



## **Open meeting on Kew 2008 held at the FRC on 20 September 2007**

Chris Cooper and Lee Oliver gave a presentation previously given to the Kew 2008 User Advisory Group and to an open meeting for Kew readers.

### **Questions and answers:**

**Q:** What is the cost of the Kew 2008 Project as opposed to the cost of keeping the FRC open?

**A:** We will be spending just under £2 million on expanding the reading rooms at Kew and £2 million on related upgrading to the building which would have been needed in the next few years anyway. TNA pays over £1 million annually for its accommodation at the FRC and will recoup the costs of Kew 2008 in three years. We cannot justify continuing to run two sites when nearly all the records held at the FRC are now available online.

**Q:** Will the restaurant at Kew be improved?

**A:** Yes, we are currently re-tendering the catering contract. The restaurant will be expanded into the cybercafe space (which will move to the Reception area) and the seating will be improved. We will ask the contractors to look at ways of improving the queuing system.

**Q:** Will the FRC's reference books and finding aids be available at Kew? Will the red catalogue lists at Kew still be available?

**A:** Yes, all the FRC's finding aids will be moved to Kew and all the reference books will be available, either in the Library or in the new Learning Zone. The red lists will be adjacent to the new enquiry desk.

**Q:** FRC users do not see it as two separate organisations. Why cannot the BMD indexes and the facility for ordering certificates be transferred to Kew?

**A:** We understand this and believe it is a tribute to the FRC's success. We are providing space on the first floor of the FRC for the GRO until the FRC closes in March 2008. However, there is no room at Kew for all the printed indexes, though we have undertaken to take the adoption indexes 1927-1969 if GRO wishes. TNA cannot carry out the functions of the GRO, which is a separate government department. Certificates can be ordered online, by post or by telephone.

Q: Some of the BMD microfiche are very difficult to read. What facility will be provided to assist researchers who cannot read the relevant fiche?

A: GRO will shortly be publicising the service they will provide. TNA plans to offer free access to the BMD indexes on Ancestry and FindmyPast at Kew. We are working with GRO to find the best method of making the most recent BMD index data widely available.

Q: Will the price of certificates go up when the FRC closes?

A: This is the responsibility of GRO not TNA. The vast majority of certificates are ordered by means other than at the FRC, so the closure is unlikely to have any direct effect on the price.

Q: Will Kew be closing for building works?

A: Yes, the reading rooms at Kew will close from 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> December inclusive and another week in January 2008 (to be confirmed).

Q: Will the opening hours be changing?

A: The opening hours at Kew are, and will continue to be, the same as the FRC, except that Kew closes on the Saturdays of Bank Holiday weekends and for stocktaking in December.

Q: Will public transport links to Kew be improved?

A: There are several public transport routes to Kew, including the R68 bus which stops 100 yards from our door. The North London Line may improve in the near future when it is taken over by Transport for London.

Q: Will TNA be introducing car parking charges?

A: We are considering this. It would help to deter drivers who are not using TNA from using our car park.

Q: How is TNA publicising the changes at Kew and the FRC?

A: We are sending out lots of publicity to readers and other stakeholders and making information available on our website ([nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk)). We welcome suggestions about how to improve the publicity. GRO is also publicising its move, for example on its website and via notices at the FRC.

Q: Will the level of service and user-friendliness of the FRC be transferred to Kew?

A: That is our intention. Most of TNA's staff and managers at the FRC will be involved in providing the enquiry services at Kew.

Q: Will children be allowed into Kew?

A: TNA has an extensive programme of school visits to Kew which will continue. At present children over 10 are allowed into the reading rooms at Kew under adult supervision. It is likely that this will continue to apply to the document reading room but supervised younger children will be allowed into the microfilm and online reading room.