THE KEW SOCIETY
We Care about Kew

The Kew Society Newsletter • Autumn 2014

Welcome... to our new style newsletter!

You'll notice that, as well as a new design for the magazine, we also have a new logo design.

We took on board everything that you told us in our member survey last year and since then have been busy creating a new look and feel for The Kew Society so as to reflect our growing membership and ongoing commitment to Kew.

Of course it doesn't stop with a new look, we are also developing new ways that we can help local residents and reach a wider community within Kew. This is in addition to continuing and expanding the work we do with planning, the environment, our very popular events and protecting the character of this beautiful part of London. Coming soon there will also be a new web site, designed to make it easier for you to see exactly what we're doing on your behalf.

We look forward to hearing your feedback on our new style and trust that we will see you at our AGM on 15th October. In the meantime, please read on…….

"The Tin Hut"

With the commemoration of the First World War being very much a part of 2014, we have been fortunate in being able to turn to one of our Patrons, David Blomfield, for a view on Kew during this period. As a notable local historian, he has kindly provided the following fascinating insight into a building that many will be aware of but few are now likely to know much about - the large but distinctly battered hut in Sandycombe Road, made of corrugated iron.

138 The Victoria Working Men's Club, with the original church window still in place.

David writes:-

It is unique, as in WW1, this unprepossessing hut became a Mecca for a stream of government ministers, bishops, prime ministers, and innumerable members of the royal family.
They came to Kew, not to visit the Gardens, nor any of the elegant houses round the Green, but to give talks or preside at meetings of a Working Men's Club.
Both building and club have unusual histories.

The building originally stood on the west side of the road and served as an 'iron church' housing the first St Luke's church and the first St Luke's school between 1876 and 1889. When a new church was built in the Avenue, and new school buildings were planned for the west side of the road, the iron hut was moved across the road. In 1892 it was taken over by the Victoria Club, which until then had been operating from rooms above workshops further along the road.

The club's president was the influential Alderman Sir James Szlumper. However, it was not the Alderman who persuaded such extraordinary numbers of VIPs to visit the club, but its secretary, a local carpenter named Robert Copland. Those whose parents were members of the club in WW1 report that Copland's networking was founded on joinery work that he did for members of the royal family. Queen Mary's mother, the large and much loved Princess Mary Adelaide, certainly presided at the club's bazaars in the 1890s.

It seems from the club's annual reports that the club then became famous for the amount of money it raised for the war effort. Much of this was to send cigarettes to men at the front, and club members collected an extraordinary total of £3,606 of War Savings Certs.
It was presumably this that attracted visits from no fewer than four overseas prime ministers, innumerable British ministers and at least ten members of the royal family, culminating in visits from the King and Queen in 1918 and the Prince of Wales in 1919. In all, the club boasted of visits from 50 such VIPs over seven years - probably a unique record for a club of its size, and most certainly for one based in such accommodation!

Photo by Pamela Ryan

Planning and Environment Update

Kew Bookshop and Kew Village

Most of you will know that the Council turned down the application to re-develop and enlarge the listed building housing the much loved Kew Bookshop. Several points we raised on your behalf were included in the refusal of permission. We are now considering commissioning a study of the commercial strengths and weaknesses of the Village so that we can continue to work with the Kew Traders Association and Richmond Council to secure a long-term sustainable future for businesses, including the independent retailers who help create the special village atmosphere of Kew.

Old Inland Revenue Site, Bessant Drive

Comments have now been submitted to the Council on the development of this long vacant brown field site and now the Council's decision is awaited. We have asked for a number of conditions to be attached to approval of the scheme. These include a functioning new GP practice before any housing units are sold and landscaping between the site and Defoe Avenue, in collaboration with the National Archives. Both of these ideas were proposals that the Kew Society put forward and we are pleased that Taylor Wimpey, the North Road Surgery and the National Archives all took up our ideas. We have also asked for conditions on affordable housing and accommodation for key workers and made suggestions for the use of Section 106 monies, including a feasibility study of a bridge for pedestrians and cyclists alongside the railway bridge over the Thames and for improvements to the towpath and road leading from Mortlake Road to the towpath.

Brentford Stadium and enabling developments

Detailed permission for the new 20,000 seat stadium on Lionel Road, next to Kew Bridge Station, and outline permission for a hotel and 8 tower blocks of 910 flats were given the green light in March 2014. A complex Section 106 agreement has been reached and planning permission now exists. Not all the land required has been bought by the Football Club. A Compulsory Purchase Order for parts of the land needed is being promoted by Hounslow Council, which we are reviewing. We continue to believe, based on independent analysis we commissioned, that the high density proposed for the enabling developments will have serious implications for traffic congestion and air pollution. We expect applications for full planning permission for the flats will be made this Autumn. We are meeting with Councillor Fleming, Councillor Speak and officials from Richmond Council to discuss the next phase in this development as well as the wider implications of the concentration of re-developments in the Local Plan for Hounslow into the eastern end of the borough, affecting Chiswick roundabout and Kew Bridge.

