

Chiswick Pier Trust newsletter - Late March 2017

Hello!

An early welcome to April, the month that must rate as one of the most exciting of the year, as we welcome the annual Boat Race to our stretch of the Thames. Read on to find out about a couple of very special boats that will be joining the race this year, as well as the important timings of the day. Easter is not too far away and if you have children or grandchildren who like to have fun on the river, we are hosting a family workshop to educate the children about the Thames as they have fun spotting birds and digging for crabs and eels on the foreshore. In the meantime, we close off our season of talks next week with a special lecture on the Thames' most regal of residents - Swans.

There is truly something for everyone this month at Chiswick Pier – so, whether you are cheering, discovering or river-dipping, we look forward to seeing you.

STOP PRESS! There are still a few places available on our Mothering Sunday cruise, leaving Chiswick Pier this Sunday at 3pm. Why not treat Mum to a gentle cruise on the Thames to Westminster Pier and back? Cake boxes are also available to enjoy on board – please pre-order when



Here at the Pier

Tuesday 28th March, 7.30pm

[Swans: Royal Birds of the Thames](#)

Sunday 2nd April from 2pm

[Oxford-Cambridge Boat Races](#)

Tuesday 11th April, 10am

[River Thames Discovery Family Workshop](#)

booking your tickets. Booking line: Tel 07594 596729



Upcoming events

Swans – Royal Residents of the Thames

Kay Webb, Chair of Swan Lifeline in Eton is joining us on Tuesday 28th March to talk about swans from all over the world, and those much nearer to home in West London with their special Royal connections. The talk will include details of the annual Swan Upping ceremony on the Thames when mute swans are rounded up, caught, ringed, and then released. Kay will also include references to swans in classical literature and explain the meaning of the phrase 'swan song'.

Despite their beauty and mythical status, these birds are at risk, and their numbers are decreasing which is why Swan Lifeline was set up to save them. Come and hear about these fascinating creatures and the valuable work Kay and her team are doing to keep them safe on the Thames.

Doors open at 7pm and the talk will start at 7.30pm. Tickets are £3, or free to members of the Chiswick Pier Trust. Refreshments will be available to purchase.

"Gloriana" to Make Guest Appearance at Boat Race!

The Cambridge and Oxford Boat Race takes place on Sunday 2nd April and Chiswick Pier is one of the best spots on the Thames to view all the action. Not only that, we will be showing the race on our TV screen inside Pier House so you can watch the start and the finish of the race too! There will be live music, as well as a BBQ and a Fullers Bar. The fun kicks off with Pier House opening up for business at 2pm, with the first race starting at 4:35pm. Prior to that, the Queen's Rowbarge, "Gloriana" will start off the event, departing from Putney at 3:00pm, and passing Chiswick Pier around 3:15pm. In addition, there are some famous faces joining the Boat Race this year. Two teams of celebrities are also racing against each other, to raise funds for Cancer Research UK. The star rowers include Strictly Come Dancing Champions Ore Odube and Harry Judd, Olympians Helen Gover and Rebecca Adlington, and TV presenters Gethin Jones and Vernon Kay. James Cracknell and Steve Redgrave are the coaches in charge of the two motley crews! We believe that the celebrity race will be pre-recorded and broadcast at some point during the BBC coverage.

The official timings for the day are as follows:

- 14:00 Pier House opens – BBQ, Fullers Bar, teas and coffees, live music.
- 15:00 Gloriana leaves Putney and will arrive at Chiswick Pier around 15 minutes later
- 15:58 BBC live coverage starts (the programme will have started earlier and will include footage of pre-recorded celebrity boat race)
- 16:35 Women's Race
- 16:50 Women's Reserves Race
- 17:05 Men's Reserves Race
- 17:35 Men's Race
- 18:00 Anticipated finish of racing

Get the Kids Digging, Dipping and Spotting on the Thames this Easter!

We are joining forces with our friends at the Thames Explorer Trust this Easter to offer families the chance to find out more about the tidal Thames and the amazing array of flora and fauna it supports. It's a great opportunity to get youngsters in contact with nature over the half-term holiday, and to get them thinking about their local environment.

The workshop entitled 'River Thames Discovery' takes place at Pier House on Tuesday 11th April and will run from 10:00am till 12:00pm. The morning will begin with a bird walk along the Thames Path from Chiswick Pier to Chiswick Eyot. At Chiswick Eyot there is the chance to explore the foreshore with nets to try and catch and identify river creatures such as crabs, shrimps, and eels. The workshop is suitable for those aged 5 and over, and all children must be accompanied by an adult. To book your place please call us on Tel: 020 8742 2713. Tickets

are £8 for adults and £5 for children. Don't forget to bring your waterproofs and wellies on the day – getting muddy is all part of the fun!



