

Kew News



left to right: Karen Reader, curator of the new community exhibition, a young visitor enjoying the wild play garden, visitors enjoying the 16mm model trains

Hello

Liz Power, Museum Director

2022 will always be the summer that London Museum of Water & Steam went a bit crazy for a mammoth! The mammoth in question features on the logo for Kids in Museums, the organisation who runs the annual Family Friendly Museum Awards.

These prestigious national awards celebrate the best family friendly museums in the UK. And, unlike most awards, being shortlisted is a massive achievement. Judging is done not just through an application form, but through mystery families judges who visit over the summer.

Three of the staff team attended the Awards, and were delighted to receive the shortlisted certificate, now proudly on display at the welcome desk. They were also delighted to cheer on our friends at the National Emergency Services Museum in Sheffield as they went on to win, not just our Small Museum category, but the overall Best Museum Award!

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We will continue to build on this amazing feedback and reputation. With the majority of our visitors coming with their families, this is a key source of income to support all areas of the Museum. I am so proud of what we have achieved for our families. We know that as members you share in that feeling; there is nothing better than seeing children enjoying and learning about something you love.

"The London Museum of Water & Steam is a brilliant, family friendly museum. What makes the museum truly outstanding is their staff and how they love engaging with families in general and specifically children" - Secret Family Judge



Liz Power, Gemma Cante and Emma Canterbury at the Kids in Museums Award ceremony



Boiler House blues

Melissa Maynard, Collections Coordinator

Last June, I sat with Liz during a keynote address at the Association of Independent Museums conference. Our work WhatsApp group was buzzing about the boilers that were being inspected. Both the locomotive and the Lancashire boiler had failed their inspections.

So, let's start with the good news: Ian Cottrell led the repair and maintenance of the Thomas Wicksteed locomotive. With new seals for the safety valves, a couple of new test cocks and a lot of tender loving care, we have our fingers-crossed that Thomas Wicksteed will pass its inspections in December and will hopefully be steaming again next March.



Polished metalwork of the Triple Expansion engine.

The bad news:

The Museum simply does not have the funds required to test the Lancashire boiler's rivets, undertake the 10-year inspection, replace the insulation, complete other potential repairs to the Lancashire boiler as well as any and all additional running costs.



The interior of the Old Workshop

Oliver Pearcey, George Houston and Richard Albanese have spent a huge amount of time working with Liz and myself looking at potential solutions and what is feasible. I am extremely grateful to Oliver, George and Richard for their expertise and willingness to explore multiple options.

We are all heartbroken that the Museum will not be in steam for the next few years as we concentrate on exploring potential sustainable steam solutions and raising funds.

The dilemma: we can't steam!

Whilst our engines are always beautiful, the magic happens when they are moving. So the question has now become what can or has the potential to move, but does not require steam?

This is what the collections team, especially the Thursday Team, are now working on. Obviously, we have the Benham Engine in the main entrance and the Waterwheel in the Splash Zone courtyard that currently operate. What else can we get moving?

Some solutions!

The Diesel House

In March 2020, the team working on the Allen engine in the Diesel House had to down tools due to the pandemic. Now, 2½ years later, we

once again have the capacity to start looking at this area of the Museum.

The first steps involve housekeeping and assessing the engines as to their current condition as well as what works need to be done. Richard Albanese, with the Thursday Team, has just started this part of the process. This will enable us to plan what works need to be done and any potential costs.

The Old Workshop

Over the winter, we are looking to tidy the old workshop and make it into a space which looks like someone might have just stepped out of 100 years ago. Our hope is we will then be able to open the door and let visitors peek in.

The belts can run and so it would be wonderful to be able to welcome visitors into the space with volunteers present to turn the machines on and talk about the history of this part of the waterworks.

Trains, trains, trains

The train will hopefully be running again from March 2023. We're waiting on the results of the inspection for Thomas Wicksteed and for Alan Keef to send someone to fix some snagging issues on Alister.

