

# Kew News



left to right: Ian Cottrell prepares the Dancers End for its working inspection; a section of the Triple Expansion Engine; Erin McCarthy welcomes visitors to the museum.

## Hello

**Liz Power, Museum Director**

We are so looking forward to what will be hopefully a much more stable year after the ups and downs of 2021.

Even though the Museum was closed for almost half the year, we were delighted with the support we received, not just from funders, but also from our visitors, local community and you, the members.

Re-opening at the end of May meant that we were able to welcome a rising number of visitors during the summer, with a very busy school summer holiday, even though we were open for fewer days than before the pandemic.

Looking forward, we are excited about working more closely with our members. If you would like to be involved please email [volunteers@waterandsteam.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@waterandsteam.org.uk).

## Inside:

Pump & Grind Café • p2

Reopening the museum for  
reopening • p3

A warm welcome to Sjoera • p5

Families, communities & schools  
• p6

What's next for the maintenance  
team? • p8

Restoring the Boulton & Watt  
• p10

From the chair • p11

Up coming events • p12



# *Welcome to the Pump & Grind Café*

**Vicky Kunzli, the Café Manager**

The Pump and Grind Café operates inside the London Museum of Water & Steam, run by Our Barn Community, a local charity for young people with autism and learning disabilities.

The purpose of the café is to give young people help in training for the workplace in a safe, supportive environment. We aim to support the staff into long term paid employment by giving help with skills and accredited training.

We have a lovely lunch menu and have just introduced brunch in the mornings. We also sell a range of good quality teas and barista style coffee, with an ever-changing range of home cakes made by young volunteers.

We are open 4 days a week (Thursday to Sunday) from 10am to 4pm.



We have discount cards for all Museum staff and volunteers. Please pop along and collect one and have a look at our lovely menu and say hello!

We would love the volunteers, staff and members see the museum café as a great place for a break- and catch-up place with friends.

See you soon!

*Photos provided by Our Barn*

## *What you told us*

Thank you to each member who recently completed the members' survey. It was a real pleasure to read your replies.

From the survey we're planning:

- A year of talks that will be held at the Museum and streamed live over Zoom. We hope that recordings will then be available to members afterwards. (Dates will be announced shortly).
- A quarterly newsletter - January, April, July and October.
- A summer social at the museum in July (keep an eye open in the next newsletter for details).

To help develop this programme and newsletter, we would like to create a membership committee. Please email [emma.canterbury@waterandsteam.org.uk](mailto:emma.canterbury@waterandsteam.org.uk) if you would like to help.

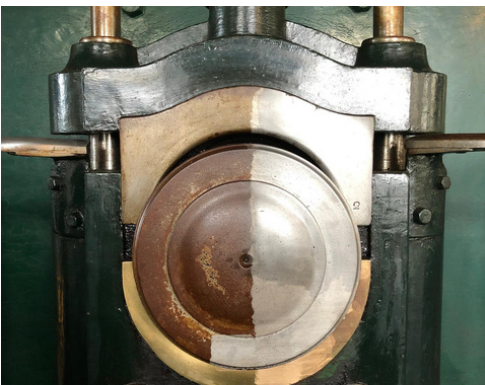
# Readying the museum for re-opening

**Richard Albanese, volunteer**

What an eventful time it's been in the recent history of our Museum, unprecedented in so many ways, bringing challenges we could never envisage and, because of lockdown, delays in being able to address them. It's only now that we are able to start tackling the backlog of works which have accrued as a result.

This and the last winter have caused us big headaches. Without visitors, staff and volunteers, the doors have mostly been closed and with less heating and being out of steam; our climatic conditions inside have gone haywire, often over a period of a few hours and usually overnight.

Lack of heat and air circulation in particular has meant that our great Cornish engine houses have literally run wet, with water flowing down the walls and clinging to polished metal surfaces for days on end. Mould broke out on paintwork and rust took hold very quickly, often within hours. Our 90 and 100 inch engine houses, which usually stand up well in winter, took a greater hit as a result of failing render and blocked drains and gutters.



*The working collections team make a significant difference.*



*The workshop was a hive of activity to get the boiler prepared after lockdown.*

During the height of lockdown an emergency team of volunteers and contractors went in to mitigate or stop further damage being done with liberal applications of grease, oil and bleach. Because of the age and design of our larger engine houses we have had similar issues in winter before but never on the scale experienced now!

Similar conditions affected our Electric House, Steam Hall and Waterworks Gallery areas. Thankfully these were nowhere near as serious, even when our heating broke down.

As restrictions have eased so volunteer teams have slowly returned. Sadly the number is somewhat depleted as some particularly older or vulnerable are having to stay away. It's been a juggle trying to prioritise works which need to be done against available labour, skills and experience but we are getting there and it's so good to be back. We have new faces too, most of which are below the age of 30 and are a very welcome addition to our ranks. They are the future!

