



NEWSLETTER

No. 49, August 2012

FRIENDS OF CARSHALTON WATER TOWER

The year so far

After an awful start with the abysmal weather and our visitor numbers down it seemed that our 20th Celebratory year would come and go with hardly a murmur but the weather and visitor numbers did not get the better of us and there has really been quite a buzz to date! *Jean Knight*

Heritage Quiz Night

As usual, the annual Quiz Night on 21 April launched the season's programme of events and this year we again had Amanda to test our knowledge as Whitehall stalwart Carol Jenkin had unfortunately had some serious health problems and was unable to celebrate Whitehall's last year's win. (I am happy to say that she is much improved and in circulation again.) It was a close-run contest this time and the eventual winners were the team from St Elpheges. Our thanks to Amanda and to all the contestants. *JT*

'Times Past VII¹ - Spring repeat Showing

A repeat showing of 'Times Past' on a Saturday afternoon suits those who prefer a daytime trip to the Water Tower and gives an opportunity to those who missed last October's showing. A second showing of these Archive documentary films does attract a smaller audience but produces a good total attendance for the two showings, and it was pleasing to see a number of people who viewed the films in October returning for a second look.

The programme was in two halves with the first half having a British holiday theme from 1940s to 1960s, starting with a look at Motor Rail and Ferries operated in the 1960s, and followed by seven short clips from films promoting British holidays, including some unusual ones, such as 'Farm Holidays' (1944), 'Amphibious Caravan' (1955) and 'Family Cycling Holiday' (1961). The first half of the programme ended with a 1955 film about holidays on the Yorkshire coast.

Films in the second half of the programme started with a very old promotional film from the 1930s for Rington's Tea, followed by a 1953 cartoon on the History of the Motor Car from BP, and a 1948 film from RoSPA on road safety featuring the Lancashire police. The final film of the programme, 'Market Place' (1959), narrated by the late Sid James, took a look at London's street markets comparing them with the new supermarkets of the time. Also included in the programme was a short silent film 'Washday Blues' from around 1960 by the late Charles Bailey, who was a BBC cameraman and an uncle of one of our Friends committee members. This shows the frustration of a South London housewife when it rains on washday.

On Friday 26 October, to mark the Friends 20th Anniversary I hope to include in the new 'Times Past VIII' at least two popular films first seen before in the early 1990s. These were originally presented on 16mm film, but have now been converted to video. *John Freeman*

Museums at Night

We reopened on a Sunday evening in May to support the national Museums at Night initiative as we have done formerly but we had very few visitors. This was very disappointing as volunteers had given up their evening to give conducted tours. The lack of support may have been in part due to the awful weather and the fact very few tickets were sold in advance. In the organizer's publicity there was also a greater accent this year on sleepovers in participating museums which is unsuitable for our venue. *JK*

Carshalton House Opening

Carshalton House Opening on Sunday 3 June was arranged by Val Murphy of the LBS Heritage Department and went extremely well. It proved to be very popular this year in spite of Royal competition. There were two tours lead as usual by Andrew Skelton. We had a very good arrangement with Val this year as the ticket price included entry to the Water Tower which secured us an income and our catering team were hard at work providing teas for the visitors. Doris Freeman's cakes were very much appreciated by visitors and volunteers alike!

Wandle Valley Festival

There was some confusion about the dates of this festival this year. The organizers decided very late in the day to open two weekends because of the Jubilee Celebrations. These dates however both clashed with our support of Carshalton House Opening and the Open Garden Squares event. As we wished take part we took their first date on offer. The organizers did not get the financial support they had had formerly and visitor numbers reflected the sparse publicity. However we were able to welcome some enthusiastic 'Wandlers' and their children.

London Open Gardens

We opened again in June in support of the Open Garden Squares Weekend scheme, organised by London Parks & Gardens Trust. As usual we sold very few tickets. However to our surprise, although we are geographically on the periphery, with very few gardens open in this area, we were delighted to welcome so many visitors who had purchased weekend tickets elsewhere. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to conduct garden tours with so many enthusiastic people. We also, with thanks to our catering volunteers and a tasty selection of Doris' home made cakes, had the opportunity to raise funds by selling teas again.

JK

20th Anniversary Celebrations at the AGM

Despite the dreadful summer we were lucky to have a sunny day for our AGM. It was well attended and the agenda was worked through without a hitch. Liz Thornton, our Treasurer, was no longer standing and Jean thanked her for all her hard work and support. She was presented with an orchid and Life Membership of the Friends.

More people came for the film show 'A Day in the Life of the BBC' presented by John Freeman. This was followed by our Anniversary Tea, with a selection of sandwiches and strawberries and cream. A special cake bearing an image of the Water Tower was cut and there was a toast and a vote of thanks from Jean to all Friends, helpers and the Committee.