We would also like to send a huge thank you to the London Transport Museum for donating 5½ tonnes of coal to us. We now have enough coal onsite to run the train for a few years.

In 2023, we are changing how we run the train. We are planning to have one operating day per month plus one maintenance day per month. This will not only aid the marketing of the railway; it will also aid the planning for visitor programming, volunteer work behind the scenes as well as managing visitor expectations.

Collection care and archives

We have started the backlog of conservation housekeeping – the preventative conservation and cleaning of our collections and archives.

Next time you visit the Museum, please do pause and admire the sparkling brightwork on the Triple and the Waddon engines in the Steam Hall. Glen Williams and other members of the Thursday Team have been hard at work with the Peek and Brasso so the engines gleam in the light.

If you have visited recently, you may have seen some of our collection items moving around the Museum displays. For example, the electric reservoir level meter has moved from the mezzanine to near the entrance to the Steam Hall, so it can be admired by more visitors.

The Venturi Orivent Water Meter which was next to the stairs to the Babcock Room is now hiding under a cloth in the workshop as we work to clean the mechanism this winter. We are currently waiting for the horological society approved cleaning solution and clock oil to arrive in order to start this work.

The beautiful brass plaque celebrating the opening of the Croyden Corporation Waterworks Waddon Pumping Station is with the University of Oxford's joiners. When it returns, it will be mounted on a purpose-built



Polished metalwork of the Waddon engine

wooden mount that will aid its display in the Steam Hall.

Down in the archives, we have started a housekeeping audit and ratification of the stores. This will be a long task as we check for damage by any of the 'agents of deterioration', clean, audit and improve storage of some of our more vulnerable collection items.

This work will include a surface clean and wrapping of some of our Victorian leather-bound volumes due to red rot – a common affliction for this type of leather. We will be looking for future funding to completely stabilise these, working, we hope, with a London-based paper conservator who has already provided us with guidance this summer.

As Claire Hall, Amy Palmer and I work on the above, Suhail Yonan and Martin Bonham continue their substantial work looking after and recording the library and the Kew Bridge Engine Trust's archive paperwork.

The Museum is currently working to upgrade its computer system including moving to cloud-based servers replacing the ones onsite. This means we will be moving to a new collections management software in the coming months as our current one will no longer be supported.

As we go through all this work, I hope that we'll be able to provide semi-regular updates via the Museum's blog and social media.

A huge thank you

As I was writing for this issue of Kew News, I had the pleasure of meeting two members during their visit to the Museum. I would like to say a huge thank you to them for their very generous and kind donation of £1000 towards the care of our collections. At their request, they are remaining anonymous.



Close up of the electric reservoir level meter, which has moved from the Steam Hall's mezzanine.

With their help we will be purchasing the following equipment, which will have a huge impact on our work:

- A new pallet truck as ours broke recently. Thanks to this purchase, we will be able to replace the broken flagstone in the Boulton and Watt house.
- A museum vac. This specialist collection care vacuum cleaner has variable speed controls and sealed hepa filter bags. Thanks to this purchase, we will be able to surface clean the items affected by red rot and mould with minimal risk to spread and our health.

Help wanted

If you would like to help with caring for and documenting our collections, then please get in touch. We're looking for support in the following ways:

- Conservation Housekeepers: to help look after the collection through conservation cleaning, which includes dusting our collections, undertaking condition reports and metal polishing. Full training will be provided.
- Data and Documentation Assistant: to help ensure the data transfer to a new CMS is accurate and up to date. We also need support to add photographs and collection care information to the system.

If you're too far away or unable to volunteer, you might still be able to help us look after the collections.

Donations of items:

- Do you have any white cotton sheets or pillowcases that you no longer require? These are great for putting items on when working on them.
- Do you have an old dining table protector that you no longer need? These are wonderful to provide some padding under the cotton sheets.
- Do you have any Brasso, Peek or pure Beeswax Polish which you no longer use? We will happily provide a good home for them! Please note, these are the only polishes we use.
- Do you have any clean yoghurt pots or small plastic tubs? There are times when we need to treat objects with chemicals, and these are great for small amounts.

