



Kings Weston Action Group Newsletter number 7

Come along to one of our events to find out more about the fascinating past of the estate or lend a hand with our working parties, meet new friends and help make a difference.

Important changes in Estate management

KWAG were saddened to hear of the forthcoming departure of Martin Harris, Estate manager for Kings Weston and Blaise estates as part of restructuring of the City's Environment and Leisure Services department. Concerned that the loss of an estate manager could lead to the further decay of Kings Weston we met with the City Council to ensure that our efforts so far would not be in vain.

We have been working closely with Martin since our formation to negotiate working on the estate and discuss future plans. We will be sorry to see him go at the start of August, but we have been assured that the new management structure will not neglect Kings Weston. Rather than dedicated estate managers the City's destination parks will be managed by a smaller team of rangers who will be split equally between Blaise and Ashton Court. These will be managed by John Williams, based at Ashton Court. The additional role of Estates Planning Officer will also fall under John's brief and we will be keenly working with that officer for any of our future plans once they are appointed. A Parks Operations Team will be responsible for the regular and scheduled maintenance including mowing lawns. This will be headed by Richard Stransom.

These are all major changes that will undoubtedly have some impact on the estate, but KWAG will keep a close eye on the transition to make sure that Kings Weston remains close to the top of the agenda

At the meeting we were delighted to have been offered the opportunity to have Kings Weston promoted in its own right alongside

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The Know Your Kings Weston event held in the house courtesy of John Hardy. (Image courtesy of Richard Goldthorpe)

the city's other Destination Parks. We have already provided text and photos for use in the City's next advertising pamphlet and hope to be providing the same for King's Weston's own entry on the council's Destination Parks web site

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A summer of Kings Weston!

Many of you will know that our Know Your Kings Weston event in partnership with the University of Bristol happened on the 16th June to coincide with the tercentenary of the commencement of Vanbrugh's design for Kings Weston House. The event, held in the house, proved hugely popular despite the wet day.

The event attracted almost 150 people throughout the day, many bringing their memories and mementos to be recorded by

the University staff. More than 200 items were recorded including oral histories from many visitors who remembered the house as a school and whose parents worked on the estate for its last private owner Philip Napier Miles. The Avonmouth Genealogy Society also deserve credit for helping make the history day such a success.

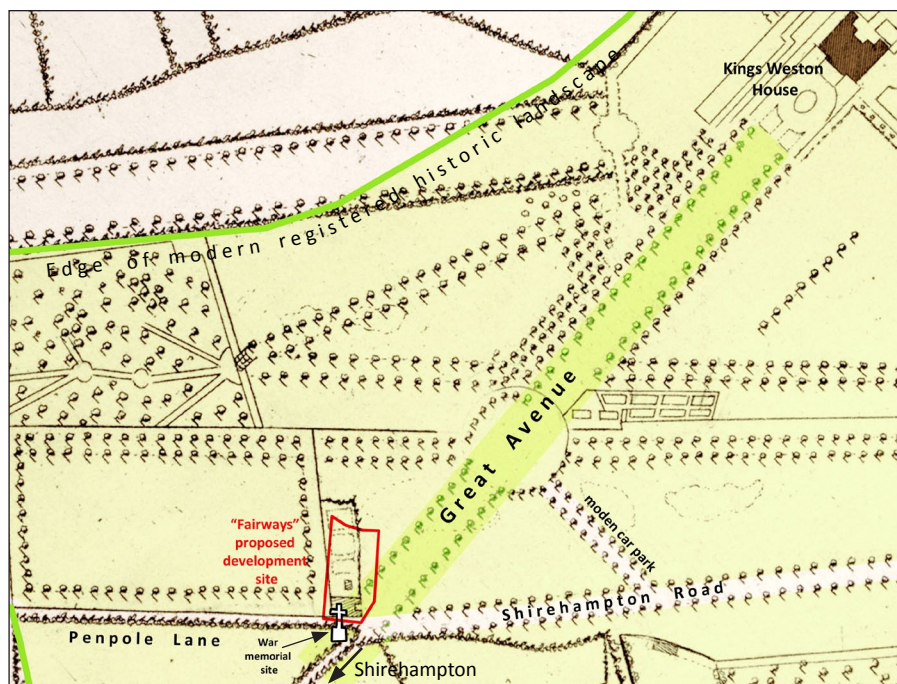
June was a busy month behind the scenes with this event, two guided estate walks for private groups, a talk for the AGM of the neighbouring Friends of Blaise, and the opening of KWAG's exhibition at Bristol Central Library which runs until the 20th July. The central venue has really helped raise the profile of Kings Weston within the city and appears to have been incredibly popular. Our thanks have to go to the library staff for augmenting our display with items from their own rich collections.