Drains and gutters have been unblocked, workshops, stores and yard have been reorganised or tidied (surprising how much mess a generation of nesting squirrels and mice can do in two years unnoticed!), steam locomotive, Lancashire boiler, six steam engines and our waterwheel have been awoken from their slumbers, cleaned, polished up and oiled for several much appreciated steaming weekends. Skips have been ordered and yet more rubbish, scrap metal and time expired stock has been cleared away.

The 'big clean' of our Boulton & Watt engine which celebrates its 202nd birthday this year, started with four hard months of work so far on removing caked on oil, dirt and rust to polished iron parts, much out of reach and at high level. We brought in contactors to demonstrate a new method of rust removal using hand held lasers, the trial results of which were remarkable both for finish and speed. This is a system, which if the costs drop in coming years, will be a game changer for us in terms of long term engine care and conservation and hopefully another Kew first.

The Bull engine has just had its pump gland repacked fully which should give another nine years of trouble free service.

The visitor experience is crucial to why we are here and Museum displays in our Waterworks Gallery and engine rooms play an important part in delivering our story to a wide ranging audience in a fun and accessible way. Each must operate reliably every day we are open; even Charles Dickens describing his visit here in 1846 cannot sleep.

Lockdown has meant that many watery interactive exhibits, audio visual screens, sound shows, lighting, control gear and other electric paraphernalia have come unset or upset through not being run and or maintained regularly.

It's surprising what our spread of volunteers with their skills can fix though and most of these are now back up and running, saving significant funds. Dud light bulbs, popped fuses, leaking water taps, failed hand driers, broken cisterns in WC, misbehaving electric doors to main entrance and a burnt out Lancashire boiler circulating pump motor complete the list.



Hours of cleaning makes the bright work shine.

# *A warm welcome to Sjoera*

Hello everyone, I'm Sjoera Snijder-Sahuleka, and I'm the new Volunteer Coordinator at the London Museum of Water & Steam.

I was born and raised in the Woerden in the Netherlands and moved to London, via a short year in River Edge (New Jersey, USA) in 2011 with my husband and our son.

I have over 2.5 years of experience of working as a Volunteer Team Leader at the Victoria and Albert Museum looking after three teams of volunteers.

I'm looking forward to further expanding our existing volunteer team and building a programme that represents the wider community of Brentford and the London Borough of Hounslow.

Outside of work I like to keep myself physically and mentally fit with yoga and meditation. I'm a qualified yoga teacher in Vinyasa Flow and Restorative Yoga. I enjoy reading a good book, am quite crafty, and my husband and I are huge NFL-fans (American football).

I'm looking forward to getting to know the Museum, my new team, volunteers and members!



Sjoera, Volunteer Co-ordinator



## Bubbles

February Half Term

Saturday 12 to Sunday 20 February

10am to 4pm

Visit [www.waterandsteam.org.uk](http://www.waterandsteam.org.uk) for more information

KIDS GO FREE

Wet and Bubbly  
Science Show

•  
Music and story time

•  
Crafts

# Families, community & schools

**Emma Canterbury, Engagement Coordinator**

Since reopening, the Museum has been busy with family activities, community groups, school visits and, of course, our popular Steam Up weekends. Every month brings something new, and, with it, familiar faces and new visitors alike.

May 2021 saw the return of community groups and visitors for the first time since 2020.

In June, the engines were in steam, passing their inspections ready for our first Steam Up of 2021.

August beat all visitor targets with a bumper summer of family fun, before we then took part in Brentford's Art Trail, The Creative Mile, in early September.

November welcomed school groups back to the Museum for the first time in over 400 days; and we have been fully booked since!

Father Christmas popped in for a visit this December to spread some festive joy during another sold out event.



*Model Trains enthrall the youngest visitors*



*Summer fun in the Splash Zone*

We started 2022 with a three-day New Year Steam Up. As well as seeing the engines in steam, visitors could ride the Waterworks Railway on Thomas Wicksteed, watch the Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers' trains in the Steam Hall, or chat to Charles Dickens and James Watt.

For our social media followers, we shared videos, quizzes and polls via our Facebook and Instagram stories.



@waterandsteam



londonmuseumofwaterandsteam



Musical Mark entertains in the summer



*Charles Dickens visits the New Year Steam Up  
(Spectrum Drama)*

We were concerned about how the newest strain of coronavirus, would affect the event, and worked hard to ensure it was Covid-secure to keep our visitors, volunteers, and staff safe.

Once again visitor numbers surpassed our expectations, and this is in no small part down to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in running such as successful event - thank you.

Looking forward to this year we have another packed events programme.

