



CARA Newsletter

New Year 2025

Canbury And Riverside Association



Many of you will know who this is, it's **Elliot Newton** who, as Kingston Council's Conservation & Biodiversity Officer, has introduced many of us to the hidden inhabitants of Canbury Gardens, such as ~'BAT walks at twilight.' Sadly, he will be leaving the council to become the Rewilding Director at the **Citizen Zoo**, ensuring the development of the ecology and biodiversity, of the whole area, so we hope we will see him occasionally. So, thank you Elliot, for all your input into the improvement of our local environment.

There is hardly a green space or pool of water in the Borough that **Elliot** hasn't enhanced or developed. He has taken folk on nature and heritage walks and showed locals how to preserve and develop their ponds, nature reserves, wildlife and insects.



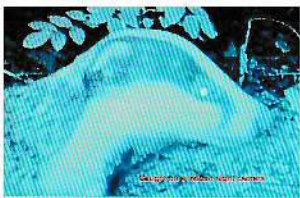
This February, he introduced six fruit trees in the wild life area of Canbury Gardens and showed us how to plant and care for them. In two years, anyone passing can pick a couple of apples or pears, to eat or take home.

(CARA & one of our members gifted four of the trees)



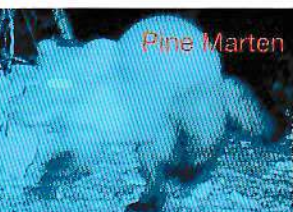
No jokes about "How many women does it take to plant a tree?"

It takes a lot of digging!!



Above: Badger in Canbury Gds caught on Elliot's after dark cameras.

Below: (endangered animal) The first **Pine Marten**, seen in a 100years. Spotted in SW London



Wildlife night cameras reveal badgers in Canbury Gardens

One January evening at the pavilion we saw amazing night-time images of badgers in Canbury Gardens. **Elliot Newton** presented the initial findings from the Zoological Society of London's wildlife night cameras installed in Canbury Gardens last year, with support from Kingston council and Friends of Canbury Gardens. The analysis of camera sightings shows that Canbury Gardens and the riverside towards Richmond are hotspots for badgers. Elliot described badgers' setts (their dens) and how they live. They have a mixed diet, but half of what they eat is earthworms (which explains why there were no images of hedgehogs in the area: the much larger badgers easily out-compete hedgehogs for their favourite food).

Eliot showed a badger skull (see picture above) which is much smaller than you expect, without the thick covering of muscle and hair. They have an exceptionally strong bite which they use to crack nuts.

It was less pleasing to see the high density of foxes in our area - seven times as many foxes as you should have in the wild, which upsets our biodiversity as they will eat birds and mice. Careless disposal of food waste and inappropriate feeding are the cause. **Please feed the birds, but DON'T feed the foxes.**

NORTHERN GATEWAY INTO KINGSTON COULD BE REDUCED TO ONE LANE.

Growing pressure on the Council gets some results.

Pressure to rethink and speed up traffic at the entrance to Kingston from North of the Town, (coming from Ham/Richmond) has rapidly increased. Residents of the CARA area together with many other people living in N. Kingston are tired of the lack of joined up thinking resulting in a decade of chaos for everyone approaching the town centre from the North. Over 10 years ago the Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) published a Planning Brief to provide new homes, create green spaces and at the same time an impressive new northern entrance. The authors boldly used the word "rejuvenate".

At the same time, fine words were being used like "heritage" development of the then recently closed Gala Bingo on the old Regal cinema site. That building is now a dilapidating shell. Those of us who have seen inside, will confirm that not only is the place a wreck (*having for some time been an illegal cannabis farm!*) and also the superstructure is deteriorating. Outside it is a graffiti site, just like other nearby hoardings.

Google Maps, somewhat altered plan of development area.



We now have Kingston Gate Properties Ltd, applying to develop **part** of the site in the RBK Brief (*see plan*). The Brief called for the applicant to include in the plans **Phase 2**, (shop redevelopment) Ignoring this, they squeeze into the Brief's **Phase 1**, (carpark & Kingsgate Rd) green space and 3 blocks of 260 odd flats and they have just reluctantly agreed to make 10% of them "affordable". This plan straddles Kingsgate Rd which will create further disruption and traffic congestion and, we think, increased traffic danger to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike. The re-routed Kingsgate Rd, will cause the cycle lane to be lost and the third lane of traffic that currently heads into town, will head north instead, up Richmond Rd, squeezing traffic going to Kingston, into just two lanes.