We are grateful too to Gerry Brook of the Bristol Post who ran a glorious three-page spread in the Bristol Times section of the newspaper.



Kings Weston Action Group

Newsletter number 7 (cont.)



The critical location of the proposed development site on the avenue shown here in 1720

Planning application threat

Thank you to everyone who has already voiced their opposition to the development of the former "Karakol" site, now "Fairways" on Penpole Lane.

We have been copied in to a number of objections made to the present owners, though we believe the planning application will still be submitted soon. We will keep everyone abreast of when this happens and how to make an objection to the City Council. We have to support the policy of English Heritage and the City Council and oppose the principal of new development within the registered historic landscape, otherwise a dangerous precedent for future development could be set both here and in the city's other historic parks. The proposals for this site also jeopardise our specific ambition to reinstate the main avenue to the house; an affordable and easily achievable project that KWAG can take on following the recommendations of the Conservation Management Plan on its publication.

Conservation Management Plan Progress

Bristol City Council continues to work on the new Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Kings Weston and Shirehampton Parks and we hope to be able to circulate the draft document for comments in August.

As part of the CMP we would like to invite you to complete a copy of the questionnaire attached to this newsletter and return them to KWAG to forward to the city. This will help them understand how people use the park, what people value in the estate, and how it needs to evolve in the future. If you could find time to complete one, or give your answers to us by e-mail we would really appreciate it.

Walking out the door...

We have been fighting to make sure that the recent KWAG walking guide is available throughout Bristol as supplies continue to run out at the venues that stock it! If you have had

difficulty in finding a copy, or know of a venue that should have some please drop us a line and let us know so we can get more out. We have been surprised by the popularity of the guide that has shot off the shelves, but we still have many in reserve. I'm sure you will agree it is great that there is so much interest in the estate and that people are keen to find out more about it.

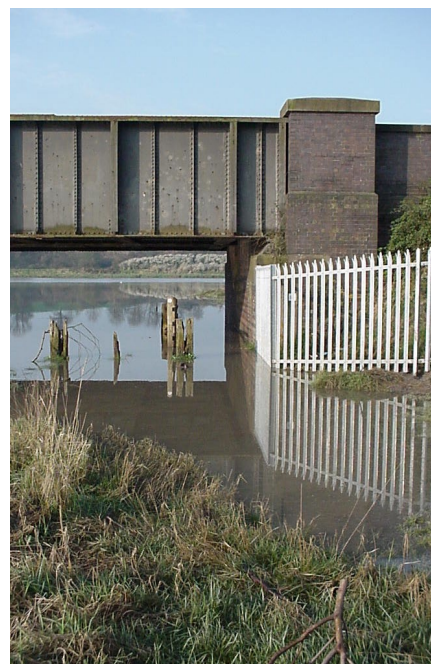
...and along the river

Staying with the walking theme a big thank you to KWAG member John Roberts who surveyed the Severn Way path for us as part of our efforts to get improvements put in place under Sea Mills railway bridge to increase the usability of the route. Because of the tidal range of the river it will probably always be impassable at high spring tides but it should be far more accessible outside of those events.

We are in contact with Christopher Orlik the council Rights of Way Officer, and Peter Gould from the Ramblers on this.

Peter Gould attended the latest Joint Local Access Forum meeting and the feedback from that seems positive. We are also liaising with Christian Matthews the Community Payback Team Manager over clearance work for the rest of the route to the Kings Weston estate along the river towards Crabtree Slip.

The Severn Way footpath frequently floods at Sea Mills



KWAG volunteer working parties begin at Shirehampton Road car park at 10am on the following dates. Everyone welcome bring a friend!!

