



BRENTFORD'S KEW BRIDGE

No. 2 in a series on classic local bridges

The Island's resident historian, Simon White, reports:

Although King George II had taken a lease on the building now known as Kew Palace in 1727 he still had to use the ferry at Kew to gain access which, at times could be very dangerous. A coach and four horses were lost a few years previously. The ferry was owned by Robert Tunstall who, in 1757, was asked to build the first bridge. It was opened by the Prince of Wales, later George III, with his mother. Tolls were charged at one (old) penny per person and one shilling and sixpence for a coach and four. The bridge was costly to maintain being part stone and part timber. Tunstall's son got permission to rebuild the bridge in 1783 at a cost of £16,500 and was opened by the now George III and was later bought by the City of London Corporation for £57,300. By the 1890s the 14-arch bridge (see sketch, below) could not cope with the weight of traffic, mainly because of a steep and narrow bank on the Brentford side. The third and current bridge - three elegant arches (top photo) - was commissioned by Middlesex and Surrey Councils at a



cost of £250,000 and was opened by Edward VII who was given various gifts for his trouble including a silver mounted prehistoric flint axe found during the building operations and a silver 1721 tankard by the residents of Brentford and Chiswick. Officially it is still called the 'King Edward VII Bridge'.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

The Express Tavern

(56 Kew Bridge, Brentford TW8 0EW)

This popular gastro-pub sits on the north side of the busy Kew Bridge intersection, close to Kew Bridge Station and handily next to the Brentford FC stadium development. The original Express was a coaching inn on the London to Bath route and the current building is a designated heritage pub thought to date to the 1860s. Inside there

is a cosy, pleasant atmosphere, a mix of original and contemporary features.

The owners completed additional renovations during the first lockdown, with an attractive external repaint, adding an airy conservatory area and a busy weather-proofed garden equipped with giant umbrellas and outdoor heaters. Food-wise, there is a weekly menu of pub classics, vegetarian options and lighter meals at reasonable gastro-pub prices. There is also a CAMRA award-winning selection of craft beers and ciders. This reviewer visited on a Sunday lunchtime and enjoyed a sharing roast of three different meats served in an enormous Yorkshire pudding: tasty and substantial on a cold winter's day. But poor service was a drawback. We had to wait a whole hour for the food to arrive, as did other diners, even those ordering supposedly quick bites like pizza. The drinks service was also lax - there simply weren't enough staff on duty for the number of customers. Covid-safe precautions were perfunctory, with no temperature taken on entry and little social distancing. This may be due to re-opening teething problems or the Tier 2 pressure of having to serve a "substantial meal" to each customer. But until these service issues are resolved this reviewer can't wholeheartedly recommend the Express Tavern.



The Express Tavern in its 2020 colours

Please note this new email address:
committee@botanicsowners.org
Any email sent to this address will be received
by all Board members

BLIRA's Board is William Shaw & Nigel Meakin (Joint Chairs), Margaret Bird, Nic Cantor, Julie Downing, Peter Goddard, Paul Lang, Ian Parker, plus Associate Directors Howard Vanderborgh and Stephen Browne
Twitter: @BLIRANew



NEWS is issued to all residents of Brentford Lock Island on behalf of BLIRA, Brentford Lock Island Residents Association Ltd. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Board.
Editors: Les Brown and Ellen Cantor

REMINDER: Visitors must not enter the Concierge office while COVID lasts. Go to the window overlooking the entrance circle, where space has been cleared for you to stand and address the Concierge through the window: if necessary, knock to alert him.



*We all want to make up for a lost year. The Island has experienced, so far, relatively few COVID cases. But our lives may never return to their former relative ease unless we remain vigilant. The Editorial Team wishes all our readers a **safe** and Happy New Year.*

BLIRA: News from the Board

See Board Minutes on the website.

Some recent highlights.....

When the damaged roller shutter gate at the Underground Car Park is repaired and brought back into use, users should beware repeating the disastrous and costly mistake made by one resident in November - the door will not retract instantaneously if you try to race through as it is closing.