What a financial donation might support:

- There are several objects which require cleaning and preventative conservation. To do this in the best possible way we require museum standard vacuum cleaners.
 - In the archives, the current vacuum cleaner has a temperamental on/off button. It would be great to replace it with a *Hoover Power Capsule Pets PC20PET bagged cylinder vacuum cleaner*. This perfect for cleaning the floors, under the racking, etc. (£55.00)
 - For cleaning where trailing leads are not ideal, a cordless, variable speed vacuum & batteries would be useful. The *Makita DVC50LZ 18V Li-ion LXT brushless cordless vacuum cleaner & Makita P-84280 18v 3.0ah li-ion LXT batteries & charger kit*, provides both wet and dry vacuuming. It also meets conservation requirements. (£319.98)

- In the archive store, we have roller racking, which is wonderful for the store. However, it blocks the lights when working at some shelves, making it very difficult to see the objects to condition check them. Noel has costed up improved lighting for the archives, which he would install himself, at £350.
- Squirrels have been enjoying themselves, causing some damage in the workshop and boiler house over the last year. To repair the roof damage caused by them and stop them continuing to get in would cost £2500.
- Conservation of the War Memorial paper which list the names to be remembered, display of the reproduction and storage of the original paper would cost an estimated £2000.

Southwestern University interns

This autumn, the Museum team welcomed Margaret Langgin and Cade Thompson for a 10-week period as student interns whilst they are in the UK. Margaret is studying biology and Cade is studying physics at Southwestern University, Texas.

I have been interning the Museum since September. I have been working with Emma Canterbury, Engagement Coordinator, to develop workshops and educational materials which reflect the Museum's commitment to sustainability and climate literacy. In my short time here I have learned so much about the environment and the history of London's water infrastructure. I am very grateful for the opportunity to grow as a professional; however the most rewarding part of this internship has been collecting and recording feedback from visitors. The love and hard work that is put into this wonderful place does not go unnoticed. I am excited to continue my work here in the coming weeks and will surely be leaving with the best of memories.

- Margaret Langgin

My name is Cade. I am originally from Texas, although I don't miss the heat and am very happy to be in the United Kingdom. My work here goes towards reducing the Museum's ecological footprint and carbon emissions. In order to minimise the Museum's adverse environmental impact, I have been able research concepts such as solar panelling, heat pumps, and energy producing flooring. I have also had the opportunity to look into alternative boiler technologies like hydrogen and electric boilers as alternative to the Museum's current, coal powered boiler. I love my time at the Museum; the massive steam engines and vast collection make it impossible to forget how much history can be found within the Museum's walls. Working here furthers my career and gives me the opportunity to develop my own research project. In addition, I get to spend time at a fun and interesting place and make new connections. Working at the Museum is very important for me and I look forward to taking everything I've experienced through the rest of my life.

- Cade Thompson

Thank you and farewell

Clare Grist Taylor looks back on her eight years as a trustee of the Museum

Clare Grist Taylor, Former Chair of Trustees

It seems fitting that my last act as a Museum trustee – chairing this year's AGM – took place in just about the same location as my first back in early 2014.

At the time, the Museum was preparing to re-open following Project Aquarius, and I was being inducted into the organisation by then Director, Penny Jenkins, while at the same time ripping up old carpet tiles on the Steam Hall Gallery.

As a metaphor, it's not a bad one for the challenges and joys of being an independent Museum.

There have been many highs and lows since then. But joining the board just as Project Aquarius was coming to fruition reminds me of how far we've come over the years, and how one crucial word has defined my time as a trustee: *inclusion*.

Here are three reasons why.

Walking the talk

When people think about inclusion, they often start with diversity, making sure that, as an organisation we properly represent the communities we serve. It's an important precursor to inclusion and a challenge and work in progress for all museums – ourselves included.

Back in 2014, I was the one of the first two women trustees ever appointed to the board,

part of a governance review that looked to re-think the board to match the aim of Project Aquarius: broadening our audiences.