Kew Plaza Map and Signage

Is this our most popular initiative yet? May be. We have received more comments in support of our plans to re-design the map at Kew Plaza than on anything else in the last couple of years. We have agreed funding with the National Archives, The Royal Botanic Gardens, and the Kew Residents Association and agreed the design brief. Design work is now underway with a lot of very helpful input from the National Archives. We hope to unveil the new map in October. We have also agreed with Richmond Council the need to improve the sign-posting on both sides of the station so we hope to have much improved signage and fewer lost visitors soon.

Meanwhile, out on the riverbank, Richmond Council have agreed to put some pedestrian priority signs in key entrance locations to the Towpath.
They have also agreed to put the pedestrians on the top of the sign rather than the bicycle.

Heathrow

The Davies Commission's decision to rule out the option of a new hub airport in the Thames Estuary will concentrate minds on the 3 remaining options the Commission is considering: a new runway at Heathrow, an extension of an existing runway at Heathrow or a second runway at Gatwick. Richmond Heathrow Campaign took the decision several years ago not to rely on an Estuary Airport as part of its defence against more runways at Heathrow. The campaign which we support is for better use of existing capacity at London's five airports. An All Party Parliamentary Group, chaired by Zac Goldsmith MP, is taking evidence on the implications of expansion of Heathrow airport, not least the existing impact of noise on local communities. We have yet to see detailed proposals from Heathrow on flight paths and how they might impact Kew but there is a strong possibility that the current respite periods would be substantially reduced. To help you understand the debate, our web site now has a glossary of some of the more common terms used and a 1 page table summarising the current noise restrictions in place over 24 hours in the life of Kew, some of which may be under threat if Heathrow were allowed to expand.

Events

Earlier in the year we arranged a tour of the **Royal Ballet School**, which has been home to the Royal Ballet School juniors since 1956. This beautiful neo-classical building was built as a Royal Hunting lodge

MAY

In May we hosted a lively **Hustings at the Barn Church** which gave 9 prospective candidates of the local elections a chance to answer questions from an audience of over 100 people. Our thanks to Malcolm Welchman for chairing this event.

JUNE

The Director of RBG Kew, Richard Deverell once again invited our members to a very interesting talk in June at the **Jodrell Theatre** to update us on his vision for the future of the gardens.

Also in June we were delighted to be able to **Picnic under the Pagoda in Kew Gardens**, courtesy of the Director.
Children were entertained by Miss Lala and her amazing balloons while the U-Kew-Lele band delighted the picnickers. Everyone was invited to climb the Pagoda and we hope that this will once more become an annual event.

We hosted a stall at both the **Kew Fete** in June and the **KHS show** on Kew Green in August when we finally enjoyed some good weather after a few damp years! Our congratulations to the treasure hunt winners: John Cooke, Shannon Justin & Mary Lloyd and to all the children who enjoyed the game.

SEPTEMBER

The very popular walk on **22nd September** by **Tony Kirkham, Head of the Arboretum of The Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew** sold out within a week of going on sale. Tony is an inspiring speaker with a very busy schedule and we are very grateful to him for making time to talk to our members.

OCTOBER

Coming up we have the **AGM on October 15th** at **The Barn Church** followed by a talk by **Jason Debney from the Thames Landscape Strategy** followed by a buffet supper.

The AGM is of course free and open to all members.

Details on how to book tickets for the talk & supper are on our web site.

We are also making plans for visits to:

- **The Poppy Factory**
- **A tour around Osterley House,**
- **A 'Fungus' walk**

And we are talking to the **Good Wine Shop** about running a wine course for our members.

So lots to look out for!

Contact Us

And…..

Did you know you can now pay online at our secure service "**Eventbright**"- there is a small transaction charge but saves the cost of postage to you and saves on administrative costs to us. You also have the convenience of printing your ticket immediately. The links to this service will be in the email for each event

Finally….

Could you consider converting your annual subscription to a standing order? Standing Orders help to reduce our administration costs.

Please contact our Membership Secretary (**membership@kewsociety. org**) for a Standing Order Mandate or go to the '**Join Us**' page of the website to download the form. www.kewsociety.org

All members are receiving this hard copy as part of the launch of the new look and the following editions will be sent via email (to members who have given us their email address) hard copies will be available from the Kew Library.

Photographs courtesy of Caroline Blomfield

YOUR COMMITTEE

Chair Designate	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 Daglish	environment@kewsociety.org
Membership	Sue May	membership@kewsociety.org
Website	Sue May	webmaster@kewsociety.org
Events	Teresa Hartley	events@kewsociety.org
Patrons	David Blomfield MBE, Sir Donald Insall CBE, Baroness Tonge of Kew	

JOIN NOW by visiting our website at **www.kewsociety.org**

You can write to us at: Kew Society, 32 Alexandra Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2BS