



THE LINK



ISSUE 62

Vicar: Rev. Peter Hart Parish Office: 8332 1324

March 2019

Inside this issue:

THE FALLEN PEAR TREE

Editorial	2
Services and Contacts	
Letter from the Vicar	3
<i>Wind in the Willows</i> — review	4
<i>Wind in the Willows</i> — review (contd.)	5
Avenue Club	7
"In the Footsteps of the Holy Family"	8
Greenpark School, Lusaka	9
Kew for You	10
Diary of Events	11
Barn Events	
St. Luke's Events	13
Book review: <i>Ulendo</i>	15



On Sunday March 10th, whilst everyone was in church, this ancient pear tree, in full blossom, decided that it could no longer stand up to the buffeting of the wind. It luckily missed the church, apart from removing a couple of tiles from the corner of the roof, but partly blocked the entrance — the lower picture was taken after the service, when the entrance had been cleared to allow everyone out safely.

This minor miracle is referred to by the Vicar in his Letter on page 3

Visit our websites:
www.stlukeskew.org.uk
www.barnchurchkew.uk

Hello from *The Link* team

There is a lovely review of “*Wind in the Willows*”, to which we have given the two pages it deserves, covering every member of the cast. Please keep supporting our advertisers — most of them have been faithful supporters of ours for years!

Link 63 will be published on 16th June. All copy to the editor by email — including photographs — by 26th May latest, please.

Editor: Charlie Grace: 8876 8853 c.grace1639@gmail.com

Barn news: Anna Pannett: anna_gane1@yahoo.co.uk

St. Luke's news: Louise Frankiss: 8274 9703

Advertising: Hilary Sims: hilary@sp-direct.co.uk

Profiles: Harriet Grace: harriet.grace@blueyonder.co.uk

Services and Contacts

Vicar: Rev. Peter Hart

The Vicarage

70 Marksbury Avenue

Kew TW9 4JF

8392 1425

pwhart1@aol.com

Licensed Lay Ministers:

Richard Austen readerkew@gmail.com

Michael Tonkin mj.tonkin@icloud.com

Parish Office Administrators

Guinevere Duff and Irene Stephens

St Luke's, The Avenue, Kew TW9 2AJ

8332 1324

office@kewparishes.plus.com

ST LUKE'S

www.stlukeskew.org

Sunday Services:

8am Holy Communion

11am Parish Communion (Junior Church and Crèche in term-time)

11am first Sunday in the month -

All-age Worship: Parish Communion with Junior Church participation

Every Thursday

10am Holy Communion

THE BARN

www.barnchurchkew.uk

Sunday Services:

9.30am Parish Communion (Junior Church and Crèche in term-time)

9.30am first Sunday in the month -

All-age Worship: Parish Communion with Junior Church participation

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BARN CONTACTS

Church Warden

Andrew Rankin

andrewrankin@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer

Rory McPherson

rorymcp@hotmail.com

Organist

Alban Clarke 8878 2856

Choir Conductor

Mike Oxborrow 8876 2085

Planned Giving Co-ordinator

Alison Rankin

aliwelch2007@yahoo.co.uk

Flower Rota

Ann Jeffries 8876 1746

Junior Church

contact: thebarnjuniorchurch@gmail.com

Church Bookings

Richard Wright 8878 2716

Youth Group

Judi Braddock jabraddock@sky.com

Brownies and Guides

www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter

Brownie Leader

Mary Noyes - please register online.

Vineyard Lunches

Clare Vollum 07708 064935

PCC Representative on Queen's School

Governing Body

Luci Mitchell-Fry

lucimitchellfray@yahoo.co.uk

Safeguarding Officers:

Children: Andrew Rankin

andrewrankin@yahoo.co.uk

Vulnerable adults: Claire Vollum

07708 064935

ST. LUKE'S CONTACTS

Church Wardens

Jayne Armstrong jaynewatts@hotmail.com

Irene Stephens dl.im.stephens@gmail.com

Deputy Church Wardens

Frankie Pinner

frankie.m.pinner@gmail.com

Paula Brackenridge

paulambackenridge@hotmail.com

Treasurer/Planned Giving Co-ordinator

Judi Braddock jabraddock@sky.com

PCC Secretary

Liz Tippet 8940 7485

Director of Music

Mary Noyes noyesmary@hotmail.com

Junior Church

Lynne Huby

lynnemitchell72@hotmail.com

Alison Samwell

alisoncardy@yahoo.co.uk

Flower Rota

Irene Stephens 8940 9614

Coffee Rota

Jayne Armstrong jaynewatts@hotmail.com

Brownies and Guides

www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter

Brownie Leader

Mary Noyes - please register online.