There are 4 more Steam Up weekends to enjoy this year: March 19/20, May 14/15, September 17/18, and November 12/13. Each weekend will have something different to enjoy from talks, tours and costumed interpretation to traction engines, model engines and even a science themed comedy show. We're also working with Kempton Steam Museum to create joint events when both sites are in steam on the same weekends.

There will be activities for families during every school holiday, including our popular science shows, storytelling, music and crafts.

We will also be piloting a Young Engineers Club at the Museum this year. The Young Engineers Club will be aimed towards Key Stage 3 (11-14 year old) children from Brentford and will introduce young people to the work of engineering and technology through hands-on, fun activities.

# What's next for the maintenance teams?

## Richard Albanese, volunteer

Now that the 'firefighting' has been done, we can look towards the future more calmly and these are the larger jobs we are now making a start on subject to volunteer availability and funding (and in no particular order):

1) We have a leak to our 5" mains water supply shut off intake valve, where the soft packing on the valve spindle has simply rotted away and securing bolts have corroded to almost nothing. Considering it dates from around 1850 it's done surprisingly well, but we will need to factor in several days to carry out safe (though soggy) careful repairs.

2) Our 'Old Workshop' dates from 1838 when the station opened. It contains a fantastic collection of belt driven machinery, tools and equipment. Its height of fame was helping to make explosive shell cases for World War 1, before being bombed and partly destroyed at the start of 1918. London once had many hundreds of workshops like this though ours is now the only complete one left. We have opened it to visitors over the years, but it was always difficult as often it was being used for restoration and paid contracting work at the same time. More recently was used for storage during the Project Aquarius makeover of the Museum. Now we have an opportunity to reopen it fully to visitors in the next year or so. It will need a tidy up, some simple interpretation and clearer access but we are good to go.



*Peter Mahoney driving the Boulton & Watt at the New Year Steam Up.*

3) The Boulton & Watt engine brightwork and paintwork clean up will restart once the weather and daylight hours improve in the spring. We also need to withdraw and fit a replacement piston or bucket ring to the air pump as the current wooden one has worn away in service. This became very apparent during the New Year Steam Up with loss of vacuum, so much so that we couldn't run the engine fully on Monday as a result. At the same time we will replace the very large Yorkstone floor slab which in the days before the Museum was established had broken into three pieces by reasons unknown. This covers the water filled condenser tank area beneath and should give our engine drivers greater protection from getting their feet wet.



4) Our Hathorn Davey triple expansion engine of 1910 (shown opposite) is still not running regularly or as well as we would like.

Outstanding issues in the basement need to be completed, being the final jobs on the list following completion of other maintenance works carried out in last four years.

Waste oil recovery and condensate return tanks have rotted through and need replacement and condenser and air pump need to be brought back into full commission.

With a view to future maintenance and upkeep we want to site the new tanks with attendant pipework at ground floor level behind the engine, where they can be accessed by drivers more easily and safely, especially when running.



*The basement under the Triple*

Similarly the electric sump pump (which was a second hand museum piece when installed in 1980) has finally burnt out and needs to be stripped out too. Behind it an inaccessible down pipe from the Steam Hall roof has also failed and we need to replace this as it is causing a damp and mould outbreak in the electricians' store alongside. In conjunction we need to give the engine a big polish up and we hope in part to have some of the works completed enough to allow it to run correctly at our next Steam Up in March.

## CAN YOU HELP?

TRIPLE  
EXPANSION  
ENGINE PROJECT

TARGET: £1500

Every donation helps  
to maintain and  
restore the collections  
& buildings.

5) Our Waddon Engine of 1910 is still not well, even though it had extensive repairs to its condenser tubes in recent years. Vacuum and safe running of the engine is being affected as a result of leakage and we need to replace rubber seals to several hundred tubes which carry exhaust steam through the cooling water surrounding them. The air pump needs attention as it has defective valves. We will also look into altering condensate and waste oil recovery tanks and piping as part of changes to the Triple engine described above, again to facilitate maintenance and easier up keep.

Once these are done ... well then what next?

# Repair of the Boulton & Watt Engine

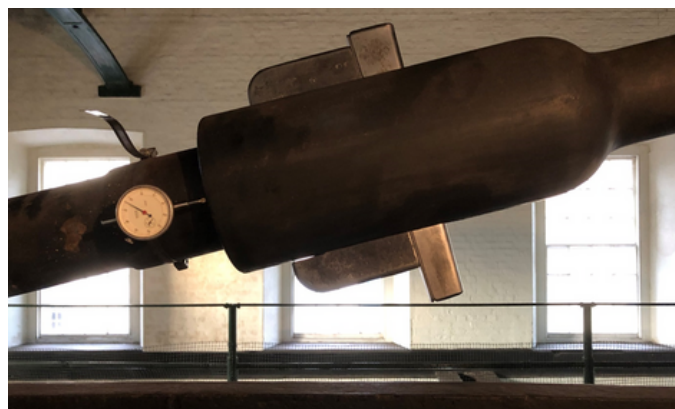
**Oliver Pearcey, volunteer**

Once the first impact of the pandemic had eased, and the immediate collapse of the Museum had been avoided, it became possible to look at what, if any, major works might sensibly be started. While there were a number of projects planned these all had to be reviewed against new priorities and constraints to see which should be taken forward.

