

KINGSTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS FOR March 2012

On Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> Kingston History Society members welcomed Samantha Short the visitor experience manager from "Overbecks" National Trust property. Samantha explained how she had been working in Birmingham but after seeing a photo of "Overbecks" in the NT magazine she decided to apply for her present position. We were treated to some interesting photos of the original house called "Sharpitor" & the creation of this stunning garden. The first house was demolished & the present one built. It was used as a convalescent home in World War 1 & we were shown poignant messages & photos of romances between VADs & injured servicemen recorded in an Autograph book. Then in 1928 the property was bought by the scientist Otto Overbecks who embarked on some interesting experiments the first of which was making non-alcoholic beer which surprising enough didn't succeed in making much money! The second invention was the production of a rejuvenator which was supposed to restore & lengthen life to those who used it. Some of Otto's inventions can be seen in the Museum at Overbecks today including the rare polyphon which plays melodies to the visitor & we also heard about George the friendly ghost. It was lovely to see a young presenter so interested in her subject. The evening concluded with refreshments & a chance to chat informally to Samantha about plans to restore the hundred year old greenhouse & expand planting in the exotic garden.