



# Kew News



left to right: children enjoying the October half term Science Show, an autumnal photograph of the Standpipe Tower, a volunteer providing a guided tour

## Hello

**Melissa Maynard, Interim Director**

Sadly, we've recently said goodbye to Liz Power and Gemma Cante as they start new professional adventures, and by the time you read this Emma Canterbury will have started her maternity leave. I know that you will join me in thanking them for everything that they've done for the Museum over the last four years.

As we move into 2023, I'm delighted to welcome Amy Dobson as Engagement Coordinator (Community and Families) and Danielle Holmes as Engagement Coordinator (Learning and Families) to our Museum. The recruitment for our new Museum Director is in progress and I hope that we will be able to share some good news with you all soon.

With new staff comes training and getting to know the Museum. So, I ask that you please bear with us and be patient in the coming months as we work hard to keep the Museum running and welcome our new colleagues.

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The coming year is going to bring some challenges with the increase in cost of living, especially towards the end of the year when we come out of our utility contracts. However, I believe that we will be able to overcome these, and we've got a full programme of activities and are getting some of our collection moving again - so lots to look forward to!

## *New Engagement Coordinators*



*I moved to London from Canada in late 2022 and am looking forward to working with you all over the next year. I love helping people get excited about museums and showing visitors what they can learn from museums. I can't wait to meet all the lovely people that visit the Museum to play and explore! When I'm not at the Museum, I'm likely visiting another museum or reading a good book!*

### **Danielle Holmes**

Engagement Coordinator (Learning and Families)



*I have worked in museums for the past 7 years, mostly in curating, collections management and visitor experience. I'm most passionate about increasing accessibility to collections, sharing stories and generally ensuring everyone is having a good time! When I'm not working, I love to garden, lino-print and teach myself Spanish. If you see me around the Museum make sure to say 'hola!'*

### **Amy Dobson**

Engagement Coordinator (Community and Families)

## **Water water everywhere ...**

What happens when you report a water leak at the Museum?

To be honest it starts as a small puddle with bubbles appearing at regular intervals. Then Thames Water arrive and the listening sticks come out to trace the 12 litres per second leak.

As this newsletter gets completed, the mini diggers are out, the courtyard is closed and 3 valves are going to be repacked. Plus Richard talking through the services plan with Melissa and Thames Water.





# Kew Bridge Engine Trust Members Events

2023

## Talks and Events (For members)

Wednesday 1 March | 3pm

Spring Members Talk  
"The history of the Kew Bridge  
Engine Trust."

Saturday 1 April | 10:30am

Guided local area walk with the  
Hounslow Heritage Guides

Wednesday 7 June | 3pm

Summer Members Talk  
"A talk and discussion on the future  
direction of the museum." (tbc)

Wednesday 6 September | 3pm

Autumn Members Talk  
"Hidden Treasures. What's in the  
Museum's archives."

## Guided Tours (For members and visitors)

The History of Water in London

Sunday 12 February | 2pm  
Sunday 14 May | 2pm  
Sunday 13 August | 2pm  
Sunday 12 November | 2pm

Steam and Technology

Sunday 12 March | 2pm  
Sunday 11 June | 2pm  
Sunday 10 September | 2pm  
Sunday 10 December | 2pm

The Changing Power of Water

Sunday 9 April | 2pm  
Sunday 9 July | 2pm  
Sunday 8 October | 2pm

Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 September | 7pm

Members are invited to join us for 'As the Actress said to the Bishop'; an exciting new radio style play performed at the Museum by the Riverside Players of Sunbury. Tickets are £12 per adult, plus a 10% discount for members using code: [KBETMember2023](#)

# Time is Money

Why there will be no clocking off early after upcoming conservation works to the museum's magnificent Magneta master clock.

## Glen Williams, Volunteer

As reported in the last edition of Kew News, the Thursday team have been busy taking a closer look at what we like to call the 'medium sized' exhibits; the smaller engines, pumps, gauge boards and clocks which combined form a surprisingly large part of the museum. Our hope is to give each item a good clean, and polish and undertake any maintenance that might be required to get the Museum looking the best it can. One such object which warrants further attention is the Magneta Clock. For those not familiar with the Magneta, it is a large and rather handsome looking electric master clock, located in the lobby of the 1838 engine house.

