



FIRE !!!



Last Sunday (16th March) we witnessed on our doorstep the largest fire in Kingston for a long time. Much has been reported on the news and in social media. The rumours that it was an insurance scam are unfounded. The most likely cause was that some person/s got inside, which is really not difficult, and started a fire either to keep warm or for fun. A witness told us that the police had declared it a "potential crime scene" whilst they searched through the destruction for evidence of its origin. An LFB structural engineer is said to have **condemned the building as an unsafe structure**. What this means for its future remains to be seen.

If you would like to see the condition of the building's interior prior to the fire, follow this link to the [UK Urban Exploring Forums](#) website, then scroll down to the **Explore** section.

Final chance to have your say on Canbury Gardens cycle route



The trial period of moving the cycle route through Canbury Gardens is coming to its end. Many have written in with their comments. Initially quite a number of residents were concerned about speeding cyclists and safety. However over the year the pejoratively termed “lycra brigade” have chosen to use Lower Ham Rd and Skerne Walk rather than the gardens. But the council still welcomes your comments before the trial ends and before they decide the best solution to freeing up the tow path.

[Click here](#) to share your views on the **Canbury Gardens shared pedestrian and cycle path trial** before the **survey closes on 9th May 2025**.

All that chatter

You may have heard in recent days the cacophonous chattering of some of our feathered friends and wondered what and why this was occurring. The ‘what’ is occurring are parakeets that live in Canbury Gardens and in other green areas around Kingston including Bushy Park and Richmond Park. And of course some people are full of joy when they hear these sounds... others less so.

More specifically our noisy neighbours are called **Ring-Necked Parakeets** or sometimes **Rose-Ringed Parakeets** or even more specifically **Psittacula krameria** (a good trivia night question). These birds have a brilliant green body and usually a red bill. Their average length is around 40 centimetres. Males can be identified by their black and pink neck.



This species of parakeet originates from Southern Asia and are well known in Australia. How they came to live in London is a topic of several urban myths. Something that is agreed is they were first observed in London in the late 1960's. One myth says they were brought to London as pets and then accidentally released. Another myth is, they came here as specimens and again accidentally released. A wilder, and refuted myth, is they were used in the filming of the movie 'The African Queen' and released on purpose. We may never know the exact cause for the population that now exists but what we do know is the original population was less than 10 birds and now there are tens of thousands. Ringed-Neck Parakeets are mainly found in London and more widely in the south east of England extending into Surrey. Having said that, other populations have been introduced separately as far north as Glasgow. They are a friendly bird and often interact positively with humans. That is the 'what' of the noise, the 'why' of the noise is... it is their breeding season currently – I will leave the rest up to your imagination.



With thanks for the article to CARA Member [Dr. Peter Higgins](#) Veterinary Surgeon.

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