Traidcraft

Sue Murray 8940 0565

Vineyard Lunches

Alison Kemp 07711 747857

PCC Representative on Queen's School

Governing Body

Laura Coughtrie 8876 3202

Safeguarding Officers

Children: Vanessa Dand

vanessadand@gmail.com

Vulnerable adults:

Alice Coddington

Letter from the Vicar

On Sunday 10th March, the first Sunday of Lent, during the morning service at the Barn, the large, ancient pear tree at the west end of the church succumbed to the howling gale and crashed to the ground. It missed the church by inches, and no one was anywhere near where it fell. Over one hundred adults and children were worshipping inside, unaware of the drama outside. Can it be termed a Lent miracle?

It is always sad to lose a tree, especially one as ancient as this one. It had stood on that spot, possibly for over two hundred years, part of the orchard that covered this area of Kew. It had long ceased to function as a fruiting tree, but its blossom was superb, and the green shade it offered was wonderful.

Inside the Barn, at the time the tree was falling, a child was being baptised. A new member of God's family was being ushered in by water and spoken promises, marked with oil and presented with a candle lit from the Easter Candle, to show that she now shares in the resurrection life of Christ. As an ancient part of Kew collapsed and died, so a new part of Kew blossomed. As a beautiful thing came down, so a beautiful new life was launched on her pilgrimage through this world.

In this duality of joy and sorrow lies the fundamental contradiction of Lent. We try to walk closer with Christ in his temptations and sufferings, but there is constant joy along the way. As we come to the events of Holy Week, from Palm Sunday to Easter, those contradictions increase. The confrontations increase, the clamour for Christ's life grows, yet in the intimacy of his final days with his disciples he has given us the basis of our worship and the fundamentals of our faith – love, service, forgiveness, re-creation.

We do what we can to try to enter into Christ's experiences of that final week. We seek out the silence of contemplation and prayer. We walk together on Palm Sunday from St Luke's to the Barn, to express our joy that the Messiah is entering the Holy City as the most extraordinary king, riding on a donkey. We celebrate the institution of communion, the sharing of bread and wine, as Christ re-interprets bread as his body and wine as his blood. And we scatter as the Saviour of the World is betrayed and arrested. We will express our unity as Christians as we walk on Good Friday from St Anne's to St Winefride's to the station forecourt, then sit and watch at the foot of the cross. Having done all of that, we can fill the church with flowers for Easter Day, and rejoice that Christ is risen. Sorrow gives way to joy, suffering to release, pain to glory.

We do not want that joy to be kept confined. We want it shared by all, that release to be known by all, that glory to be entered into by all. Come and join us: there is room for everybody!

Peter



Baptisms

St Luke's

10th February	James Miller
17th February	Sasha Herring
10th March	Ralph Austin

The Barn

10th February	Max Chong
3rd March	Sophie Giangrande
10th March	Brooke Thompson

“Wind In The Willows”



Poop-Poop! The irrepressible Mr Toad swaggered, with friends and foes, through three wonderfully-enjoyable performances at the Barn Church in January. A cast of all ages, drawn from the Kew community, delivered Kenneth Grahame’s classic tale of the riverbank and woodlands in a musical adaptation created by Adam Forde and David Perkins.



Andrew Cox displayed superb comic talent, portraying an hilarious excess of amphibian ambition as his conceited Toad drove Mole, Rat and Badger to distraction. His downfall at the hands of the dastardly Wild Wooders brought a moment of pathos as he degenerated – briefly – into an unhappy and forsaken Toad in prison. We almost felt sorry for him – but, of course, with typical bravado he ended up as Master of Toad Hall once more. The imperious-but-kindly Rat and anxiously-determined Mole were a superb double-act of Jane Corpetti and Leo Copland, with Jean Utchudiema a reassuring rock of a Badger. Dave Felton delivered a witty Otter, whilst managing a mob of young animals, thus earning

an extra star, supported by Eleanor Turley’s Portly.

