

# JANE WERNICK'S HAPPY PLACE

The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew has long been a favourite place to visit, with its extensive gardens, full of interesting trees and plants, and its collection of beautiful glasshouses. It appeals to serious botanists, lovers of architecture and structure and those who just want a peaceful place to walk or have a picnic. Recently Kew has been continuing the Victorian tradition of building projects that are embedded in the park, and for me, one of the happiest is the Xstrata Treetop walkway which provides a 180 metre long stroll through the deciduous trees originally laid out by Capability Brown, at a height above ground of 18 metres.

As others have mentioned, one's feeling of happiness in a particular place will usually be the result of a number of factors. So for me, leaning against the handrail a couple of Sundays ago, my pleasure probably came as much from knowing that I had had a hand in its design, and hearing all the good comments around me, as from the built object itself. The project, the brainchild of Kew's head arboriculturalist Tony Kirkham, aimed to engender a greater love of trees amongst young people, and an understanding of how important they are to our planet. I am sure this will happen. With such an enthusiastic client, and a equally committed team of architect and builder (Britland Steel) we had just come to the end of one of our happiest projects.

As well as being educational the project is also about producing a feeling of delight, which is a constant aim of the architects, Marks Barfield. This is achieved firstly by bringing us up high amongst the branches, into a position that we very

