

Kew News



left to right: Young visitors enjoy the Museum's new Wild Play Garden; a close up from the Waterworks Gallery; Queen Victoria visiting the Museum during the Jubilee

Hello

Liz Power, Museum Director

In May, we passed a major milestone, we had been re-open for a whole year once again! Since the start of the pandemic have been lots of changes at the Museum, same as in the rest of the world, and even though we have not returned to our pre-2020 opening hours we have still welcomed lots of new and returning visitors.

From May 2021 to May 2022, we welcomed 85% of our normal visitor numbers, which is great and well above what lots of Museum can currently achieve. However, we still have a way to go before we return to pre-pandemic numbers. This is where we would really like our members' help! As members, you are already enthusiastic supporters of the Museum, so your help in spreading the word about the Museum is much needed.

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Summer is on the way, and we are busy getting ready for an amazing school holiday. Things were off to good start at May half term, with a sunny week full of fun and a brilliant garden party to celebrate the opening of the new Wild Play Garden. We look forward to welcoming you, your friends and family this summer.

Introducing our new trustees

Clare Grist Taylor, co-chair of Museum trustees

One of the most important things the board has been doing in recent months is recruiting new trustees to boost the board after the Covid-19 pandemic.

We were delighted by the quality of the applications we received, and we've been able to appoint five excellent new trustees. Together with our current trustees - myself; co-chair and fundraiser, Ed Stannard; Finance Director, Freddie Hollom; HR expert, Peter Roland and the Science Museum's Ben Russell - we now have an impressive array of experience and talent to lead the Museum into the next stage of its development.



Susie Batchelor offers us a wealth of museums and heritage experience in learning and engagement, visitor experience, collections, marketing and retail. She led the recent transformation of displays and programmes at Gunnersbury Park Museum, and has also worked for Historic Royal Palaces, the Watts Gallery and the National Trust, and as a freelance consultant and primary teacher.



Tom O'Leary is Director of Public Engagement for Historic Royal Palaces. He has worked in the cultural/heritage sector for over 25 years, focusing on public engagement and learning, with roles at The Science Museum Group, Houses of Parliament and the National Archives. Prior to this he was a history teacher, and currently advises the School of Humanities at Royal Holloway University.



Georgie Salzedo is an archivist, currently Sector Development Manager for London and business archives at The National Archives, supporting a wide range of archives. She previously worked as an archivist at De La Rue, and has volunteered and worked in a number of museums, big and small. She is already proving to be an asset for our collections work.



Fabio Rosso is an Associate Director at Skelly & Couch, an engineering practice that champions the sustainability and zero carbon agenda in the building environment. His experience includes the redevelopment of Victorian Grade II-listed buildings and work on the Special Exhibitions Gallery project for the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester. Fabio is already helping us to set the vision and programme for our goal of becoming a zero carbon site by 2050.



Heather Thomas is Head of Learning & Engagement at The Lightbox Museum and Gallery in Woking, Surrey. She has also been an education consultant and mentors emerging and mid-career professionals in the museums sector. She was until recently a trustee at a disability arts centre, has worked in theatres and events management, and brings a wide range of experience in heritage and the arts.

Members will have the opportunity to meet and hear from our new trustees at this year's AGM and full details are also on the Museum website.

We've lost no time putting our new trustees to work, with an induction day in May, the launch of our new Sustainable Steam standing committee in June and plans for a new Income and Audiences committee in the works.

It's great to be part of a new team with so much energy and enthusiasm to celebrate our successes and tackle our challenges. We all look forward to working with the Museum community in the months ahead.



Trustee induction at the May Steam Up

Save the date

The **Kew Bridge Engines Trust and Water Supply Museum Limited annual general meeting** will take place at the Museum on **Friday 7th October 2022**, starting at 7.00pm.

Look out for more details soon.

12 months of building maintenance

Glen Williams, volunteer

Whether it be the working collections or the Museum garden, the unprecedented closure during the global pandemic has brought about a number of challenges which the staff and volunteers are tackling with gusto. This is especially true for the Museum buildings.

Cyclical maintenance across the Museum's buildings restarted in earnest in the closing weeks of 2021, with the Museum's roofs and gutters being cleared in time for the worst of the winter weather. This was fortuitous timing, as extended closure during the pandemic had taken its toll and many gutters and downpipes were either partially or completely blocked. The opportunity was also taken to remove all the rotten timber walkways which were no longer safe to use, providing a plentiful supply of fuel for the steam locomotive.