Time to hiss at the baddies. Jake Ferret, played by Hugh Cox, was a splendid revolutionary, along with brilliant side-kick Alison Arnold as Jasper Ferret, and Helen Stumcke put the minx into Minnie Mink. Michelle Bick, Laura Coughtrie, Helen Lynam, Marie Dargelos-Lepage, Vivian Widick and Amélie Corpetti maintained the menacing momentum as senior Weasels and Stoats preparing for social upheaval, whilst thoroughly enjoying their tormenting of the hapless Mole. Emma Roberts was a natural as the sleazy car salesperson, a potential career-move? Jim Thomas earned laughter as he switched from victim to magistrate, and Helen Price commanded the stage as court Clerk. Robin Morrison deliciously evoked Baldrick in his



Jailer cameo, whilst Bethany Widick brought the house down as his cross-dressing daughter. Andrew Rankin made an impressive policeman, Freddy Ferret, and the audience appreciated Veronica Willoughby and Rosy Harvey as they skilfully steered Toad to freedom via barge and train. Now, your critic’s award for Best Supporting Role – Tim Woolmer gave a BAFTA-winning neigh. He had a lovely time horsing around.

(Contd. on page 5)



The Wind in the Willows (contd.)



The children were touching and impressive – the young Corpettis brought us Theo as a junior hedgehog, confidently opening the show and Amélie as the beautiful Spring dancer and naughty Stoat.



Freya, Melody, Lydia, Sirius, Inez, Jemima, Isabella, Max, Lottie, Gennie and Megan created an irresistible menagerie of young animals and a crew of barge children.



Huge congratulations to members of the Kew Community Choir, delivering a demanding range of singing with ever-greater confidence – you were so impressive. Frankie Pinner, Lorna Bhasin, Pauline Taylor and Jane Bramah delivered strong character roles whilst keeping an eye on junior members of the cast. The Band were magnificent - thanks to Mary Noyes and Pat Monro for collecting such superb musicians, and to Alison Rowley for offering her expert fiddling.



Vital roles behind the scenes included Mike Oxborrow's imaginative set design and props, Harriet Turley's stage management [and every curtsied on-stage moment was a performance in itself], James Strong's lighting direction [supported by Tom Bithell], Amelie and Eleanor's poster, and of course Richard Wright's sound engineering expertise. Thanks also to Clive Copland and Kew Community Trust for help with the stage, Susie and Robin Hancock for the refreshments and Ian Bloomfield for support with lighting equipment.

The production was staged in support of both the Barn and St Luke's church and a locally-based charity, REACT, which offers rapid practical support to families of children with life-limiting conditions. £209 was collected in the bucket for REACT. A magnificent £1000 was given to the Barn and £500 to St Luke's Church.



The masterminds directing this production were Jane Corpetti and Robin Morrison and of course the whole show was dreamed up, managed and conducted by Mary Noyes. Huge congratulations to her, and we can only wait with great excitement to see what she comes up with next! Mary – thank you so much, from everyone in our community.

Liz Holden Bithell

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News from the Avenue Club

The Avenue Club is thriving and our membership continues to grow. In addition to our popular variety of activities, this Spring we have a number of talks and events which we hope will be of interest to you.

Scam Prevention Talk, Monday 1st April, 1pm : Les Jackson, ex-Metropolitan Policeman, is coming to give advice on how to prevent being scammed, including details on doorstep, telephone and cash machine scams.

Charles Hanson 'My Life as an Auctioneer' Thursday 11th April, 2pm: Charles Hanson of TV shows Flog It! And Bargain Hunt will be talking us through his career starting as an Auctioneer at Christies.

'We need to Talk about Death', Monday 29th April 1pm : Natasha Bradshaw from Mortlake Crematorium is coming to give advice and answer any questions you may have.

'Ageing Youthfully' Thursday 9th May, 2pm: Gary Freer, our Wellbeing and Pilates teacher, will facilitate a short seminar giving advice on how we can improve the quality of our lives as we age.

Flamenco Music & Dance Performance, Friday 10th May, 3pm: by popular demand, Rosandra is returning to give us a performance of flamenco music and dance.

Roy Norton, BBC Producer, Monday 17th June 2.30pm: Roy Norton, ex-senior Producer will share with us highlights from his career at the BBC including some amusing 'off camera' anecdotes.

All the above are free to members and non-members, but donations are gratefully accepted on the day.

We have a full schedule of classes and activities to suit everyone from pilates and yoga, art, mosaics, knit & stitch and creative writing groups. For the musical among you, we have a choir and ukulele classes. We also have French, Italian and Spanish language classes.