- Together with the property managers, the Board is examining technical specifications of **non-combustible balcony decking** to replace the current timber, which may not comply with new post-Grenfell regulations, and has started to rot in some exposed locations. Options of aluminium and composite material are under consideration.
- **Redecoration of common areas** in apartment blocks: owners will shortly be advised of costs and asked for their views

- The Board is seeking assurance from the Canal & River Trust that we will be given **advance warning of potential flooding** - this didn't happen on 3rd Oct., when a high tide on the river coincided with CRT engineers' emergency release of water from the canal's header reservoir.
- **Trees:** annual trimming and pollarding is now complete, to the satisfaction of the Hounslow Tree Protection Officer.

Social Committee News

With Island social life still on hold due to the pandemic, the Island's Social Committee hopes to return with more events for the New Year, and wishes you all a Happy 2021.



L-R: Orhideea Rosu, Caroline Jones, Jennie Shaw and Mary Short (on wall) Photo: Martin Barnard

You may not have noticed the fir tree that for most of the year stands discreetly near the Mill Houses - see photo above. However, each December it becomes the **Island's Christmas tree**, decorated by Committee members - this year with new lights.

WALKS

During this long pandemic many of us have taken to frequent walks as a healthy form of escape from our homes. The most accessible walks are on the **Grand Union Canal**, since it faces the Island. For those who haven't ventured much further than that, here are some other options, within a reasonable distance of the Island. In most cases it's possible to go and/or return via public transport, if preferred.

- A. Through **Syon Park** to Thames-side Old Isleworth and back (see masthead photo). You're out in the country, it seems.
- B. **Thames walks:**
 - (a) North bank going south (from Syon Park) to Richmond and beyond, or
 - (b) North bank to Kew Bridge then South bank going south to Richmond and beyond
 - (c) North bank to Kew Bridge then South bank going east to Barnes and beyond
- C. **Joined-up parks:** GU Canal going north to Boston Manor Park - Northfields Recreation Park - Lammas Park - Walpole Park: don't miss the amazing Pitzhanger House by Sir John Soane at the Ealing town centre end of the Walpole.
- D. **Gunnersbury Park and House** - It's a large park, and if you're feeling fit, it's worth the mile-long traffic-noisy walk through East Brentford to get there. It's a pity that vandals burnt down the lovely new-ish cafe
- E. North bank downstream to Kew Bridge, then around **Kew Gardens** via the Elizabeth Gate on Kew Green. Kew is London's most fabulous open space, if you can ignore the aircraft overhead (as Islanders, we're used to it!). Pricey entrance charges, but annual membership is good value.
- F. **Osterley Park** - the huge park is free to use (but National Trust charges apply to the splendid Robert Adam re-modelled House). To get there & back, take the H91 bus on Great Western Road, going West: the walk there is too boring.
- G. **Chiswick House and Park:** a bit further afield, but only two stops on the Waterloo train from Brentford to Chiswick. Lovely gardens, and an excellent caff.

Please share your experiences of these and other walks through the new contact details on page 4

LOCAL BUSINESS REVIEW

Sioned Morgan, Painter & Decorator

Sioned, from Wales, is now based in nearby Isleworth. Unusually for a painter & decorator, her background is university (Eng.Lit & Art) and administration. She's glad she plunged into a career change, for which she prepared by gaining a City & Guilds qualification in her new field. It allows her to make use of her passion for art, and interiors. She specialises in domestic commissions, and loves what she does. That's very obvious to her clients - she pays a lot of attention to detail. She recently carried out a much-admired redecoration project on The Island. Contact Sioned for a quote, by email:

sioned.morgan@gmail.com or by phone: 07446 838935

LOCAL NEWS

1 The Brentford Project:

Lengthy site preparation for the first phases is now complete, and the building will soon appear. Sales have been impressively buoyant. Brentford's 'Town Centre' will soon see its first major development since the 1950s, and Islanders will surely benefit from this

2 Brentford Lock West Phase 3

has been approved by LBH Planning. It will add 7 buildings, 5-10 storeys high, containing 452 dwellings (187 of them "affordable"), plus a new footbridge across the Brent/canal

3 Royal Mail delivery office:

plans for flats on the site have now been approved. The loss of this facility will be felt locally, as, with no local Post Office any more, it is a popular pick-up and drop-off point for parcels.

4 Brentford End:

the long-awaited Hounslow (LBH) social



housing site on London Road is nearing completion. It includes this weirdly retro 4-storey block at the site entrance... (photo above)

5 Watermans/Max Factor site:

5 flat block design called in, because of objections. It's "interlocking" (i.e. buildings too close), 8-9 storeys; drab, huge and bland, certainly no improvement on the buildings - loved by many - that it will replace.

