

## Chiswick Pier Trust newsletter - May 2017

### Hello!

What do you fancy doing this Spring? Enjoying nature and all her colours down by the Thames, with a camera in hand? How about a cruise on the longest day of the year? Or perhaps a family party on the pier? We have all of this coming up over the next few weeks at Chiswick Pier, and very much hope you can join us for at least one of these events. This is a fantastic time to get outside and enjoy the Thames and it's river-life - see you soon!



#### Upcoming Events

**Friday 19th May, 10am to 2pm**

[River-life on the Thames  
Photography Workshop](#)

**Wednesday 21st June, 7pm to  
10pm**

[Summer Solstice Jazz Cruise](#)

**Sunday 16th July**

[Party on the Pier](#)

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## Upcoming events

Want to take better photos? Join our workshop with expert tutor and naturalist Iain Green

If, like us, your camera has become a little dusty and unused over the winter months, then we have just the course coming up for you at Pier House! With the advent of spring and an abundance of river-life bursting into colour, now is a wonderful time to take a walk along the Thames and become reacquainted with your camera. Even more so if you've forgotten what exactly ALL those buttons and fancy settings do....

On Friday, 19 May we are hosting a half-day workshop with expert tutor and naturalist Iain Green of the award-winning 'Wildlife Wonder'. Iain hosts photography workshops at wildlife hotspots all over the UK, and is joining us at the Pier to share his expertise and tips for capturing the flora and fauna of the Thames. The session will run from 10:00am till 2:00pm and will start with an introductory session at Pier House, before heading outside for a walk along the Thames. The course is suitable for beginner and intermediate photographers, and Iain's tuition will be tailored to suit. Due to small course numbers there will be plenty of time for one-to-one tuition too.

The cost of the workshop is £40 per person, and you can book by calling us on Tel: 020 8742 2713. Only a few places remain at the time of going to press!

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Celebrate the Longest Day of the Year with our Annual Jazz Cruise on the Thames

Our ever-popular Jazz Cruise is back, offering the chance to celebrate the wonder of midsummer on the water! This year the cruise takes place on the Summer Solstice on Wednesday, 21 June. Where better to see the sun dip below the horizon on the longest day of the year than on the water, with the bridges and buildings along the Thames as a fabulous back-drop?

Our boat will depart Chiswick Pier at 7pm and cruise past the bright lights of central London to Tower Bridge. On board, we will be serving a two-course cold supper plus there will be a bar to purchase beverages and further refreshments. There will be live jazz too of course, courtesy of the ever-popular band 'Anacousis'. We hope to disembark at Chiswick Pier around 10:00pm.

This is one of our most popular events of the year so please do book quickly to avoid disappointment. Tickets are just £40 each and can be booked on Tel: 020 8742 2713 or Mobile: 07594 596729.



## Past events

Swans – Royal Birds of the Thames

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Kay Webb, chair of Swan Lifeline in Eton, joined us at Pier House in March, to tell us about the work of the charity and give us an insight into the lives of swans all over the world. Kay explained how there are several different species of swans, with only the Mute Swan being indigenous to the UK, having possibly been brought back to the UK by Richard the Lionheart in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The Bewick Swan is native to the Arctic, but is a winter visitor to the UK. The Black Swan, often seen on lakes, is a smaller, but more aggressive variety. The Black Necked and Coscaroba species are from South America and the Trumpeter and Tundra from North America.

We also learnt that Abbotsbury in Dorset has the only managed flock of swans in the UK, with all others belonging to the Queen. Every year in July the ceremony of 'Swan Upping' takes place. Boats from the Worshipful Company of Vintners and the Worshipful Company of Dyers leave Sunbury on Thames, on the Monday and go upstream to arrive at Abingdon on the Friday. Along the way, they count every family of swans they come across – as opposed to 'flocks'. The Vintners and Dyers lay claim to about one third each with the remainder going to the Queen.

Kay shared some photos of injured swans, and explained that while some were as a result of fox attacks, most injuries are the result of human activity such as fishing hooks and nets, and some even by intentional acts of vandalism. However, we were encouraged to learn that the population is now increasing since the banning of lead weights in fishing.

Contrary to common belief, swans are very rarely aggressive unless they have cygnets. It is the males who choose the nest site, and the female who does the building and stays on the nest - hardly eating - for the full 35 days of incubation. The parents do not feed the cygnets, but stir up the water for them to loosen the weeds that they eat. A favourite food is grass cuttings, but bread, particularly white, is not good for swans, and mouldy bread is lethal. In 12 weeks the cygnets are fully grown, but do not mate until they are mature at three years old. Although some mate for life, not all the males are so faithful, with at least one cob known to have two families in the same season!

#### Other News and Events

Macmillan Plant Fair – Saturday, 6 May – 70 Grove Park Road, Chiswick W4 3QA  
On Saturday May 6th from 10am to 2pm at 70 Grove Park Road, W4 3 QA, there is a Macmillan Plant Fair, plus cakes, stalls and refreshments. Profits will fund a Macmillan nurse at Imperial and Charing Cross Hospitals.

Reduced Price Course: Alexander Technique & Running – 9 and 11 May – Pier House, Chiswick Pier

'Guinea pigs' are required to take part in an "Alexander Technique and Running" instructors

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course, taking part at Chiswick Pier, and hosted by local practitioner Elizabeth Dodgson. You will need to be available on either Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 11-12.30 or Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May, 10.30-12.30. The training will be by fully qualified Alexander Technique teachers with input and supervision from two experienced Alexander Technique/Running instructors. On the Tuesday participants will get input 1-1 from one trainee. On the Thursday, the trainees are learning to run a group training course and will take it in turn to give input to a group of 'Guinea pig' students. The cost to take part is just £10 and is available for all levels of runner. No previous experience of Alexander Technique is preferred. If you would like to register your interest or find out more, please contact Elizabeth Dodgson on Tel: 02089949527 or Email: [Elizabeth@ATteacher.co.uk](mailto:Elizabeth@ATteacher.co.uk)

Green Days Fete and Craft Fair – 10 to 11 June – Bedford Park, Chiswick  
Traditional summer fete with funfair, craft stalls, food and drink, plus live music. More info at: <http://www.bedfordparkfestival.org>

Marlow Town Regatta and Festival – 10 to 11 June – Marlow, Bucks  
A traditional rowing **Regatta on the Thames with a 'family day' of Dragon Boat** racing. More info at [www.marlowdragonboats.co.uk](http://www.marlowdragonboats.co.uk)

## And finally.....

We would like to thank all those who have attended our series of talks over the Autumn and Winter months here at Pier House. We have enjoyed a fantastic array of speakers covering topics as diverse as landscaper Capability Brown, the history of the Boat Race, and the treasures that lie beneath the streets of Brentford. During the series of talks we learned that Georgian artist Johann Zoffany may have practiced cannibalism, Brentford High Street was labelled the 'worst public road in Europe' as far back as 1754, and that Barnes is the home of modern football. We are now busy pulling together the programme for our next season which will return later this year on Tuesday, 26 September with a talk that will particularly appeal to all you beer-lovers out there. Mark the date in your diary now... we look forward to seeing you there!

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