bell tower and the Victoria Gate campanile.

The St Anne's church bell tower was an application for a "certificate of lawful development". It has been turned down by Richmond Council who, when we contacted them to ask why, said that, following a site visit, they took the view that the works were not internal and would be visible from the exterior. They should therefore be subject to full planning approval.

Similarly Richmond Council also turned down the application for equipment in the Campanile at Victoria Gate following a site visit and the Council have told us that, as with the application at St Anne's, no pre-application advice was sought. They encourage this to happen.

Both locations seem sensible but we too wish the buildings to be protected and hope that the applicants will modify their plans to meet concerns. It is a shame that the applicants have not engaged in pre-application discussions with the Council to find appropriate design solutions. The application at St Anne's has now been submitted to appeal.

Trees

A small group met with Craig Ruddick, the Borough's Arborist, to walk around Kew and follow up on some of the issues raised at the meeting on Trees at the National Archives. We noted that re-planting of trees had taken place though, as stated in the meeting, not always in the same place. Questions were raised on the rationale for the species used for re-planting, the monitoring of trees undertaken by the Council, areas of significant visual impact and tree preservation orders. The possibility of a 'tree plan' being an addendum to the Village Plan was also raised. Discussion will continue and there is a follow-up meeting with Craig scheduled for 30 November. Part of the deal is that the developers pay a Community

Infrastructure Levy of which some £1 million would be for local initiatives in Kew. The Council will engage with the community on proposals for best use of this money. We will continue to pursue our suggestions for a feasibility study of a pedestrian/cyclist bridge alongside the railway bridge near the re-development site, improvements to the Thames towpath, and improvements to the footpath joining Mortlake Road to the Thames towpath. There may be additional ideas in the community (please let us know) as we have asked to be involved in further discussions once the Council have considered their approach to local consultation.

Across the River...

In conjunction with residents groups north of the river we continue to monitor the very ambitious application for the **Chiswick Curve** on a tiny site in front of the Chiswick B&Q. We anticipate that a fresh proposal will be made which, following the change of London Mayor, may need to incorporate more social housing although height, density and large electronic advertising will remain issues.

London Irish have come forward as a potential rugby club to share use of the **Brentford Football Stadium** pitch meaning that when Brentford FC are playing away matches, London Irish would play their home rugby games. Although shared use was a declared objective for the football club at the time of its original planning application, town planning consent for other stadium uses was specifically excluded from the consent granted. We are concerned that the traffic, transport and pollution consequences for Kew (and beyond) are fully investigated, and mitigated, if extended uses are to be permitted by Hounslow planners. We also believe the

financial benefits for the football club should be fully and openly analysed again.

To pay for the construction of a new **Brentford bus repair garage** on Capital Interchange Way (behind the Fountains Leisure Centre), a largely residential development in three towers up to 73 metres high is proposed. A total of 550 flats is intended but basic infrastructure such as parking, shops, medical facilities, schools etc seems lacking. These flats would be additional to the over 900 flats of the football stadium "enabling development" and very poorly located in the pollution corridor of the elevated M4. If overdevelopment on this scale, contrary to the Local Plan, is consented, precedents for other nearby sites (e.g. the former Telephone Exchange, Fountains Leisure Centre itself etc) will inevitably come forward.

Heathrow

An announcement on whether aviation capacity should be increased in the south east at Heathrow or Gatwick is widely expected to be made this month and may have been made by the time you read this.

The Richmond Heathrow Campaign (RHC), representing the Richmond Society, the Kew Society and the Friends of Richmond Green, has assembled a substantial body of well-documented evidence against expansion at Heathrow. See www.rhcfacts.org.

If the decision is for Heathrow expansion, the RHC will use the evidence to support legal challenges anticipated by Richmond Council and others. Whatever the decision we will continue to engage in discussion with Heathrow on reducing noise, ending

night flights, mitigating air pollution and the redesign of flight paths.

The work involved in drawing up a solid evidence base and in engaging with Heathrow has been very significant. We were pleased to see that the chair of the Campaign, Peter Willan, was given a community award by Richmond Council. The nomination read: "Peter has for many years led the Richmond Heathrow Campaign against the expansion of Heathrow. He has tirelessly and meticulously analysed the case made by the Airports Commission and identified telling points contained in the vast body of evidence which in fact argues against expansion. His knowledge of the evidence is second to none".

Events

West London Waste and Recycling team gave a talk to Kew Society members at the end of July. Animated discussion from both speakers and audience brought to everyone's attention how we might better promote recycling efforts within the Kew area. Initiatives have been followed up with Richmond Councillor Pamela Fleming and we will continue to work to get better facilities in place. Watch this space.....

Members have been kind enough to keep The Kew Society Committee on our toes when visiting our stands at the August Kew Village Market, Kew Summer Fete and Kew Horticultural Society Show.

These events provide a popular opportunity to meet up with existing Kew Society members and provide a platform to encourage local residents to join The Kew Society and keep informed regarding our current projects. Feedback received has been very positive and we are proud to use such events to showcase current and future projects for the local area. We will have our stand again at the Kew Market on Sunday 2nd April 2017.

At the Kew Summer Fete, Jane Hogan and our Chair, Caroline Brock, presented prizes to winners of our second photographic competition for local schools. The high standard of entries made judging quite demanding. Children rose to the challenge with excellent photographs relating to our theme "Kew Alive! – People, Animals, Plants". If you have a prize-winner in your household, do let us know what was purchased with the winning photographic vouchers and any ideas you might have for future competition themes – all ideas are welcome.



*Jane Hogan
captivating the
children during prize
presentation at the
Kew Summer Fete*

And finally....

If you do not already pay by Standing Order, please consider changing to this method of payment which saves us a lot of time and effort as well as costs in issuing renewal letters.

Contact us

Your Committee

Chair	Caroline Brock	chair@kewsociety.org
Vice Chair	Vacant	
Hon. Secretary	Mary Done	secretary@kewsociety.org
Hon. Treasurer	Mike Adams	treasurer@kewsociety.org
Planning	Caroline Brock Martin Taylor John Oxley	planning@kewsociety.org planning@kewsociety.org planning@kewsociety.org
Environment	Avril Dalglish	environment@kewsociety.org
Events	Mary Done	events@kewsociety.org
Patrons	Sir Donald Insall CBE Baroness Tonge of Kew Sir David Durie KCMG Nick Baird CMG, CVO Gudrun Edwards	

Non committee roles

Membership	Michael Fletcher	membership@kewsociety.org
Website	Nick Hutchings	webmaster@kewsociety.org

JOIN NOW by visiting our website:

www.kewsociety.org

Charity number: 296591

You can write to us at:

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@kewsociety