Fortunately there was one project that ticked all the boxes. Our oldest engine: the 1820 Boulton and Watt engine, taken out of service in 2019 when it started to make unwonted noises while operating.

Planning the necessary repairs had been started before the pandemic and the ability to isolate the Boulton and Watt engine house and the availability of skilled contractors on site meant that the works could be carried out with the maximum degree of safety. Crucially the project attracted very generous funding from half a dozen friends of the Museum.

Initial fund raising was aimed at the most important works needed to restore the engine to safe working order; specifically repair of the loose cotter on the beam truss, which was moving (and banging) slightly with each stroke, and replacement of the leaking main steam valve. The latter had the additional advantage that as well as making safer operation of the engine possible it also increased visitor comfort by halting the steaming drops of condensate that dripped from it onto visitors' heads.



*The repaired cotter undergoing final checks.*

Detailed reports on the works carried out are available in the "Latest News" section of the Museum website (December 2020, and March, June, July and September 2021). The project culminated in the steaming of the Boulton and Watt for the three days of the 2021 New Year Steam-Up.

Any Member wishing to look at the repairs in more detail is urged to read these reports.

The project also facilitated further developments. The funding available allowed a start to be made on the repair of the interactive beam engine model which has always stood by the Boulton and Watt, and a subsequent very generous donation will pay fully for the completion of repair and improvement works to the model, and its reinstatement with the associated interpretation panels in its original position, during 2022.

So there is much still to do, but in this as in other areas at the Museum we are now making solid progress in addressing major works to exhibits and facilities.

# From the chair

## Clare Grist Taylor, co-chair of Museum Trustees

What a pleasure to round off this latest issue of *Kew News*, which stands as something of a metaphor for our re-opened and reinvigorated Museum after such an extraordinary pandemic-hit two years.

It is testimony to the strength of our community that we weathered the storm so well, and, on behalf of the Museum's trustees, I would like record huge thanks to each and every person who has supported us during such trying times.

As others have noted in these pages, it's a pleasure to be able to plan for what promises to be a bright future for the Museum.

Trustees have continued to meet regularly (via Zoom) over the last two years, although, as members might imagine, our focus has been almost exclusively on keeping us on an even keel while preparing, where possible, for full recovery. We have also benefitted greatly from our two well-established standing committees: Collections and Compliance. These committees also have members from outside the main board contribute so much to our work. We will be adding a third, Income, committee this year.

Our immediate priorities this Spring are to boost our numbers with a trustee recruitment programme (see Museum website for details) and to continue our work on a new five-year strategic plan.

Look out for more news on this as we work on the details, including ambitious plans for a zero carbon future for the Museum.



*Clare Grist Taylor at the New Year Steam Up*

## TRUSTEES WANTED

### Strategic priorities:

- Community
- Learning/Education
- Strategic audience development & marketing
- Hounslow local business
- Sustainability and zero carbon

For an information pack visit  
<https://waterandsteam.org.uk>

### PLEASE NOTE:

The most recent *Kew News* was No 113, Autumn/Winter 2017/2018.

This was followed by five un-numbered electronic Members Newsletters.

These have retrospectively been assigned the No.s 114 to 118 for archive purposes, which is why this edition of *Kew News* is No. 119.

# Upcoming Events



## SPRING STEAM UP

**19 & 20 March**

Catch the Museum's engines in steam and then head over to Kempton Steam Museum and see the world's largest working triple-expansion steam engine, which stands as high as four stacked double-decker buses.

Future Steam Up dates are:  
14 & 15 May; 17 & 18 September;  
12 & 13 November

## CONNECTING THROUGH ART

**10 & 24 February**

Art Social started as a way of giving back to the society. Lockdown has been hard for all of us. I believe just a few lines and some colour is all it takes to relax and beat stress.

Come and connect with your creative side in a fun and relaxing environment.

Meet like-minded people.

*Sans Art*

ART THAT CONNECTS

Meet People | Make Art

Connect with your inner artist in a fun art workshop at

**The London Museum of Water and Steam.**

Chiswick Art Social



For a full list of upcoming events please visit: <https://waterandsteam.org.uk>