Unfortunately, it was a case of jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire as it became immediately apparent that the rainwater gully behind the Hawthorn Davey Triple Expansion Engine was blocked, and with fully functioning gutters even the lightest of showers would create a small river across the steam hall floor. Closer inspection revealed that the buried iron drain pipes had in fact rotted out some time ago and were beyond repair.

Thankfully, funds were and available for repair and following several weeks work the offending downpipe has been diverted



Repairing mesh screens inside the tower

into a new stainless steel trough adjacent to the Triple Expansion Engine, bypassing the collapsed drain. Issues with damp, rust, and mildew in the vicinity of the engine and storerooms should hopefully now subside.

It was also discovered that several of the mesh screens which prevent birds from roosting in the standpipe tower were no longer attached. As a result, several generations of pigeons (although thankfully no peregrine falcons!) had moved in and brought all the associated detritus with them.

Repair of the mesh screens was identified as a priority for repair, and following the donning of protective equipment, volunteers undertook the unenviable task of climbing up several flights of guano encrusted stairs to reach the lantern. I am pleased to report that the screens have been refixed - all with stainless steel screws - and our feathered friends have been evicted.

As you may expect, the tower staircase and standpipes now need a comprehensive

clean. We are currently assessing if and how volunteers could undertake the cleaning work, with a hope that we can reopen the tower for public tours in the near future. Do stay tuned for further updates.

With the initial firefighting out of the way, we can now get to grips with the backlog of building maintenance that has been building up during the last few years. Most importantly the majority of museum buildings have been surveyed, with items of disrepair being photographed and logged onto a spreadsheet.

As always, it is difficult to know where to start with repairs, but we are keen to tackle some of the roof leaks around the site and issues with windows and glazing. If you have a building related skill and would like to help us the maintain the site as part of the volunteer team, please do get in touch by emailing volunteers@waterandsteam.org.uk.



View down the stairs inside the tower



View of the Steam Hall skylight

 London Museum of Water & Steam

See our unique collection of stationary engines in steam

—

Crafts and hands on activities

Autumn Steam Up

Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 September

10am to 4pm

Visit www.waterandsteam.org.uk for more information

KIDS GO FREE

Kids in Museums Family Friendly Award

Emma Canterbury, Engagement Coordinator

In June, we were beyond delighted to find out that the Museum had been shortlisted for the national Kids In Museums Family Friendly Award 2022.

Back in 2019, Gemma Cante, Engagement Coordinator, attended a training day with Kids in Museums and Museum Development London. Following that day, the Museum team created a family action plan and received a £250 grant, which kickstarted three years of hard work and creativity. Being shortlisted is a wonderful acknowledgement of this hard work and everything the Museum has to offer families. This is also the first time ever that a Hounslow Museum has been shortlisted for the award.

The Museum has been shortlisted in the Best Small Museum category, alongside The Egypt Centre Swansea, Ely Museum, the National Emergency Services Museum Sheffield and The Story Museum Oxford.

Over the summer holidays, the Museum will be visited by undercover family judges who will assess us against the Kids in Museums Manifesto. Their experiences will decide the winner for each category and the overall winner of the Family Friendly Museum Award 2022. The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in October.



Steam Explorers STEM Club

In the last edition of Kew News, Rhiannon Litterick, our Learning Producer, wrote about STEAM Teens, our new initiative aimed at engaging local young people aged 11-15. We are delighted to share that the Water Conservation Trust have kindly funded the first year of the club, now called the Steam Explorers STEM Club. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

The new club will be launched in the Autumn, with monthly sessions where the young people will be immersed in the world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, through creative and fun activities.

Community update

Gemma Cante, Engagement Coordinator

The Museum continues to enjoy being an integral part of the local community. We are delighted that Speak Out in Hounslow recently held their popular AGM with us for the sixth time. Following years of working together, we have asked Speak Out to be our Community Access Advisors, and their members are making a film for us to go on our website, giving our visitors an insight into what to expect as they explore the building and garden.

