

LAURA PONSONBY

Laura Ponsonby worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens , Kew, for over 25 years, first as a Guide Lecturer and then as Education Officer . She was particularly concerned with the outstanding Economic Botany Collection, first started by Sir William Hooker , Kew's first Director, in 1847. Much of this Collection of some 90,000 items derives from India and includes fibres, dyes, textiles, fruits, vegetables ,spices, musical instruments and a fine collection of timbers. It is much used for research, education and exhibitions.

Now a freelance lecturer, Laura gives many talks on various aspects of Kew's history and work, as well as a number of other subjects, including the life and work of the Victorian artist, Marianne North.

Laura is the author of "The Flowering Plants and Ferns of Haslemere and District" and "Marianne North at Kew Gardens".

(Laura was trained at the Guildhall School of Music and is particularly fond of playing chamber music in her spare time. Other hobbies include gardening, cooking, calligraphy, looking at old buildings, travelling and sorting the family archives).