Our Spring series of **History of Art** Lectures is focussing on women artists and the role they have played throughout history. (Tuesdays at 10.15 - £7 per session)

The Avenue Club **Film Club** continues on Tuesdays (12.45 – 1.45) Each week you watch excerpts from a film and follow up with a discussion. It costs £7 per session.

Our **Opera Lectures** continue, discussing works currently on in London and New York including operas by Donizetti, Verdi and Faust. (Every second and fourth Thursday - £7)

Great Britain and Great Britons (1770-1880) This popular series of lectures and trips is exploring the lives, times and achievements of extraordinary Britons. Wednesdays – 2.15-3.45 (Free but donations are gratefully accepted.)

All our classes and activities are on a pay-as-you-go basis so come along and try something new! Details of all our classes are on our website or get in touch by email or 'phone. Alternatively, pop into the Club for a chat and to see what's going on for yourself.

Kew Community Centre, The Avenue, Kew TW9 2AJ

Tel: 020 8948 8807 E-mail: avenueclub@kewcommunitytrust.org.uk

www.avenueclubkew.com

A PILGRIMAGE

"IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE HOLY FAMILY"

I recently joined the Bishop of Southwark, Rt. Revd. Christopher Chessun, and an ecumenical group on a pilgrimage to Egypt led by Archbishop Angaleos, the Coptic Archbishop of London.

The pilgrimage was called "In the footsteps of the Holy Family" and we visited several sites in and around Cairo, Alexandria and the Nile Delta, where ancient tradition holds that the Holy Family rested during their flight from Herod after the birth of Jesus.

This was a very moving week. We were all struck by the resilience and determination of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. Christianity in Egypt goes back to the first century when St. Mark founded the church there in Alexandria. Coptic Christians make up about 15% of the population of Egypt and 80% of the remaining Christian population of the Middle East.

The Coptic Orthodox Church is alive and going through renewal as it rises out of persecution. It has a vital role to play in building bridges in Egyptian society. Although there have been several attacks on churches in recent years by extremists, the Christians in Egypt realise that the vast majority of Muslims are their friends and do not support terrorism.



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We were struck by the love for one another displayed in the church, the living out of the Christian message daily and the dynamic faith of a people who know they will have suffering in the future. We were also touched by the genuine affection openly displayed to the Clergy and Bishops, particularly by young people. The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt is the largest and most prominent Christian presence in the Middle East. Coptic Orthodox Christians show a deep faith and hope in the face of adversity. They are truly a light shining out in the darkness.



Richard Austin with Archbishop Angaleos, Bishop Christopher and, at the back, Father Nadim (the only Syrian Anglican Priest in the UK)

This week was also a wonderful ecumenical experience in its own right with such a diverse group brought together by our solidarity with our persecuted sisters and brothers. As well as our Coptic hosts, the group included representatives of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches and the Church of Scotland as well as representatives of the Awareness Foundation, Premier Christian Radio, Churches together in Britain and Ireland, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Aid to the Church in Need, the Conservative Middle East Council and Christians in Government.

The hope is that this will be the start of future collaboration between our Churches on the issue of religious freedom, so important at this time.

Richard Austen

THE HANCOCKS VISIT GREENPARK SCHOOL

Last summer Susie and Robin Hancock's dream to visit Greenpark School, in Zambia, came true. In July 2018 they left Heathrow with their two sons, Oscar and Harry, and flew to Lusaka to spend a week with the children and the staff at the school.

Greenpark School is in Matero, a slum area of Lusaka, and was founded by Felix Sinkala. Some of you may have read the piece about the school in the *Link* two years ago, which describes how the school started and how Ruth and Mark Chitty