Past event at CPT

10,000 Years of Brentford Unveiled by Guest Speaker Jon Cotton

On the last Tuesday of February, we had the pleasure of welcoming Jon Cotton to Pier House. Jon is a former senior curator at the Museum of London and is a particular expert on all things relating to West London. John got the inspiration for his talk from a book published in the 1960s by archaeologist Roy Canham, entitled '2,000 Years of Brentford'. John, however, decided to go a few better than Roy, and used the talk to take us even further back in time!

Jon set the scene by explaining the ability to time-travel within Brentford is all thanks to its unique position. The town is sited next to the River Brent and the Thames and it is this confluence that has drawn man to Brentford for thousands of years. Brentford has also gone through much development in recent years (indeed, this still continues), which has given archaeologists the chance to dig under its streets, supermarkets and car parks. Brentford is also the first point on the old Roman road out of London that meets the Thames. It was for this reason that Roy Canham started excavating in Brentford during the 1960s and was able to find the original Roman road. Jon showed us photographs taken upon its discovery, which showed that the road has been resurfaced several times during its lifetime. No Roman villas have ever been found in

Brentford (or anywhere in West London). Jon explained that Brentford during this time would have been a village of artisans, making goods to ship up the river to London, and would have resembled a shanty town.

Jon then took us further back in time and showed us a Neolithic pottery bowl which had been found under the site of Thomas Layton's house in Kew. Layton was himself a hoarder of artefacts and at the time of his death in 1911 his main residence and 31 sheds were full of objects he had collected over the years. His ambition was to create a British Museum on the Thames. One of the most exciting finds within Layton's hoard was the Kew Tankard, a communal drinking vessel dating back to the Iron Age.

After a whistle-stop back to the present day, which included Saxon fish traps and late Bronze-age swords, Jon concluded that Brentford did not deserve its maligned reputation. Jon revealed that even as far back as 1754 its high street was labelled the "worst public road in Europe" and some might say that not much has changed since then. But Jon, and many other archaeologists disagree and find Brentford to be one of the most fascinating parts of London... and the audience were left in total agreement!

Other news & events

First Tidal Thames App Launched

The Port of London Authority (PLA) has launched a free app to provide everyone with an interest in navigating on the Thames with easy access to the latest information on the tidal river. Download via the App Store for Apple devices and Google Play for Android devices. More info at <https://pla.co.uk/Media-Centre/PLA-Tidal-Thames-app>

Childrens Easter Egg Trail – 1st to 17th April – Kew Gardens

Follow a trail around the Gardens to receive a tasty reward! Open daily 10:30am till 4:00pm. More info at <http://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/moomin-adventures-easter-trail>

Tall Ships Regatta – 13th to 16th April – Greenwich

The Tall Ships will be anchored at two festival sites in Greenwich – at the Maritime Greenwich UNESCO World Heritage Site in the town centre, and the Royal Arsenal Riverside in Woolwich. More info at <https://www.pla.co.uk/Events/Tall-Ships-Regatta-2017>

The Tudor Pull – Sunday, 23rd April – The Thames: Hampton Court to the Tower of London

Annual event with much pageantry, where the Queen's Rowbarge 'Gloriana' is rowed by the Royal Boatmen from Hampton Court Palace to the Tower of London, accompanied by craft from the City Livery Companies. More info at <http://www.traditionalrowing.com/events/>

And finally...

Our wonderful talk from Jon Cotton on the subject of the history of Brentford threw up some interesting facts about famous former residents of this town, including that of a certain 'fairy tale' princess. We are, of course, talking about Pocahontas who came to London with her husband John Rolfe in 1616. The couple chose to live in Brentford as Pocahontas' health started to fail shortly after their arrival in London, and the air was considered to be cleaner in the 'country side' of West London. Pocahontas' home town in the USA was on the banks of the River James in the tidewater region of Virginia. One can guess that Brentford was also appealing given its unique location close to the river Brent and the tidal Thames, and would have provided her with some kind of reminder of 'home' . Indeed, Pocahontas was given a secret name at a young age, 'Matoaka', which translates as 'the bright stream between two hills'. A memorial plaque has just been erected in her honour in the grounds of Syon House, and reminds us what a rich and fascinating area we live in, all thanks to the mighty Thames.