Since then, our governance has evolved as we have. Our new 2020 constitution introduced fixed trustee terms of office, making being a trustee more accessible and less daunting a commitment. Introducing board sub-committees is another way of involving a wider range of people in our governance.

We've also learnt to think more creatively about how we employ people.

Understanding the benefits of part-time and flexible working has meant that we have been able to appeal to, and retain, skilled and experienced staff that we otherwise could not afford or attract.

There is much more to do, but we are moving in the right direction.



Ed Stannard, Clare Grist Taylor and Peter Roland at this year's AGM.

A bigger circle

Inclusion is not a zero-sum game. Broadening our audiences to include new groups does not mean that someone else has to be excluded.

So, it's entirely possible for us to be a family-friendly museum shortlisted for a Kids in Museums Award and a place where steam enthusiasts come to marvel at our engines and win awards for their work on them.

It's brilliant that we have a café run by young people with learning disabilities while our railway volunteers can continue to cook their breakfasts on a shovel over the coals.

We can run school-holiday storytelling and science shows for kids alongside a hackathon as part of our project towards becoming a zero-carbon organisation.

Containing multitudes makes us all stronger.

Making our circle bigger makes us more resilient and sustainable.

Community, community, community

We would not have survived the Covid-19 pandemic without being able to show how rooted we are in our local community.

Thanks in particular to the work of Museum Director, Liz Power, and her team, our oft-stated intention of engaging with our local community is becoming a reality.

Whether it's opening our outdoor spaces for local families during Covid, collaborating with Hounslow Council to offer free visits for local schools, hosting a range of community groups or exploring partnerships with similar organisations, this is the aspect of inclusion of which we can all be most proud.

As we engage with more and more people, they become our champions and advocates. It's the kind of reciprocity that makes all the difference.

Inclusion is always a journey. All organisations have to adapt and change as the world and our part in it changes around us.

But it's encouraging that, in the last eight years, I've been privileged to witness some real strides towards making the Museum the inclusive place it needs to be.

I've learnt so much from everyone in our community and look forward to seeing how we can build on the progress made since those carpet-removing days of 2014.



The poster features the London Museum of Water & Steam logo on the left, which includes three wavy lines representing water and a steam engine illustration. The central text reads 'New Year's Weekend' in large white and yellow letters, with 'Saturday 31 December 2022 to Monday 2 January' and '10am to 4pm' below it. On the right, a list of activities is shown: 'Guided tours', 'Family tours', and 'Hands-on Fun', each preceded by a yellow dot. A yellow diagonal banner in the top right corner says 'KIDS GO FREE'. At the bottom right, it says 'Visit www.waterandsteam.org.uk for more information'.

A very warm welcome

A very warm welcome to our new volunteers.

- Constantin Chateauneu, Visitor Welcome Assistant
- Filipa Almeida, Visitor Welcome Assistant
- Calum Shaw, Visitor Welcome Assistant
- Chathuri Silva, STEAM Explorers STEM Ambassador
- Alison Davidson, STEAM Explorers STEM Ambassador

Learning at the Museum

Emma Canterbury, Engagement Coordinator (Learning and Families)

After the pandemic paused school visits for 602 days, we were finally able to welcome schools back to the Museum last November. In the past 12 months, our learning programme has gone from strength to strength. The summer term was so over-subscribed with requests to visit that we opened on extra days and started a waiting list. Whilst many schools are from West London, one school travelled all the way from Cardiff. We already have bookings right up until summer 2023!

Our Learning Team has expanded. The freelance Learning Facilitators and volunteers are core to offering amazing and enriching experiences at the Museum.



The Museum's Learning Team: Rhiannon Litterick, Olivia Davies, Judy Preece, Kayleigh Edun, Kate Mervyn Jones, Phil Finnerty and Lesley Hetherington

Thanks to the generous support of the Water Conservation Trust, we are able to offer bursaries to primary schools in West London where 30% or more pupils are on Pupil Premium. These bursaries have enabled us to welcome pupils to the Museum who otherwise would not have been able to visit.