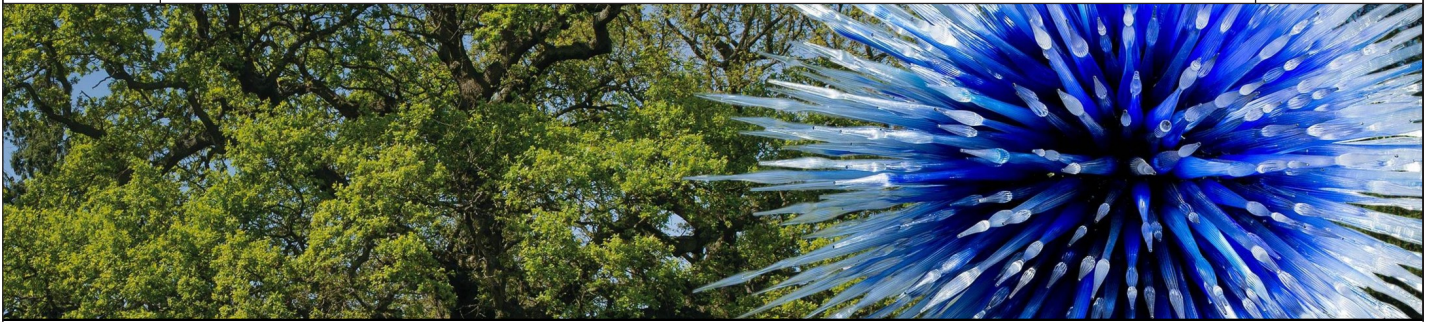
became involved and set up the Umunandi Trust. See: <https://barnchurchkew.uk/archive/> - Issue 54. Susie met Ruth in 2008 and has been a trustee of the school for about seven years and has been involved in helping to find sponsors for the children, who without sponsors would not be educated and would probably be on the streets begging food for the day.

The trip was transformational for the whole family. Susie said she has always believed in the school but the experience altered her commitment to a serious '*calling*'. Her son, Oscar aged 14, said he'd never felt so much joy; the children couldn't stop putting their arms round him and Harry, so happy to have them in their school. This was particularly affecting when the family saw the conditions these children were living in at home. They visited about five of the sponsored children's homes taking with them a pack of sheema (maize), cooking oil, washing powder and soap. In one home the mother had AIDS and could only work when she felt well enough; her work being to buy food in the market and to sell it on the street for more than she paid, if she was lucky. The Hancocks would ask the family (often child-headed) 'When will you eat again?' and they didn't know. Sometimes it was clear that a child in a family wasn't at school because he or she wasn't sponsored. Some children cried themselves to sleep wanting so badly to be at the school. By the end of the trip the Hancocks had increased their sponsorship from one child to four!



The school urgently needs money and more sponsors. It provides structure, safety and love as well as education. There could not be a more worthy cause in which whole families can become involved. The Hancocks are organising a wonderful-sounding Umunandi fund raising event on Saturday 15th June, to be held at Dukes Meadow Golf and Tennis Club; Tables of 8 or 10 (£480/£600) including a 3 course dinner with wine, an auction and DJ dancing till late. If you would like to secure a table please contact Susie on susie@umunandi.org and more details will follow.

Harriet Grace



KEW FOR YOU

DALE CHIHULY: the amazing glass artist has come back to Kew Gardens. He will be showcasing his work from the 13th April till the 27th October 2019. Once again, he will be showing his luminous glass artwork, including new pieces never seen before in this country. Visitors will be able to see the perfect links of art, science and nature whilst in the gardens and enjoy the contemporary outdoor gallery space.

Unique Art Installations: these will be situated throughout the Gardens, including the Shirley Sherwood gallery of Botanic Art. You will be able to experience his Drawings and Rotolo Series, the most technically challenging work Chihuly has ever produced and Seaforms, undulating structures which conjure underwater life.

Sapphire Star: this celestial vibrant and blue masterpiece will welcome you as you walk through the Victoria Gate. The Temperate House will amaze you too, as it will have a brand new, especially designed sculpture made to inspire the cathedral space which will contain it.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES: A splendid and inspiring range of things to do during the Easter break, May half-term and the Summer Holidays. There will be some exclusive night- illuminations along a route of Kew's stunning setting.

THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN: A brand new experience for children to have some amazing fun. They will be able to climb, run, jump and explore everything a plant needs to grow.

KEW PALACE: this amazing Royal building in Kew has the initials on the front of 1631. The startling red colour is the ochre original, used to hide the cracks and show its wealth. The original owner, Frederic, then Prince of Wales played the cello and died at the age 42. His son became King George 3rd and with his Queen produced 15 children. In 1804, he became ill with stomach ache and hallucinations. In 1810, a young daughter of his died and he was very bothered and upset.

