



CARA Newsletter

Summer 2025

Canbury And Riverside Association

KING ATHELSTAN 925-939CE WAS THE FIRST KING OF ALL THE ANGLO SAXONS. AFTER A MAJOR BATTLE AGAINST THE ASSEMBLED NORTHERN KINGS AND THE VIKING STRONGHOLD OF NORTHUMBRIA, IN 927, HE CONSOLIDATED THE ANGLO SAXON KINGDOMS AND MADE PEACE ACROSS THE LAND. HE ADOPTED THE TITLE:- KING OF THE ENGLISH

King Athelstan, the grandson of Alfred the Great, probably chose Kingston upon Thames for his coronation as it was a strategic location between Wessex and Mercia and was already a Royal Borough. The Coronation Stone (which can be seen today in the grounds of the Guildhall, next to the police station) is made of sarsen stone, like Stonehenge. Athelstan brought peace across the land for 14 years, before he died at the age of 45 with a suspected inherited stomach illness.

Kingston Council organised the Saxon Fayre to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the coronation with our own 'King Athelstan', who was duly crowned with all pomp and ceremony, after parading over Kingston Bridge and alongside the Thames into **Canbury Gardens**.



SADLY, YOU CAN'T HEAR THE AUTHENTIC MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT.



This Saxon healer had her stall laid out with all sorts of medicinal herbs and spices, many of which are the basis for our current medications. A Saxon soldier has removed his metal helmet and is having a rest at the back.



There were lots of interesting period stalls and activities.

THERE WAS A GREAT EXHIBITION OF FALCONRY.



A Falconer put the birds through their paces. They flew off and returned to command. The birds serve a number of environmental roles in the countryside, as they did in the past.



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SWANNING AROUND IN THE GARDENS

By Dr Peter Higgins

As you know, we are lucky to live in a locale which is one of the most idyllic in the world. One of the glorious aspects of Canbury Gardens that we should never, ever, take for granted, are the swans that live here. These magnificent birds are unique and a gift to humanity.

A few weeks ago, locals were concerned about the length of time a particular swan was sitting on her eggs. So let's look at the facts, swans usually only lay eggs once a year. The conditions have to be right for them and they instinctively know when food availability, shelter, and weather conditions meet their requirements. It needs to be a quiet part of the river, away from possible predators, sadly not always achievable with foxes on the lookout for a tasty snack. As creatures of habit, once the perfect spot is located, they tend to return there, every year. Swans lead the way in homemaking and care for offspring as they share all the labour, from building the nest, nurturing the eggs, caring for the babies and faithfully staying together for life. The male 'cob' scouts for the perfect spot and lays the groundwork with sticks, twigs and aquatic plants, and sadly, sometimes including plastic waste, then the 'pen' weaves the materials into a sturdy cradle.

The incubation period is the thing that brings concern to caring onlookers but knowing the facts helps with worrying unnecessarily, as depending on conditions it can be anytime between 33 & 46 days. So in future we just count the days and wait before getting anxious.



The length of time in the egg doesn't make any difference to the development of the fluffy grey cygnet. The cygnets, once born, stay with their parents, learning by observation and mimicking. Then like the 'Ugly Duckling', they grow into magnificent majestic birds just like Mum and Dad.

Unfortunately, the other swan and her partner, we locals were watching for so long, weren't successful with their eggs. They went over the 46 days and eventually the Swan Sanctuary took away the eggs and nest. They also, took the bereft parents into care.

THE DRAGONS ARE BACK ON THE THAMES



And the winner is, by only 1.12 seconds '**Usain Boat**'

The Dragon Boat Race was back on July 20th with over 50 teams raising funds for local charities. There were great craft stalls, food and drink tents, community stalls and lots of fun, innovative things for the kids to do.

Creating the Full Festival Vibe.

The Boater's Inn and Canbury Secret Café were rushed off their feet.

So no-one went short of a pint or an ice-cream.

Thanks to all those involved in the organisation of the event, as well as all those stalwart community minded people who 'put things back together again'!

A Really Great Community Event.

Best dressed crew won by The Fern Hill School Dads
'Fast and Fernious'





When Stuart acquired '**Canbury Secret**', the very popular cafe near the bandstand, in **Canbury Gardens**, it was a radical change of lifestyle. Golf has been his life's passion since he was a young man and as a Professional Golfer he played for England.