The purpose of a master clock is to ensure accurate timekeeping within a large building by transmitting an electrical pulse through a circuit to the secondary clocks throughout the various rooms, such that they all remain synchronised. Program units could also be incorporated into the system to automatically operate machinery, recording equipment and factory bells at the required time. The importance of accurate timekeeping in industry was well understood and master clocks were a critical part of a waterworks site, until solid-state quartz and radio-controlled clocks became widely available in the 1980s.

The Magneta clock (technically a Swiss Magneta) generates the required voltage by means of a magneto operating on an alternating positive-negative cycle every 60



*The Magneta Clock in the 1838 Entrance Hall*

seconds. The system is therefore completely self-powered, this being a key advantage in the days before standardised power supplies and low maintenance batteries.

Unfortunately, this came with the downside of needing to be wound at least every week, and although auto-rewinding mechanisms were fitted in later models they could never compete with the convenience of the more conventional Gents and Synchronome systems that became popular from the 1920s onwards, and subsequently fell out of use.

The Museum's Magneta clock was originally installed at the offices of the New River Company in Islington around 1910, and is one of the larger models made by the Magneta



Company, being an 'f' model capable of driving up to 100 units. There are very few surviving examples of this size known to still exist.

The clock has unfortunately not run for a number of years and requires some repairs and maintenance before it can run;

- The movement needs to be cleaned and oiled.
- There are issues with the escapement wheel, which is causing the movement to stick slightly at regular intervals and eventually stop, preventing the clock from running.
- There is a possible fault with the remontoir, a spring device inside the movement which acts like a clutch to smooth out the sudden operation of the magneto.
- The brass components and wooden case need some attention.
- The impulse clock movement mounted on the case, is sticking.

A stopped clock is always a sorry sight and we have always been keen to get this significant piece of equipment back into working order.

I am pleased to say that following some very generous donations we are now in a position to do this.

The first thing to do is to service the clock movement and repair the identified faults. This will involve taking it to pieces, cleaning everything, undertaking repairs to the escapement wheel and remontoir (if needed), putting everything back together, and oiling the relevant parts.

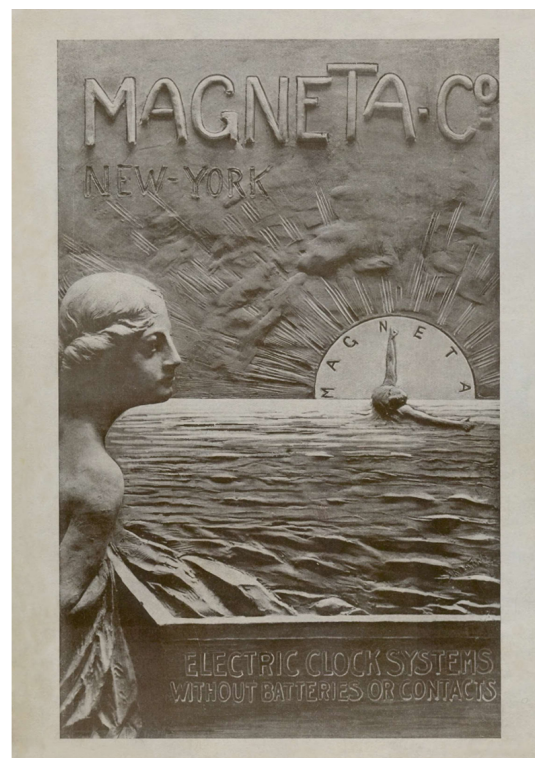
As this is a specialist piece of equipment we have engaged the services of Johan ten Hoeve, an electric clock conservator, to undertake this element of the work.

Whilst this is happening museum volunteers will attend to the brass elements and paintwork within the case, and service the impulse movements.

The overhaul of the master clock also provides an opportunity to connect up the spare Magneta impulse dials, located in the Museum's archive. This will demonstrate the system as it would have originally run, and with some additional interpretation and would explain to visitors why such systems were an important part in the story of London's water supply, and why accurate timekeeping remains such an important part of modern industry.

As they say, time is money!

Once the works are completed, we will be redisplaying the Magneta clock in the Electric House.