Our Barn's Pump and Grind Coffee Shop continues to go from strength to strength, hosting a carer's coffee morning on Thursdays which helps families get the support they need. The café is open Thursday-Sunday and has comfy new sofas where you can enjoy a coffee and cake or have a hot lunch.

We are looking forward to upcoming visits from some new groups including from the



Speak Out in Hounslow 2022 AGM

National Autistic Society and RNIB, whilst we regularly host Hounslow Community Solutions, All Aboard Club, the Tramway and Light Railway Society's meetings, and Refugees Welcome Hounslow.

Just before half term we said goodbye to the fantastic Brentford FC Supporters' exhibition in our Community Gallery. We are now excitedly working on our next exhibition partnership so watch this space!

If you know a community group you think we could welcome, email us at community@waterandsteam.org.uk.

London Museum of Water & Steam

Summer Holidays

Saturday 23 July to Monday 29 August
Wednesday to Sunday plus Bank Holiday Monday
10am to 4pm

Visit www.waterandsteam.org.uk for more information

KIDS GO FREE

- Crafts
- Storytelling
- Hands on activities

A very warm welcome

A very warm welcome to our new volunteers.

- Philomena Finnerty, Community and Learning Assistant
- Judith Woods, Community and Learning Assistant
- Linda Tate, Community and Learning Assistant
- Oscar Forster, DofE, Visitor Welcome Assistant

Volunteers' Week 2022

Sjoera Snijder-Sahuleka, Volunteer Coordinator

National Council for Voluntary Organisations' (NCVO) Volunteers' Week takes place 1st to 7th June every year. It's a chance to recognise the fantastic contribution volunteers make to our communities and say thank you.

The London Museum of Water & Steam owes its existence to a group of volunteer enthusiasts who formed the Kew Bridge Engines Trust in 1974. These volunteers not only restored the Boulton & Watt and Cornish 90-inch engines to working order, but they also collected engines and artefacts from other sites. Their work shaped the Museum that we now know as the London Museum of Water & Steam.

Since then, volunteers have been a vital part of the Museum's operation, doing everything from the mammoth task of engine maintenance to winding the clocks and everything in between. Volunteers have painted engine houses, repaired leaks, archived documents, cared for the garden, polished the brass, oiled the engines, driven the locomotive and given guided tours.

We would like to take this opportunity again to say **MASSIVE THANK YOU** to our volunteers past and present. Your commitment and contribution as a volunteer really makes a difference to our Museum. Thank you for your amazing support and generosity!

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We are currently recruiting for

- Visitor Welcome Assistants (weekdays during the school holidays)
- Steam Team Mentors

For more information please visit
[https://waterandsteam.org.uk/
support-us/volunteers/](https://waterandsteam.org.uk/support-us/volunteers/)

Steam Team

Tom Verran, Steam Team Coordinator

In October 2021, the Museum launched the Steam Team programme. The programme – funded by National Lottery Awards for All and Hounslow Thriving Communities Fund – focuses on the transferable skills that can be developed through volunteering, and aims to contextualise that experience for young people seeking employment.

This year's programme will run between Saturday 23 July and Sunday 28 August 2022 and is open to 18 to 25 year olds in Hounslow.

This year, participants will be able to:

- gain experience and develop new skills through volunteering in a variety of roles;
- learn more about career development and employee rights;
- work with our mentors to write a strong CV and cover letter;
- practice interview techniques with local professionals;
- find out more about local volunteering and training opportunities.

Recruitment is now open for Steam Team Mentors. These volunteers will support the programme in one of two ways:

Support Mentors will attend sessions alongside participants to provide additional support to anyone who needs it. Knowledge of other languages, including British Sign Language, or experience in teaching or providing support to young people with additional learning needs, is essential.

London Museum of Water & Steam

follow this link to become a mentor

If you have experience in

- ✓ Youth mentoring
- ✓ Recruitment | HR
- ✓ Job coaching
- ✓ Other languages | BSL

Steam Team 2022 needs you!

Contact us:
volunteers@waterandsteam.org.uk

Workshop Mentors will attend drop-in workshops to provide additional coaching to participants. Experience in recruitment, HR, job coaching or youth mentoring, or knowledge of a particular sector, is desirable.