"The pupils were able to have a hands-on experience with water filtration, which we don't have the resources for at school. It was a great opportunity to spark their interest in engineering!" - Key Stage 2 Teacher

We are currently developing two new learning programmes for Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 11) and Key Stage 3 (ages 11 to 14) focusing on sustainability and climate change. We hope these will be available in the new year.

This month we launched STEAM Explorers, our new club for young people interested in science, engineering and technology. Running monthly, the participants will explore some of the difficulties caused by water, discover innovative solutions created across the world and learn more about global issues surrounding climate change, sustainability and access to water. Our thanks again go to the Water Conservation Trust for funding this amazing opportunity for our community.

Brentford at Work, Rest and Play

Karen Reader, curator of the community exhibition

I started 'Brentford Thru My Lens' in May 2016. I aim to share our town's history in a medium that will reach and be relatable to as many people as possible. I love sharing wonderful historical photographs alongside those I take on a regular basis. I aim to capture Brentford today for the people of tomorrow. I really hope my images bring joy to people in the future just as I get joy from seeing historic images of Brentford. You can find me on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

This is my tenth exhibition on Brentford in five years. When Gemma Cante invited me to hold an exhibition in the new community space at the Museum, I felt deeply honoured. I wanted to take the opportunity to share many of the wonderful memories, stories and photographs which have been shared with me through my social media platforms. The great joy of sharing a photograph are the memories they evoke and the way in which people relate them to their own experiences. I hope when people visit the exhibition they will feel inspired to share more with family, friends and the next generation. This exhibition is a 'pick-n-mix' of Brentford nostalgia: from the golden days of the Great West Road lined with 1920s and 30s factories to the parks of our childhoods.

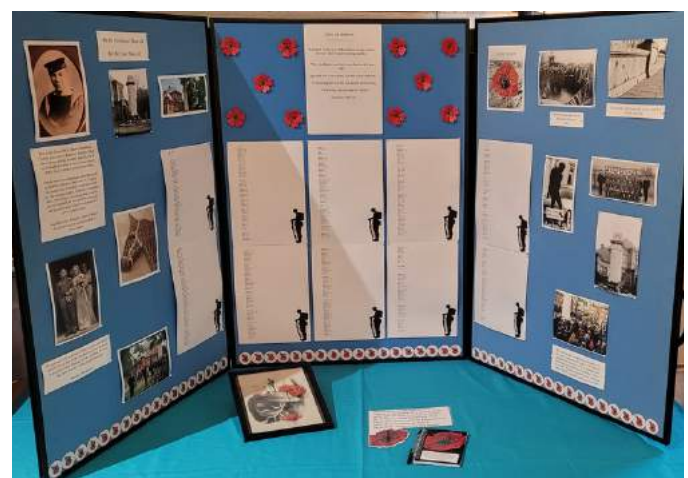
The exhibition is very unique and very special as many items on display come from private collections and family treasures. These items have never been on display before and possibly won't be again. The exhibition will be running until next year, and I very much hope you enjoy it on your next visit to the Museum.



A visitor enjoying the Brentford at Work Rest and Play exhibition



A young visitor with a wonderful pearly suit which belonged to Mr Alfred Pearce



Part of the exhibition relating to Remembrance Day

In memory – Anthony Albert "Tony" Cundick (1937 – 2022)

Oliver Pearcey

The death of Tony Cundick this August breaks one more link with the now almost mythical team which also included Ivan Fear, Ron Plaster, and Nick Reynolds. It was a team responsible for restoring over half the surviving Cornish cycle pumping engines in England to working order under steam, and founding two separate working steam museums: Crofton Pumping Station on the Kennet and Avon Canal and Kew (Nick subsequently established the Kempton Great Engines Trust as well).

