

Royal visit celebrates World Heritage honour

The Queen joined celebrations to mark Kew's status as a new World Heritage site by unveiling a commemorative plaque at Kew this summer. The Queen and Prince Philip delighted crowds during the royal visit on 4 June. Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh, accompanied by senior staff and Kew's director, Professor Sir Peter Crane, enjoyed a whistle-stop tour of the Palm House and Waterlily House, where they met staff and their families. Kew's longest-serving staff joined other guests in the newly opened Nash Conservatory to see the Queen unveil a plaque commemorating Kew's inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage site list.



The Queen enjoys a tour of the Palm House during her visit to mark Kew's new status as a UNESCO World Heritage site

Climbers and Creepers success

Kew's latest attraction, Climbers and Creepers, has proved a big hit with visitors. The interactive botanical play area – thought to be the UK's first – has attracted nearly 30,000 visitors since it opened in June. Liz Noble, children's zone supervisor, explains, "We get about 1,000 visitors a day, and 19 out of 20 comments are wholly positive."

There are around 15 indoor learning activities that provide

sights, sounds and smells to help children learn about plants through play. There is also an outdoor play area and facilities for school groups. Some 25 volunteers or 'funsters' help out in the zone, along with Kew horticulturists who provide specialist workshops for children and school parties. Further information on Climbers and Creepers can be found at www.kew.org.



Learning about plants is proving to be child's play at Climbers and Creepers

Alpine expert Tony Hall continues his research



Tony Hall, one of Kew's most respected and admired plantmen of recent times, has been made an Honorary Research Associate following his retirement this year. This means that the former Alpine Unit manager's acclaimed work on Juno irises can continue.

Tony's eminent career at Kew spanned more than 30 years,

during which his passion for alpine plants led him to become respected throughout the alpine world (see Issue 43, Winter 2003). A lasting legacy is his contribution to the planning and design of the new Alpine House.

At his retirement party, which was attended by Kew staff both past and present, Kew's director, Professor Sir Peter Crane, told

Tony, "Your meticulous attention to plant culture has greatly enhanced the value of the collections and has helped raise the profile of Kew."

The Juno irises at Kew have been granted National Collection status by the NCCPG, thus honouring Hall's special and lasting contribution to the *Iris* genus.