If you have experience of working with young people and/or providing employability mentoring, or if you know someone who might be interested, please follow this link to apply to join our volunteer team:
<https://timecounts.org/waterandsteam/forms/71667>

The day Queen Victoria came to see me pass out as a locomotive driver

Roger Harris, volunteer

On Friday 3 June 2022, Queen Victoria visited the Museum especially to see me pass out as a probationer driver for the railway. I believe she may have also popped into the Jubilee Garden Party that just happened to be taking place on the same day!

I have lived in Grove Park, only a mile or so from the Museum, for over thirty years. In that time I have visited the Museum and ridden on the railway several times, without ever realising that I could learn to drive the little "Wren" class locomotive. Last August, when we finally came out of Covid restrictions, I called into the Museum and discovered that volunteers were needed to keep the railway running and that learning to drive the locomotive would not take the years of training that is required on the "real" railways. In my mid 70s it looked as if I might, at last, be able to achieve a lifetime's ambition (and every schoolboy's dream) to drive a real steam engine.

I spoke with Andy Pierre, Lead Railway



Andy Pierre, Queen Victoria and Roger Harris with Locomotive, Thomas Wicksteed

Engine Driver, and he was not at all fazed by the challenge of training a silver haired guy in the skills of firing and driving the locomotive, although I must be his oldest ever trainee. He assured me that it would not require years of apprenticeship, and that I would have my hands on the controls on the first day of training. I duly turned up the next Saturday morning, bright and early, in my overalls and steel capped boots ready to learn the routines of cleaning the locomotive to prepare for lighting the fire and raising steam; polishing the brass and lubricating the locomotive ready for a day of running. And I did indeed drive on that first day, although very closely watched over by Andy, Joseph Kikta and Edward Yelf.

I volunteered for my own selfish pleasure and ambition to drive the locomotive, but I've found far more rewarding reasons to walk through the gates of the Museum on a cold wet Saturday morning. I have made new and interesting friends all with amazing skills that I probably did not even know existed. I spend the day in the fresh air (and smoke of the engine) and often have a breakfast fry up cooked on the shovel in the loco firebox in the traditional way by Joseph. He will never get a Michelin star, but with the egg yolk trickling down your coal encrusted fingers, it's by far the best way to start the day.

A consequence of driving the locomotive I never considered when I first volunteered was the pleasure that I would get from

interacting with the public. As well as driving the locomotive we also have to act as guard. This involves giving safety instructions to our visitors and talks on the history of the locomotive, the railway and some aspects of the Museum. This has been a real unexpected pleasure, especially seeing the awe and wonder of younger children as well as the excitement of the older ones, and even their parents and grandparents. It's very satisfying to give them a fun time and receive their genuine thanks at the end of a run; once I had two little non-speaking twin girls hug each of my legs in thanks, which was very moving. It's always gratifying to receive an unexpected round of applause for just doing what you enjoy.

Passing as a probationer driver means I can be the second member of a crew and drive the locomotive without footplate supervision which takes some of the pressure off the rest of the team, giving somebody a weekend off. I still have a lot to learn and need to hone my skills, but eight months after first stepping onto the footplate I qualified to drive a steam locomotive and Queen Victoria came to ride on it – quite an achievement for an old guy in his 70s!



Roger Harris preparing the locomotive

Eleanor Michell 1924-2022; a personal memoir.

Bryce Caller, former volunteer

Eleanor died recently after a long, diverse and interesting life. She was 98 years of age.

For many years Eleanor and I were fellow volunteers in the the Museum's archive and library. At that time, the archive was suffering from a considerable backlog of material awaiting cataloguing, and she did wonders in dealing with this. Undaunted by the travails of dealing with a newly introduced computer system, Eleanor tackled the task with calm persistence.

Over the years that followed she was a wonderful colleague; completely reliable, kind and thoughtful but with a sharp intelligence.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to have known her.

Upcoming Events



SUMMER HOLIDAYS

23 July to 29 August

Join us Wednesday to Sunday each week, plus Bank Holiday Monday, for hands-on family fun.

We'll be exploring the world beneath our feet with archaeology workshops, family tours and a brand new Science Show. Plus all our usual fun.

MONSTER SOUP!

22 to 30 October

Join us every day in October half term and discover the monster bacteria that lurked in the River Thames in the past!

Learn the science behind where our water comes from and how we clean our city's water in our very own Soggy Science Show!



For a full list of upcoming events, please visit:

<https://waterandsteam.org.uk/events>



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