*Magneta Company sales brochure front page (1915)*

# *AIM Pilgrim Trust Collection Care Funding!*

Thanks to the AIM Pilgrim Trust Collection Care Funding, we have been able to purchase equipment and resources to support the care and cleaning of our collections, especially in the archive and library.

Over the coming months, we will be working with a paper conservator to work with our archive volunteers to clean and stabilise some of the more delicate volumes in the collection. Unfortunately whilst we do this, the archive will need to close to visitors to ensure that there is no cross-contamination from volumes with red rot to other, non-affected items.

We've also purchased some new environmental monitoring equipment so that we can measure the temperature and relative humidity around the museum, the diesel house and the old workshop. This will help us to identify any large fluctuations and plan the future care of the buildings and collection. This is important in areas such as the 1838 House, which suffers from severe condensation every winter and objects such as the war memorial (we still need to conserve this funding permitting) and the Magneta clock.

## Our Barn Community

### **Karen Adams, Our Barn Manager**

Pump & Grind Coffee Shop is a drop-off point for Our Barn's new digital inclusion project that aims to deliver 1,000 reconditioned and refurbished laptops to local residents in 2023. Devices can be dropped off any time that the cafe is open, currently Thursday through to Sunday, between 10am and 3.30pm, and every day during February half term.

We can take anything from windows XP onwards, any Apple devices, old printers and phones. We have a work experience project, taking out the old SSD and upgrading, fixing the broken keys, replacing the cracked screens and cleaning things up. They will be allocated a functioning device for no cost. This project has been funded by a Community Solutions grant from Hounslow Council. Further information: [digital@ourbarn.org.uk](mailto:digital@ourbarn.org.uk)

Our popular Digital Inclusion sessions, term-

time on Friday afternoons will also continue. People can drop by with their tech issues and find a willing and knowledgeable volunteer ready to help with small issues and signpost to the other sources of help available.





# A very warm welcome

A very warm welcome to our new volunteers.

- Toby Boulton, Archive and Collections Assistant
- Kahreem Zeeshan, Site and Maintenance Assistant
- Ursula Fenton, Site and Maintenance Assistant

## Volunteering Update

### Jade Husseyin, Volunteer Coordinator

After a very successful volunteer drive at Hounslow volunteer fair, we welcomed five potential volunteers to interviews in the new year and some new visitors.

We have begun a working relationship with Ealing Mencap, and currently have one volunteer is working with you and should have groups in the new year.

I have been communicating with many local schools and colleges, students are hoping to come in and interview over the next few months.

Spark charity is enthusiastic about our garden and are hoping to attend for mass weeding events over the coming months, also a Worley graduate group are organising to clean the site and ask our engineers some questions. I have been taking part in the START NOW

Hounslow project, which entails a six-week volunteering programme.

January has been busy as we get ready for our many work experience students and interviews are underway.

We are currently looking for grounds maintenance volunteers, as the grounds and gardens need much care and attention ready for the warm weather.

If you would like to help with caring for and documenting our collections, then please do get in touch with either Melissa or Jade. We're looking for support to help look after the collection through conservation cleaning, which includes dusting our collections, undertaking condition reports and metal polishing.

London Museum of Water & Steam

Easter Holidays  
**bubbles!**

Saturday 1 to Sunday 16 April  
10am to 4pm

Science Show  
•  
Crafts  
•  
Hands-on Fun  
•  
Storytelling

KIDS GO FREE

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

# Update from the Co-Chairs

**Tom O'Leary and Heather Thomas, Interim Co-Chairs of Trustees**

January has been a busy time for us as we work on recruiting a new Director for the Museum. At the time of writing we have finished shortlisting for the role and interviews are being arranged. It is clearly a time of transition for the Museum, with both our Chair, Claire Grist Taylor, and then Museum Director, Liz Power, departing, coupled with the cost of living crisis. The inflationary pressure, including the steep rise in utility bills is a challenge for us, along with every other independent museum.

We are looking forward to working with the incoming Director to agree a strategy to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the museum. Once a new Director is in place we intend to start the recruitment for a new Chair of Trustees, so watch this space for further announcements in due course.



*Tom O'Leary, Interim Co-Chair*



*Heather Thomas, Interim Co-Chair*

## *Donations of items for collection care:*

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. Not only do they help to protect the objects from dirt, but they're also great for spotting anything that might drop off and are easy to wash.
- old dining table protector or cotton mattress protector that you no need for anymore? These would be wonderful to put under the cotton sheets to provide some padding for the objects whilst we work on them.