THE GREAT PAGODA: designed by Sir William Chambers and completed in 1762 as a gift for Princess Augusta, by the founder of the Botanic Gardens in Kew. A ten-storey octagon tower of nearly 50m was built, so that each level was 30cm narrower than the one below. These were the earliest and best birds-eye views of London. Restored in 2018, you can now see replicas of the original 80 dragons, each carved from wood and gilded with real gold. Belief has it that in 1784, the original dragons were removed and sold by George to settle his gambling debts. But by the Experts, I am now pleased to be able to tell you all that people believe that the wood had simply rotted over time. Chambers actually studied oriental architecture in China, but amazingly he is believed to have ignored the rules. I find it very interesting that Pagodas normally have seven floors, not the ten which Chambers thought. It is now known that the number seven represents the seven steps to Heaven. Also, the Great Pagoda was the closest reconstruction of a Chinese building. To end on an interesting thought, it was originally considered a Moorish Alhambra and a Turkish Mosque rather than the Great Pagoda!

NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT: Kew's scientists have unearthed a plant that could treat cancer. A white flower from the coffee family, discovered in Guinea was found to have pollen-rich triterpenoids, part of their self-defence mechanism, which have anti-cancer properties. "This plant might be a life-saver, Kew said."

Rosalind Eagleton

Diary of Events & Services at St Luke's and The Barn

April

Palm Sunday 14th	10am	Service starts at St Luke's with walk to the Barn
Maundy Thursday 18 th	8pm	Service at St Luke's
Good Friday 19th	Noon	Walk of Witness: from St Anne's to St Winefride's to Station
	2pm	Meditation at St Luke's with Music & Readings
Sunday 28 th	9.30 & 11am	APCM at The Barn and St Luke's

May

Sunday 5 th	11am	Barn Patronal Festival followed by Bring & Share lunch Vineyard Lunch at The Barn
Saturday 11 th	7pm	St Luke's social event - tbc
Sunday 12 th		Vineyard Lunch at St Luke's

June

Sunday 2nd	2-4pm	Barn Church Open Day/Open Gardens
Sunday 9 th	6pm	Pentecost Episcopal Area Evening Service
Saturday 15 th		Barn Summer Fair



The **Table Top Sale** on 2nd February at the Barn was a great success – lots of bargains were to be had and a good crowd enjoyed the cakes – all delicious and home-made – at the café.

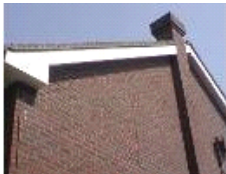
The Barn Christmas Fair was an outstanding success, with over £2,600 being raised for church funds. Very grateful thanks go to all those who contributed to this success— in particular the Events team, led by Felice Oxborrow, who all put such a lot of work into organising it and making it run so efficiently.

MAKE A DATE!

The Barn Summer Fair will be held on the 15th June – this is always an enjoyable event with lots on offer for all ages.

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Swing time in May
At St Luke's
Saturday 11th May
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Come and join us for a spectacular evening of entertainment - Cabaret performed by Serenata (maestro Ian Bloomfield), and dancing to popular music. The evening will begin at 7 pm with an aperitif followed by a 3-course gourmet meal. It's sure to be lots of fun with an excuse to dress up and dance the night away.

This year we will be supporting the charity
Small Steps for Africa (www.smallstepsforafrica.org).

Come individually — or make up a table of 10/12 with your friends and family?

Tickets are £50 each. To book, please contact Tracey Baker at:
traceybaker@blueyonder.co.uk or text her on 07710 223219



St Luke's Charity Quiz Night
in aid of
London's Air Ambulance
and St Luke's Church

A great evening was enjoyed by 80 quizzers at St. Luke's Church at the beginning of February. Our professional quiz master Andrew Thompson kept everyone on their toes with some challenging and diverse questions – something for everyone. We enjoyed a delicious baked potato supper - welcome brain food for the evening - and raised a total of £1,300.44, split between London's Air Ambulance and St. Luke's. Thank you to everyone who came along to support the event.

The quiz is an annual event – why not come along to next year's quiz? Look out for notices in the Church and community newsletters.



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Kew Horticultural Society

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8948 7254

Kew Wind Orchestra

King's House School, King's Rd, Richmond. All ages, Thurs, 8pm.

8876 2192

Tea & Art Club

for over 50s Thurs 11-12 Pensford Field.

Pam: **07500 178578**

Kew Neighbourhood Assn

Offers help with transport to medical appointments and the Avenue Club, together with befriending and shopping. **8948 8054** weekdays 10-12 for help and offers of help.