When the previous owner of Canbury Secret, Filippo, moved on to other things in March 2024, he wanted to pass it on to someone who would look after it and make it a success. Stuart and his team have certainly done that, with a new fresh sandwich menu, delicious coffee and fabulous freshly made gelato. Stuart's aim is to create a welcoming spot for everyone to enjoy.



However, as a professional golfer, he hasn't left golf behind, as he still teaches at Sandown Golf Centre in Esher and even though his 2 boys are football mad now, he has high hopes of leaving the team in charge and taking them off for golfing away days.

THE RIVER AND RIVERSIDE

Plenty of good news and a bit of bad!

A Thames Landscape Strategy Design

for a section of the ugly concrete riverbank that will be made more natural. The strip will be lowered, allowing the river to rise above it making a base for reeds and other suitable plants to create a stable, more natural riverbank.



The Environment Agency's

agreement is awaited which will be followed by the formal period of notice of the changes.

It will happen, they've already been active on the river bank nearby, but don't hold your breath while we wait!

THE HALF MILE TREE

We mourned the loss of the Half Mile Tree in the Spring Newsletter but now we can report that the Council has allocated a generous amount from Neighbourhood 'CIL' funds for a 'semi-mature' replacement tree and new bench.

We hope work will begin on this in the autumn - a good time for tree planting.

To celebrate the new tree, Thames Landscape Strategy plan to update and 'refresh' their faded information board on the riverbank nearby.



Info board to be Updated and Refreshed!

GREEN FLAG AWARD

Congratulations on another **GREEN FLAG AWARD** to Trevor Willis & Len Cowking and all the Friends of Canbury Gardens' and volunteers.

Seen here are members of RBK's Leadership Team, creating a new BUG HOTEL, under Andy Hallet's guidance



AND NOW THE BAD NEWS:-

The consultation by Thames Water on the Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) scheme has ended. If it goes ahead the TDRA will do irreparable harm to the local ecology with discharges of warm, partially treated sewage into the river. This is a very poor and expensive scheme. For information about the problems with the TDRA and better alternatives go to:-

Solar's website -saveourlandsandrivers.org.uk/ we hope the Secretary of State recognises the defects of this scheme and rejects it.

Kingston Giving

Kingston Giving is the borough's 'Place Based Giving Scheme'.

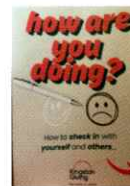
Kingston has a diverse and vibrant population, seen outwardly as an affluent area. However, shockingly, statistics show 20% of Kingston's children, 5,733, are living in deep poverty and 77% of these are from working households.

As one aspect of their work **over the past 4 years**, Kingston Giving have awarded £107,000 in grants, benefiting 57 organisations and over 50,000 residents.

Visit www.kingstongiving.org.uk for more information.

At the Dragon Boat Fair they had a stall which highlighted another aspect of their work. Their **latest booklets on mental health**, packed with support for all ages, **they have a special edition for youngsters & teens**. The booklets, accessible on the website, have a handy check list to note your current feelings and moods, as well as online help and phone numbers to call for help information.

Sometimes it's difficult to find help for sensitive issues. This would be a good place to start looking.



We are pleased to invite all CARA members, families and friends to our annual get-together

CARA Late Summer Barbecue

Sunday 14th September 2025 from 1pm

Entrance beside King's Walk **Kingston Riverside Tennis Club**, Lower Ham Road, KT2 5AJ

Meat provided by Bevan's Butchers, with Vegetarian options and Desserts.

Email your booking details to: cara.kingston@gmail.com including name & address.

Number of Adult tickets:- Number of **meat** - number of **vegetarian**-at £10 each

Number of Child tickets:- Number of **meat** - number of **vegetarian**, at £6 each

To confirm your booking pay by bank transfer to :-

Canbury and Riverside Association (CARA) Sort Code 20-46-73 Acc no 13558584

Please reference: BBQ Your house/flat number and street/block name

CARA AGM 2025

Thursday 16th October 6.30pm for 7pm start.

At Canbury Pavilion Behind the Tennis Courts

Everyone welcome to join us for a drink and an enjoyable evening.

The post AGM speaker to be announced

CARA Committee

Charles Roscorla (Membership Sec; Treasurer; Heritage) 12 Ulster Court, charos100@hotmail.co.uk

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