**Sat July 14th,
Sun August 12th,
Sat Sept 15th
Sat Oct 13th**



Kings Weston Action Group Research update

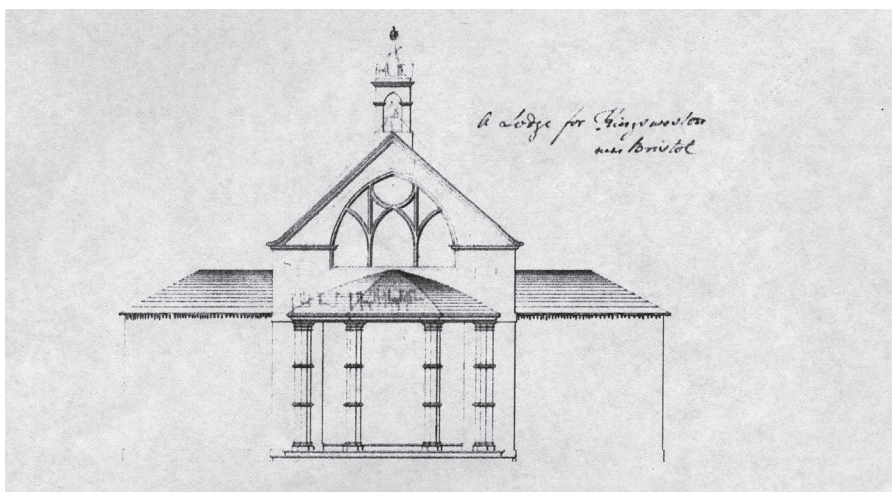
As our knowledge of Kings Weston expands we want to keep you up to date with some of our discoveries with this occasional supplement to our newsletter. We hope you enjoy finding out a little more about the past as we uncover it. We would welcome any stories or articles for future supplements on Kings Weston, the people who lived there or about the wider estates.

The other Kings Weston

In the first decades of the C17th as Edward Southwell II was engaged in rebuilding Kings Weston house he was also making major investments in his Irish estates. Downpatrick in Northern Ireland, inherited on the death of his first wife Elizabeth Cromwell in 1709, received special attention. As well as a school, market shambles and paved roads in 1717 Southwell built a new quay, granary and Custom House on the River Quoile close by. The new facilities were described at the time as a great success and exports of grain and linen greatly benefited the district. In gratitude to Edward Southwell the town authorities named the new quay 'King's Weston'.

Southwell's programme of improvements in Downpatrick was as much motivated profit as philanthropy. As the town grew in both commerce and prestige increased rents could be levied on the newly gentrified town, swelling his wealth and influence back in England.

As an absentee landlord Southwell seldom visited Downpatrick and instead appointed



Robert Mylne's sketch for a "Gothick" styled lodge

an agent to look after his interests there. The other "King's Weston" did not retain its honorary name for long and became better known as "Quoile Quay" after the river it served. It enjoyed good trade throughout the C18th and the granary, custom house and a modest C18th house remain. It is this house that preserves the name Kings Weston today; a distant cousin to Bristol's mansion

Gothick discovery

We are indebted to the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles for having helped us recently. We discovered an obscure reference to drawings by the architect Robert Mylne that had found their way

into their collections with some Kings Weston connections. From Mylne's own diaries we know that the walled kitchen gardens with their pond and lodges, the stable block, Shirehampton Lodge, and major alterations to Kings Weston House were all commissioned By Edward Southwell III between 1760 and 1778. The same source notes other designs for the Kings Weston estate though, until now, none have come to light.

The Getty kindly sent through drawings of a 'Gothick' style lodge once destined for the estate. Although they appear to be preliminary sketches the drawings show a building with an open veranda, a large gothic window and short spire. Although the proposed site for the building is unknown it may have been an alternative design for Shirehampton Lodge on Park Hill.

Whilst an Important discovery for Kings Weston the drawing is also a new example of Mylne working in the same Gothick style he applied to Blaise Castle folly. With these two designs there is now a small body of evidence that may suggest that Mylne is a potential candidate for author of the Black Castle and bath house at Arno's Court; buildings contemporary with his time in the city and, as yet, with no definite attribution. Stylistic evidence alone will never prove conclusive, but there are enough similarities to open the debate again.



Kings Weston and Quoile Quay near Downpatrick.