Kew Community Trust

Runs **Avenue Club** - social activities for older people. Nicola Patel **8948 8806**

Rotary Club of Kew

Coach & Horses, Kew Green. Wed, 7.30 for 8pm.

8894 9958

Richmond and Kew Quilters

every 2nd Monday of the month. 7.30—9.30pm, St Winefride's Church Hall.

www.richmondandkewquilters.org.uk

Richmond Local History Society

Talks, usually 2nd Mon. monthly Oct/May, 8pm. Duke Street Church, Richmond TW9 1DH.

Elizabeth Velluet **8891 3825**

rich.hist@yahoo.co.uk

www.richmondhistory.org.uk

Facebook and Twitter (@RLHS1985)

Kew Village Market

First Sunday of every month (except Jan) 10am to 2pm. Community food/ crafts market, live music. All operating profits to local charities. www.kewvillagemarket.org

Q2 Players

Kew Scouts HQ, Station Ave, Presents two full-length plays each season, with performances at the National Archives. **8940 2053**

North Sheen Bowling Club

Marksbury Avenue, Kew. All levels from 12 plus. **8891 1541**

Kew Studio

Art courses and studio space to let. 270 Sandycombe Road TW9 3NP.

8332 2122

www.kewstudio.org

Richmond Chamber of Commerce

1/3 Richmond Road Twickenham TW1 3AB

email@richmondchamberofcommerce.co.uk

Kew Community Choir

Thurs. 7.30 — 8.30, St Luke's in the Avenue

noyesmary@hotmail.com

Arts Richmond Unit 6, Upper Deck, Phoenix Wharf, Eel Pie Island, TW1 3DY. Over 80 affiliated societies.

8892 9446

info@artsrichmond.org.uk

Kew Residents Assn.

Caring about the community environment by promoting sensitive and appropriate local development www.savekew.org.uk

Priory Park Club

Bowls, Bridge and Tennis Forest Road, Kew

www.prioryparkclub.org.uk

Bowls: **8400 1963**

St. John Ambulance

8948 8852

For events coverage: operations@richmond.sja.org.uk

Probus Club

Third Wed. monthly, lunch for retired professionals, Richmond Golf Club. **8948 5553 or 8994 0396**

KIDS

Girlguiding

Brownies (7-10 yrs)

Tuesdays: Raleigh Road United Church (3rd Kew); Thursdays: St. Luke's House, Sandycombe Road (2nd Kew) and The Barn Church (5th Kew).

Guides (10-14 yrs)

Thursdays: Barn Church (5th Kew) Raleigh Road (1st Richmond) guides1strichmond@outlook.com

Kew Scout Group HQ

Station Avenue by Kew Gardens Station (rear of Pether's Butchers Shop).

Beavers (6-7 yrs) Thurs 6 pm

Cubs (8-10yrs) Thurs 7 pm

Scouts and Explorer Scouts

(11+ yrs) Fri 7 pm

8940 2484

Kew Youth Club

Barn Church (entry Marksbury Ave): Friday nights during term time, secondary school years 7-9. Entry £3.00. jabraddock@sky.com

Kew Park Rangers Football

North Road Recreation Ground. Ages 3-18, boys and girls. Sat morning (training), Sun morning (matches).

07770 755 538

www.kewparkrangers.co.uk

Kew Young Musicians

Saturday morning music school for 5-18s. Drums, bass, electric and classical guitar, saxophone, clarinet, flute, recorder and singing.

kewyoungmusicians@googlemail.com

8401 6950

Toddler Groups

Barn Church Mon. Wed. and Fri. 9.15—11.00

Windham Rd. Tues 9-11 term-time

Toy Library The Old Court House, Sheen Lane, Mortlake.

£1 membership, plus 30p per toy for 2 wks, plus family drop-in.

Thurs. 9.30-11.45.

8876 7294

Richmond Gymnastics Association

Townmead Rd, Kew.

Pre-school for mothers and toddlers (18 mths-4 yrs).

Gymnastics 5 plus, classes, competitive squads in sports acrobatics and tumbling.

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Skills for all levels. **8878 8682**

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ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW OUT OF AFRICA

'Ulendo: Claude's African Journey into War and Passion'

by Malcolm Alexander. Aldridge Press

The *Rhodes Must Fall* movement has already had a statue of the arch-imperialist removed from the University of Cape Town and they now have their eyes on Oxford. Do we destroy our history or do we keep it alive to be examined with all its faults? In his characteristically wise foreword to Malcolm Alexander's compelling book, 'Ulendo', the great Desmond Tutu writes: 'At this moment, when we are re-examining the legacy of empire, it is imperative that we try and look again at what was driving people. Malcolm gives us that perspective'.

