

Thursday, 1 April 2010

April events diary

There are all sorts of events happening in and around London during April, from exquisite furniture and crafts exhibitions, to top design shows, and even a window box workshop. By Barbara Chandler

Kew blooms

See the best of spring on free tours from Victoria Plaza at 12 noon every day this month, for up to 20 people. Kew's Tropical Nursery throws open its doors on Sunday 11 April from 11am to 5pm. See amazing tropical plants (some are now extinct in the wild), and get the lowdown on climate, propagation, pest control and more. Enter through White Peaks gate.

All families in West London love Climbers & Creepers at Kew. Now comes Treehouse Towers outdoor play area, where 300 kids can climb ladders, clamber across rope bridges and slide down three towers of different heights. Find giant swings, zip wires, scramble nets, slides and a mountaineering ramp for a challenging family day out (ideally for children between the ages of three and 11). And from 2 to 18 April children can also join free tree-themed workshops. Check the website for programmes.

A free Easter Egg Hunt is on Easter Sunday 4 April from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Friendly characters from Climbers & Creepers will dispense tokens for a Green & Black's Easter chocolate treat.

Admission is £13.50 for adults with concessions at £11.50. Free for children under 17 years with an adult. 020 8332 5655; www.kew.org.



Kew blooms



Handmade at Fortnum's: Tea set by Chris Keenan

Handmade at Fortnum's

In the heart of Piccadilly at Fortnum & Mason's glorious food store is a delightful show of contemporary British crafts. Aptly titled Handmade, it reveals such treasures as pewter bowls, sculptured fruits and crystal carved milk bottles, with more pieces in ceramics, glass, silverwork and wood, at prices from £50.

"Our artisan foods support many small independent producers so this is a perfect pairing for us," say the store. Featured artists include Kate Malone (ceramics), Helen Beard (hand-painted porcelain), Sam Sweet (crystal), and Clare Ramsden (silver). From 12 April to 11 June 2010. Fortnum & Mason, 181 Piccadilly, W1; 0845 300 1707; www.fortnumandmason.com.

Kid's workshops at the Design Museum

Supporting the current block-buster - Brit Insurance Designs of the Year - are "transport-themed" workshops for children (ages 5-11 years) called Slide, Glide and Ride! They are on 11 and 25 April 2010, and 9 and 30 May 2010, from 2-5pm. It is essential to book - call 020 77940 8783; Shad Thames, SE1; www.designmuseum.org.

Artful craft

John Makepeace shaped a generation of British furniture makers with Pamham School (sadly now closed). Currently he is showing a striking and sculptural new dining table in ash at 21st Century Furniture II - The Arts & Crafts Legacy, open until 25 April 2010 at The Millinery Works.

Also wonder at a further exquisite 69 pieces of furniture by 45 of the UK's leading designer makers. Martin Grierson's Falling Water is a cabinet in quarter-sawn brown oak, lined with cedar-of-Lebanon, with a front carved by Georgy Mkrtychian - undoubtedly a future antique from true masters.

Marc Fish's Le Orchidée desk updates Art Deco with a delicate yet robust aluminium base and tambour top. Supporting a trend for furniture eco-art is Ian Spencer's Bonifacio chair, made from multi-coloured wood off-cuts - as is Ed Johnson's Firestarter table. And the Bird console table by Toby Winteringham has a shape inspired by a kimono, with exquisite marquetry. 87 Southgate Road, Islington, N1; 020 7359 2019; www.millineryworks.co.uk.



Artful Craft: Poggiale, a chair made with 20 different timbers, by Ian Spencer

Urban Upcycling

Infused with eco care, Urban Upholstery rescue old sofas and chairs and turn them into designer furniture. They have got together with the sparkly Elli Popp for a special show called Hide and Seek.

Urban Upholstery, 21 De Beauvoir Road N1; 020 7275 9436; www.ellipopp.com, [www.urbanupholstery.com](http://urbanupholstery.com); <http://urbanupholstery-events.blogspot.com>.

Potting up at Clifton Nurseries

It's time to do your window boxes. A workshop for spring planting is at Clifton Nurseries on 14 April, from 6.30-8.30pm. Choose from flowers or herb/salad combos. You don't have to have a garden, and it's for experienced gardeners and amateurs alike. Cost of £15 includes all materials, plants and light refreshments. To book, email guy.pullen@clifton.co.uk or call 020 7432 1866.

Clifton Nurseries, 5a Clifton Villas, London W9; www.clifton.co.uk.

