



**FRIENDS OF
CARSHALTON
WATER TOWER**

Chairman's Report 2022/23

I would like to thank you and your Committee very much indeed for making our 30th Anniversary Year such a success and for all the support you have given over these years. Our Orangery display, *The Way We Were*, did surprise, shock and please many visitors who had not realised what has been achieved to date. This could not have been possible without you.

We celebrated our anniversary year with a fuller programme of events. These commenced in April with the Trustees' reception for the Freemasons of Carshalton Lodge who most generously contributed money towards the Friend's new chairs. And the scale model, funded from Bob Steel's legacy, was unveiled in the Pump Chamber. In May the Purcell Players' well tempered concert of chamber music pleasingly filled the Water Tower. In June, to follow our AGM, we had an enlightening talk given by Ian Betts, *Baths and Bathing in Georgian London*. Ian linked our bathroom in with the London bathing scene. This was followed by our traditional strawberry tea, with anniversary cake and sparkling wine to mark this celebratory occasion.

Also in June, by popular demand, the colourful Regency The Dansant was staged and greatly enjoyed. In August we celebrated the generosity of those who had very kindly contributed to the Tree Fund with a progress around the lake area to see the newly planted trees and took refreshments in the Hermitage.

Our free September openings were a great success and we are very pleased to report that our visitor numbers appear to be steadily growing after the pandemic. John Freeman, in October, delighted us with his montage of highlights from his *Times Past* programmes seen over the years. The Christmas Soiree and floodlighting the Water Tower completed our year.

This year has started no less challengingly, not with the scheduled events but with hires which Julia is so ably managing. We were pleased that in April Amanda Hill devised a Quiz for us with a Royal theme. It was well supported and great fun. We will have Andrew Skelton's talk, *Tales of Old Cheam*, to follow our AGM. The Purcell Players will return at the beginning of July with a mosaic of Mozart's works. Please join us, if you were unable to attend last year, they will not disappoint. In September we will have a new Hermitage forecourt area and the lake railings refurbished. We will celebrate this work when completed. John will devise another *Times Past* programme for us in October and the year will finish with our Soiree.

Our Orangery Exhibition, *The Water Tower: In the Eye of the Artist*, has been well received so far. It was devised to contrast with last year's topic, to give our returning visitors something new to view and to gather as many past images of the Water Tower as possible for our Archive.

We are very pleased that many Friends and Volunteers have helped us over the past year and greatly thank them. Paul Freeman has so ably run our website, Jeff Gertz, apart from regularly cutting our grass, agreed to arrange and manage the Hermitage works. Doris Freeman made our heritage openings so popular with her homemade cakes, managing the teas and organising the raffles at our events. We thank our Sunday Stewards, Margaret Coombs, Lynda Cooper, Anne Dodwell, Viorica Feler-Morgan, John Greig, Clive Orton, Julia Staggs, Tony Thorpe, Leo Wenker and Derek Yeo, for making our visitors welcome, and without whom we could not open to the public. Your Committee, Julia, Simone, Hannah, our two Johns and Robert, have worked hard to manage the Water Tower and sustain its upkeep. And we are fortunate that Amanda agreed to join the Committee in the autumn and took on the role of our Treasurer. Amanda is a great asset.

But it is with an extremely heavy heart that I report the death of John Thornton and our deepest sympathies are with his son, Richard. John was a founder member of the Friends' Committee and formerly the Minute Secretary for the Trustees. John was our Newsletter Editor, and took on the role of our Treasurer, after Liz died, until late last year. He was always willing to be a Sunday Steward, a guide for private parties, and organise stalls at fairs to give us publicity. Always supportive, his presence is greatly missed. But John has given us a tangible lasting memory and for which we are so grateful. John designed our Water Tower logo.

Jean Knight, Chairman of the Friends