A ulendo is a walk in the African bush. In this book the term refers specifically to the journey that colonial officials made, often on foot, to visit the towns in their jurisdiction in order to assess the needs of the people at first hand, to listen to their concerns and to try to solve their problems.

They did not travel light: 'A ulendo party would typically comprise ten machila-men, thirty carriers, native messengers and askari, personal boys, and even several women and babies; maybe sixty in total. Exchanging gifts, soon after arrival at a village, would be an important part of the proceedings, with the headman bringing baskets of flour and a few chickens; even a goat. The headman would expect something in return and might receive a yard or two of calico'. Within a day or two the whole procession would be on the road again.

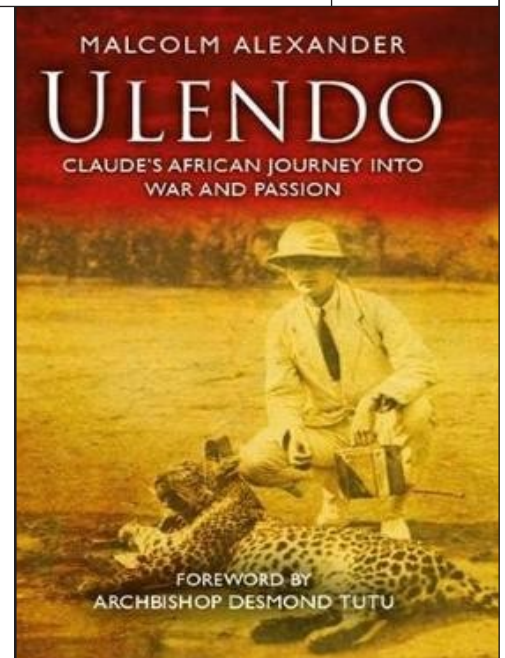
The author takes us on a similar journey through the life of his great-uncle Claude Oldfield, visiting his Victorian boyhood, his education at St Paul's and Cambridge, a treacherous love affair (this is no hagiography), pig farming in Norfolk, RAF service during World War 2 and a final redemptive marriage. But mainly it covers Claude's varied career as a colonial official in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and his crucial role in World War 1, for which he was mentioned in despatches and commended by Winston Churchill.

Yet this fascinating book is more than the story of one man. It is an informal history of a lost age. In the course of the narrative we encounter a remarkable panorama of characters and events. There is the English squire (Claude's paternal grandfather) who fathers 25 children by a succession of women including the fourteen-year-old daughter of his land steward. We follow the helter-skelter of World War 1 across the veld and the triumphant return of the defeated German general to Berlin as an omen of things to come. An Anglican missionary earns the nickname 'Father Gadget' for his handy contraptions, including a string and banner device to indicate when the mission's outside loo is occupied. And there is a dossier of the dark-hearted subjugation of the Congo by Belgium.

We learn a great deal about the way the British ruled in Africa. A tribal chief chooses to relocate his court and is charged with 'running away' (the actual words of the official report) like a truantiing schoolboy and is forced to return in disgrace. There is the administrator who refuses to shake hands with any African. An old Harrovian is sold 10,000 acres of land for a shilling. A young magistrate has a 'wont for stretching out natives on the ground for caning' but who also breaks the grip of the Arab slavers in his area and curbs the excesses of the more bloodthirsty neighbouring tribes.

A treasure trove of letters, diaries, quotations and gossip captures the voices and foibles of the past. Rich pickings from Claude's photograph albums bring history to life, and the author's gift for vivid description animates the large cast of characters and transports us deep into the African landscape with its seductive beauty and heady atmosphere. The book ends with a magisterial survey of the history and current condition of southern Africa, from apartheid to Zambia.

Two minor quibbles. Sometimes the author is reluctant to prune his prodigious research, and yet it must be said that his digressions are a delight and will be a boon to future historians. And he is a bit soft on the colonial venture when he writes: 'the British approach was not simply that of *veni, vidi, vici*.' That ignores much arrogance and greed - and the guns. We should not have been in Africa, but we were, and it is heartening to be reminded that there were officials of honour and humanity who did their best to serve the people they ruled. This beguiling book tells that whole story with verve.



Paul Gregorowski

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