Born in Melksham, Wiltshire, and educated at Trowbridge High School, after a very brief period at Westinghouse Brake and Signal Tony spent five years in the joinery shop of Spencer (Melksham) Ltd. In 1960 he and his new wife Ros emigrated to Australia. They only remained there two years but in that time Tony completed teacher training and then taught in Adelaide, as well as proving to be a highly successful rugby coach. They returned to England with a third member of the family, their first child Andy. Tony then taught woodwork, technical drawing and physics at secondary school level for several years.

In 1968 he joined the Crofton Society, whose aim was to restore to working order the two Cornish cycle engines at Crofton on the summit level of the Kennet and Avon Canal, then itself under restoration largely by volunteers. For the next two years, working mainly on Sundays with volunteer labour, Tony was responsible for restoring the fabric of the building, thus ensuring the long term security of the two engines it contained, one of which is the oldest Boulton and Watt engine still carrying out its original work.



Crofton Volunteers in 1986

When Crofton opened to the public, Crofton Society members started looking at other closed pumping stations with engines with a view to restoration. In 1974 after establishing the Kew Bridge Engines Trust and Water Supply Museum Ltd. Nick Reynolds invited Tony to become site manager at Kew, thus completing the quadrumvirate with Nick (money and organisation), Ron (mechanical engineering), and Ivan (skilled machinist and millwright).

In his 29 years at the Museum, Tony accomplished a huge amount. Perhaps his biggest single impact on the site was the construction of the new workshop. Originally built to facilitate the Museum's contract operations it has since seen a number of changes of use and remains a hugely useful facility today. What is particularly striking is how Tony ever obtained planning and listed building consent for such an uncompromising new addition to a Grade 1 and 2* pumping station of international significance! This large portal frame building incorporating an overhead crane was constructed almost entirely by in-house and volunteer labour.

Second only to the new workshop in terms of impact was the Museum's first large Lottery grant project, the original Water for Life

Gallery, in 1995. This was entirely project managed by Tony, and a great deal of the practical work was organised and implemented by him. When Project Aquarius revisited this space it was able to reuse much of the work done 18 years earlier in its representation of this area.

Tony's hand can be seen everywhere in the Museum; from the repurposing of the Steam Hall as a display area for engines rescued and moved to the site, including the construction of the Gallery, the installation of the Lancashire boiler, the outfitting of the Diesel House Studios, the paving of the car park, and the laying of the narrow gauge railway track. His commitment to high standards was always there; everyone looking through from the Babcock Room to the Steam Hall is doing so through a multi - pane window designed and built by him.

Tony was also responsible for a significant part of the contracting business at Kew; everything from building large steel houseboats through the construction of water tube boilers and the repair of historic steam machinery to assembling model boilers for Stuart Turner. The work of Historic Steam Ltd. was highly rated and some wonderful historic items came through the workshop - from display engines destined for the Science



Tony with Ken Brown and Lesley Bossine

Museum through whole and parts of steam cars and perhaps most significantly a series of historic steam boats including the umpire's launches Eva, now a static exhibit in the Henley River and Rowing Museum, somewhat to Tony's regret, and Consuta, still to be seen in operation on the Thames. This involvement also led to the famous Kew steam boat shows which attracted thousands of visitors over a single weekend.

After retiring from the Museum Tony remained active, substantially rebuilding a house as well as creating a combined workshop and living space for his own use. He took a major part in the maintenance and operation of Consuta, and in the development of proposals for a museum of Thames water craft. And he retained a strong interest in progress at Crofton and Kew.

When I first came to the Museum as a volunteer one Saturday in 1974 it was Tony who set me to work scraping off paint from the crank of the Easton and Amos, and who later commended my enthusiasm but suggested that I did not need to scrape all the leading out from around the crank pin. I will always remember this; and I and many others will long miss Tony.



Eva and African Queen at the 1987 Steamboat Show

In memory – David Harris

Elizabeth Pearcey, Former Kew News editor

With the passing of David Harris, another of the links with the original group who set up the Museum has gone. That group possessed a notably well-balanced set of abilities, experience, and qualifications – legal, financial, engineering, and practical knowledge.