# Update on the Lancashire Boiler

**Melissa Maynard**

With thanks to a generous donation from a member, we have been able to take the first steps towards getting back into steam.

This February, the old insulation has been removed and disposed of to expose the entirety of the Lancashire Boiler for the first time since it was installed in the mid-1970s.

The Non-Destructive Testing of the rivets has been booked and once we receive the results we will be able to plan the next steps in more detail. We will keep you all informed as we go along.



We will be fundraising to create a designated fund for the ongoing maintenance & repair of the Museum engines and their associated plant.



## Current projects

We're currently working on a number of projects:

- Maintenance and repair of engines and their respective plant
- The Diesel House and repair of the air compressor
- Maintenance and conservation of collection items
- Maintenance and repair of the historic buildings (e.g. repainting the café seating area)

If you would like to find out more or donate towards any of this work then please do get in touch. Or visit our website <https://lms.digitickets.co.uk/category/1776>

# *New Sustainable Steam visits for schools*

**Emma Canterbury, Engagement Coordinator (Learning and Families)**

In January 2022, the Museum, along with our partners Worley Engineering and Skelly and Couch, embarked on a Hackathon event to kick off the Museum's Sustainable Steam project. Hackathons are normally used to tackle a digital challenge, but this event tackled a different one now facing the Museum: how can the London Museum of Water & Steam reduce its carbon footprint to zero over the next 30 years.

Since that day, the Museum has continued to educate itself about the climate emergency and explore our journey to carbon-net zero. We have addressed our governance and introduced a new steering group made up of trustees, staff, volunteers and partners. Our core staff completed carbon literacy training and are now certified carbon literate. We hope to roll this training out further to our volunteers, freelancers, and new staff to become a fully carbon literate organisation.

Now, as we move into 2023, we're able to take some of our visitors on that journey of education and exploration with us. We are introducing two brand new Sustainable Steam learning programmes for schools, one for Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to Year 6) pupils and a second for Key Stage 3 (Year 7 to Year 9) students. The new programmes focus on sustainability and climate science as well as the past, present, and future role the Kew Bridge Waterworks and Museum plays in climate change.

The new learning programmes include an age and curriculum appropriate guided exploration of the Museum. Students and teachers will discover the site's almost 200 year legacy of

of water supply and changing energy sources.

For Key Stage 2 pupils, this is followed by a workshop exploring our carbon footprints, whilst Key Stage 3 students will take part in their own hackathon to explore the challenges facing the Museum today. Before the end of the day, all the students will have the opportunity to think about their individual responsibility to combating climate change and make green pledges to take back to their schools and homes. During their visit, students and teachers will also have the time to enjoy the Waterworks Gallery and Splash Zone.

We couldn't have researched and developed these new programmes without the support of our partners. We are therefore incredibly grateful to the following individuals and groups:

- Margaret Langgin, Student Intern from South Western University Texas, for supporting with the initial research and planning during her placement at the Museum.
- The teachers and pupils from our Learning Partnership Schools, Reach Academy Feltham and Green Dragon Primary School, for supporting with the development of the new activities.
- Our Sustainable Steam partner, Worley Engineering, for both providing technical knowledge and support in developing the resources and for financially supporting the overall project to develop the new workshops.
- Mark Canterbury, Electrical Design Manager with Ylem Energy, for providing technical knowledge and support in developing the resources.



# Upcoming events



## GUIDED TOURS

Join us on the second Sunday of each month at 2pm, for a fascinating tour of the former Kew Bridge Waterworks with one of our knowledgeable volunteer tour guides.

Tours will explore one of three themes: 'The History of water in London', 'Steam and technology' and 'The changing power of water'.

## EASTER HOLIDAYS

**April 1 to April 16**

What do you get when you mix soap and water? Bubbles!

Join us this Easter holiday for some bubble-tastic fun! We're open every day from Saturday 1 to Sunday 16 April. There'll be crafts, hands-on activities and our popular Wet and Bubbly Science Show!



For a full list of upcoming events, please visit:

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



@waterandsteam



londonmuseumofwaterandsteam