6 A fish & chip shop

is planned for the former chocolate shop unit on the High Street, opposite the Holiday Inn.

7 Brentford Football Club:

a recent BBC online feature pays tribute to the club's diversity programme. In Lorna Falconer, head of football operations, the club has one of the few black women in a position of power across the men's professional game. Read all about it here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/54911260>

8 Boston Manor Park

- wild woodland being tamed....

If you are a regular visitor to the park, you will have noticed coppicing and other work going on in the woodland area. We'll review the results in due course.

9 The vacant Garden Centre

at Syon Park will be taken over in Spring 2021 by Hillier, founded in 1854. Among the innovations they plan, there will be a Gardening Club.

11 It is reported that Morrisons

have contracted to take the supermarket space in Ballymore's Brentford Project, directly opposite Market Square, due to open in 2023. So it won't be Waitrose (the NEWS's secret hope) after all! However, there will still be a space for a competing supermarket, on the ground floor of Essential Living's housing development that will come up on Morrisons current site, also due to open in 2023. Breadsticks at dawn!

BLIRAdvice

(1) Cooking smells

Concern continues in some flat blocks about pervasive cooking smells reaching communal areas (entrance area, landings and stairways). Strong smells can be dispersed by use of the cooker extractor fans and the Dantherm air circulation system. Please make sure these receive regular cleaning and maintenance (including filter replacement- see below).

Be aware that barbecues, heaters and fires are not permitted on patios, balconies or common areas, for well-established health and safety reasons.

See the Residents Handbook (brentfordlockisland.com), which has more information on this topic

(2) Mechanical ventilation

All flats (but not the Town or Mill Houses) are served by individual MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery) systems that are designed for **continuous operation**, in Normal Mode. This is because - to keep down aircraft noise - windows do not have trickle vents. If the system is switched off and your windows are closed, the flat, including the bathrooms, is **unventilated**. Switch off only if the flat is to be unoccupied for some time. Note: when cooking, select the cooker hood switch. When partying, select Party.

Replacement filters can be obtained from Dantherm online:

Part no. 1003545 - Filter size 365x340x15mm. Cost, including VAT & delivery, approx. £5.55 per filter. Contact: Spares & Sales: bastien.warnier@dantherm.com (also for Manuals)

Two filters are required for each installation, and they should be replaced annually.

Wintering Swans

Many of have watched the five cygnets raised this summer by the Island's resident pair (Cobnut and Penny). All have now departed from the canal.

The first three went a few months ago and last two in November - the photo (right)

shows the tail-end, perched on the canal weir. Parent swans often chase their young away before their first winter which, though it can seem strange, is perfectly normal. Adult swans are territorial and protect their terrain even from their own. The young swans



generally move to large colonies downriver at Isleworth and Twickenham. These adolescent swans typically live in groups for up to four years before pairing up and finding territories and having young of their own.

After a successful summer raising their offspring, Cobnut and Penny will enjoy a well-earned rest over the winter, before, it is hoped, raising yet more cygnets next spring.



Urban foxes have increasingly inhabited Brentford. This one, taking advantage of the currently open gate, looks completely at home perched on top of a car in our underground car park.

Photo by Stephen Browne (see below).

BINS

Before and after Christmas each year, a large volume of waste of all kinds is generated, and the communal bins quickly fill up. PLEASE don't just abandon your cardboard, plastics etc if your recycling bins are full - check the next bin areas along Tallow Road, which may have extra capacity. In any case, remember to crush your waste packaging so that it occupies less space.



2020 was the year when neighbours failed to recognise each other, when masked for COVID and dressed for winter

NEW BLIRA DIRECTORS

Businesswoman, world traveller and now the newest BLIRA Director, **JULIE DOWNING** is no stranger to the NEWS, having been the subject of our Meet a Neighbour feature in May 2018. She has lived on the Island for nearly nine years, and brings a wealth of vital experience and enthusiasm to the Board.

STEPHEN BROWNE, who also joined BLIRA recently, as an Associate Director, is a newer Island resident. He was for many years the Chair of a larger residents' association, elsewhere in Brentford, and his offer to share his expertise has been eagerly accepted by the Board.