In addition to editing Kew News from 2000, and assisting Ken Brown before that, David brought his own professional skills of publishing and public relations at Brooke Bond to the marketing of the new enterprise. He made the most of every opportunity to bring the Museum to the attention of all potential audiences, letting them know what a gem of a place lay at the bottom of the stand-pipe tower. He also chaired the Health & Safety Committee.

At his retirement, David said: *“As one of the founding members of the Museum, I have witnessed with admiration the development of Kew by so many enterprising and dedicated volunteers and staff. The work involved in running the museum in recent years has been just as hard as in the pioneering years by the simple fact that once an organisation is up and running, the challenge switches to maintaining the appeal of the Museum to a wider public”.*

David was a private person. He brought a calm and balanced presence to the Museum’s proceedings, often acting as peacemaker – steam generates passions! It seemed typical of his unchanging and immutable character that, always a dapper dresser, to his retirement dinner he wore a 25 year old suit.



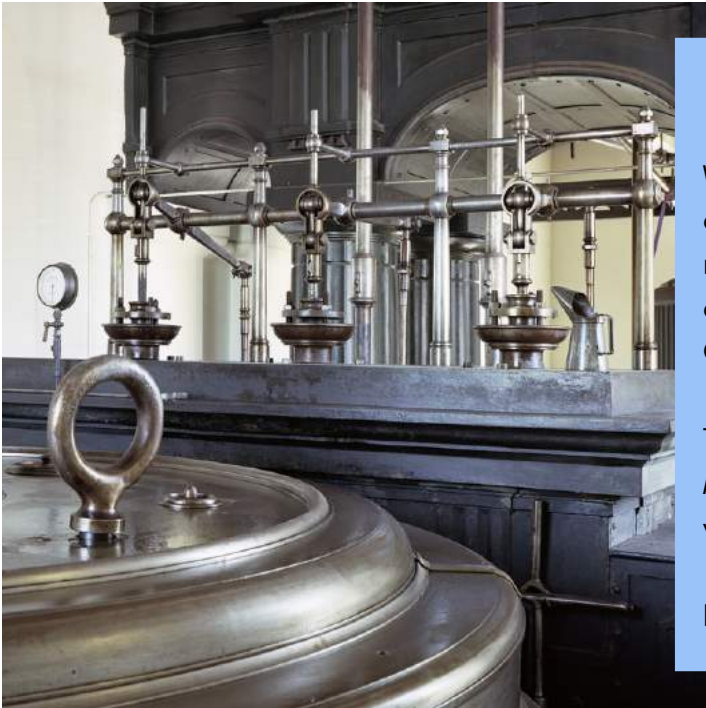
David Harris at his retirement dinner. Image from Kew News No:80, Summer 2004

A lovely man, whose contribution to the setting-up and success of the Museum should not be underestimated, and who has been much missed since his departure to his canal boat Gongoozler, and his beloved county of Wiltshire, where he had family connections.

There will be a Service of Thanksgiving for David at St Mary's Church, Great Bedwyn (after a private cremation) on Tuesday 13th December 2022 at 2.00 pm.

The family have requested family flowers only but donations towards Kennet and Avon Canal Trust and Cancer Research in David's memory are welcome. All donations care of: Dianne Mackinder Funeral Service, Wagon Yard, Marlborough SN8 1LH. (tel: 01672 512444).

Upcoming events



MEMBERS' EVENTS

We are delighted to share that for 2023 we are launching a series of events especially for members, including fascinating hybrid talks, and a local area walk from Hounslow Heritage Guides.

There will also be monthly guided tours of the Museum which members are invited to join, as well as discounts for other exciting events.

Full details will be shared in the new year.

NEW YEAR'S WEEKEND

31 December to 2 January

Discover the fascinating world of water and steam this new year! Learn about the history of the Kew Bridge Waterworks through guided tours for adults and our Marvellous Machines family tours, as well as all our usual hands-on family fun!

We will also be joined for the weekend by the Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers.



For a full list of upcoming events, please visit:

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



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