Get stuck in at Kids Modern

The sassy selling show Kids Modern has its third birthday on Sunday 18 April 2010 at Dulwich College, with great design ideas for kids from around 50 exhibitors and stall holders. Fine stylish toys, clever storage, funky decor and cool clothes, plus workshops with Clothkits, Lost Values and Stuff Your Doodles. Sew a stylish accessory, make a fuzzy friend with LED eyes, or doodle/make a crazy creature.



When furniture meets fabric: Inbox - a collection of multi-use boxes to optimize space, made from reclaimed plywood

Dulwich College, SE21; www.modernshows.com.

[Miller Goodman - Kids Modern](#)

Tiptoe through the tulips at Waddesdon Manor

People love visiting the Waddesdon Manor most of all National Trust houses. It was built 130 years ago by Baron Ferdinand Rothschild - a great Victorian pile-up that looks like a French chateau landed in the Home Counties, just 40 miles from London.

Their stunning Tulip Festival is open now until the end of the month, from 10am to 5pm (you will need a gardens ticket) Admire two new tulip beds in front of the house with a dazzling array of special varieties - check the website for what's flowering when. Get to grips with history on a guided tours of the ground floor - Fridays 9, 16, 23 and 30 April 2010 at 11.30am, at £5, plus normal admission charges. Booking essential on 01296 653226.

And snap up a garden gem at the Spring Plant Fair at the Plant Centre on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 April, from 10.30am to 4pm, admission free.

Waddesdon, near Aylesbury, Bucks; 01296 653226; www.nationaltrust.org.uk.



[Hothouse flowers](#)

Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, W5; 020 8567 1227; www.ealing.gov.uk/pmgalleryandhouse.

Hothouse news

Huge photographs of flowers, "painted" on her computer are the signature style of Jane Gordon Clark, artist, designer and writer on design, who trained in Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford. Her work is in Hothouse Flowers, a solo show at the Tom Faulkner furniture showroom open now until June 2010. 79-89 Lots Road, London, SW10; 020 7351 7272.

Soane view

Pitzhanger Manor, the "dream home" Sir John Soane designed for his own use, is showing Portals now until 1 May. Artist Helene Uffren works with glass and photography to create intriguing view of the house. Admission free.

Ask Alfie

On Saturday 17 April, the first of three "nostalgia events" at Alfies famous antique market celebrates the glamorous and elegant pre-war period of the 1920s and 1930s. See highlights from dealers' collections, enjoy music and reading, learn more about the era, and have tea at the Rooftop Restaurant, from 10am to 6pm.

Alfies Antique Market, 13-25 Church Street, Marylebone, London, NW8; 020 7723 6066.

The Ideal Home Show 2010

Until 5 April 2010. The Ideal Home Show, supported by Homes & Property is the largest home show in the world, with over 500 exhibitors. Five stunning show houses include the worldwide launch of a brand new British housing concept: the CUB "plug-in" home, an easy-access "module" that is instant, affordable, stylish and carbon-neutral.

The show is packed with home improvements, DIY ideas and crafts, as well as talks in the "how to" theatre, one-to-one sessions with trade and professional experts, and hands-on demonstrations. Buy top tools and gadgets and hear the latest on energy-saving, recycling and other green issues. Explore the "ideal allotment" for fruit and veg in a confined space and a fantasy garden for Alice in Wonderland.



[This huge event at Earls Court is the largest home show in the world, with over 500 exhibitors](#)

Tickets: weekday tickets (adult) cost £15 on the door (£10 in advance); weekend, £17 (£12); weekday concession, £11 (£9); children under 16 years are free. Late night Thursday, 5-9pm, £5. 50p per ticket sold goes to the soldiers' charity; details from www.idealhomeshow.co.uk/ideal-homes-for-heroes.

* Earls Court Exhibition Centre, Warwick Road, SW5; 0844 412 4650; www.idealhomeshow.com.

What's on at the V&A

Quilt-making got a radical new image when Tracey Emin took it up. Her work is just one of around 65 finely-crafted pieces in **Quilts** (some over 300 years old), a major new show open now until 4 July.

Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill runs until 4 July. Walpole was a leading 18th-century English collector, but his treasures were auctioned off by his heir in 1842. This show reassembles around 250 of them, evoking the interiors of Strawberry Hill, Britain's finest example of Gothic revival architecture.

Decode: Digital Design Sensations continues in the Porter Gallery until 11 April, with an astounding selection of digital and interactive art and design by over 35 international artists, designers and studios.

* The V&A Museum, Cromwell Road, South Kensington, SW7; www.vam.ac.uk/decode.

* For more by Barbara Chandler, see her latest blog at anmblog.typepad.com/chandler.

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