Ten years on, the "locals" are getting restless, but our pressure is working.

The CARA committee has raised several objections to the lack of joined up thinking through the Council Planning Committee, the local Council Neighbourhood Committee and the Council's Chief Executive. Our pressure and that of the North Kingston Forum, Queenshurst residents and many individual residents, has worked.

Local Councillors support most of our objections and at least one has supported a complete rethink of the **Gala Bingo site**, (the original Regal Cinema) by removing it from the Heritage list, as the original interior can no longer be salvaged.

Therefore, RBK has postponed Kingston Gate Ltd's planning application for at least 3 months.

This allows for grown-up thinking time to reconsider a truly rejuvenated, attractive and traffic safe plan for Kingston's important Northern Gateway that local residents can support and for which the town can be proud.

Not a member?:- To get the rapidly developing news please join CARA and send your email address to get the updates in our **monthly CARA eNews**. Send to: www.carakingston.org/membership (£10 pa)

PAUL, PULLS STUFF LIKE THIS OUT OF THE THAMES EVERYDAY!



Paul, the expert salvager.



And this is just half way through his morning's haul!!

At least in Kingston, behind John Lewis, he hasn't come across any firearms, crossbows, unexploded bombs or other munitions, as he has in many other places along the Thames

WHY? WHY? WHY?

If there is anyone in the household that has received this newsletter, that has ever thrown a council owned piece of property, or someone else's bike or even a colourful bear, into the river, **please tell us...**

...'WHY?'

It would be so interesting to know the motivation behind picking up a random object and throwing it in the river!

Was it just for a laugh? You had a few beers? Was it fun? Was it your idea? Did you feel a bit guilty? Did you think about the owner?

Please send your story to the editor (see back page)

Any responses will be printed in the next newsletter anonymously.



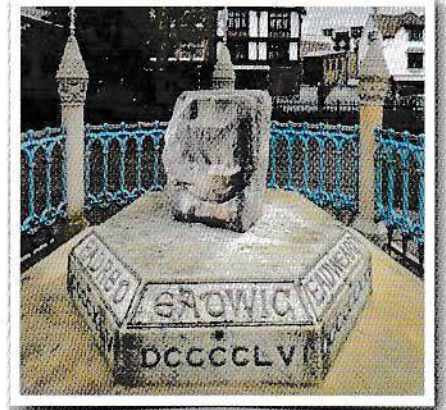
Kingston celebrates the crowning of the first King of all England



King Athelstan presenting a book to Saint Cuthbert

1,100 years ago, in 925, King Athelstan was crowned in Kingston. Athelstan became the first king of the whole of England.

Through 2025 Kingston council is arranging celebrations to mark the event, beginning on Saturday 3rd May in Kingston Market Place. We are fortunate that some of these festivities will be in our area.



The Coronation Stone, Kingston upon Thames

EVENTS

For two days over the weekend of 26th and 27th July 2025 there will be a **Saxon Fayre in Canbury Gardens.**

Visitors will be able to experience a wide variety of aspects of daily life in a Saxon encampment. Entertainment highlights, when **Warriors will re-enact battles!**

There will be many related events during the year, including in September a colourful '**River Cultures Festival**'

The grand Charity Event in Canbury Gardens on Sunday 20th July **Dragon Boat Race**

We have great new **Persian Coffee Shop** at 135 Richmond Rd called **Komoo**
Offering freshly baked baguettes with delicious fillings at 10% off with this card >>



The Boaters Inn give 20% off food on Monday to Thursday with a **CARA** card.

The Queen's Head offer members 10% off your final bill, every day!

Doubletree Hilton, Hawkers Brasserie & Bar offer 15% discount of both meals and Accommodation.

So it's certainly worth being a CARA member at a mere £10 pa!

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Alternatively, at www.carakingston.org to get to the same place.