We all look forward to many more successful years looking after our lovely building. *JG*

The 'Cider Fest'

Originally conceived as a sort of rustic cider and folksong evening in the Hermitage, this event began quite early on to transform itself into something rather more recherché as it became clear that the programme proposed by Gerald Place (who entertained us at last year's Christmas Soiree) was more wide-ranging, and better suited to the Orangery in the Tower. If you have not heard Gerald, he is a tenor who also plays recorder and viola da gamba, and on this occasion was accompanied on the lute by Dorothy Linell in a

programme of Shakespeare songs and songs of his time by John Dowland, Thomas Morley and others. The concert - eventually advertised as 'Midsummer Minstrelsy' - drew an appreciative audience, who also enjoyed the various ciders, cheese and apples provided in the interval. **JT**

Dutch Tile Gifts

We were extremely fortunate to be given two Dutch period tiles by John Pickup and two by a French Friend Marie-Therese Defrenet. These are now on display for your viewing on the door recess wall in the Pump Chamber of the Water Tower.

Friends of Carshalton Water Tower on Facebook

Paul Freeman, who manages our website, introduces us to Facebook and looks to its future uses and benefits, now the Friends have a Facebook page.

No matter who you are or where you've been, everyone by now will have heard of Facebook, stylised by a little blue square with a white 'F' inset. The premise started very simply as a way for American university students to keep in contact with each other. As with so many simple ideas it grew and grew, until two months ago Facebook floated on the US stock market, and it is estimated to hit 1 billion users worldwide by August 2012 and 47% of the UK's population has an account.

Facebook works by 'posting' comments, photos or video's on a user's timeline. These are often from friends and family and can reflect a user's feeling, activity or help with a question, useful or otherwise - 'What was the best thing before sliced bread?' Others that are your agreed friends can reply to these, post their own comments in response and before you know it you are seeing pictures of distant relatives grow up, unusual holiday destinations or activities that may appeal to you or even play scrabble online with a friend in Australia. Used in the right way this is an excellent example of social media.

This is a very simplified explanation, but how does this affect the Water Tower? Well, with a little help from you, your friends and family, we hope in a very positive way, as the Friends are now on Facebook as a group. When a user adds, or 'likes' a group, just like their friends, posts that the group make show up in that user's updates. This gives us an added medium of being able to instantly communicate with interested parties. This can be used to promote events at the Tower, give reminders about openings or information about changes, such as the cancellation of the Christmas Soiree when we had the heavy snow in 2010. It can also give an insight into-what visitors may be thinking or how many might be attending an upcoming event so that we can cater accordingly.

This can only begin to work by growing our list of people who 'like' the Water Tower on Facebook, only then will we reach friends of Friends and find new visitors. By starting now it is hoped that by mid-2013 we will have a good number of users and so keep the Water Tower fresh in their minds.

So to all those who are on Facebook already or have family or friends that are interested in the work we do please ask them to visit www.carshaltonwatertower.com or www.facebook.com/carshaltonwatertower and click on the 'like' button.

If you are not on Facebook you can see a simplified version of our group by using the Facebook link above or why not visit www.facebook.com/rnli to see a charity who are using Facebook to full effect.

What next... Twitter?

Festival of British Archaeology

To mark the Festival in July, Andrew Skelton prepared an exhibition recording excavations that have taken place on the campus in recent years and on the final Sunday Andrew and fellow-archaeologist Jeff Perry conducted tours of the various sites. Professor Clive Orton and John Phillips were also on hand to answer visitors' questions, and at the end of the tour, Doris, Julia and Patricia were there to provide tea and cakes. On the next page, Andrew expands on the subject.

Archaeology of the Carshalton House Estate

The archaeological heritage of the Carshalton House landscape is of great depth and breadth, as illustrated in the exhibition of information and finds assembled to participate in the Council of British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology, held in the last two weeks in July. There are two principal areas of interest: that of the prehistoric and Roman occupation sites to the west and north-east, of the Water Tower, and of the 18th to 20th century estate landscape which is still visible around us. In our two guided walks, Jeff Perry and I explained that there is evidence for almost continual occupation from the Mesolithic to the modern period - almost 10,000 years - highlighting in particular excavations of the later Bronze Age occupation site along the western boundary of the site found when building new school facilities in the former Kitchen Garden and Orchard areas, and also the area around the Water Tower and its original surroundings.

The exhibition included photographs and drawings of these excavations, along with a summary of the evidence. The finds displayed ranged in date from the Mesolithic (c10-6,000BC) to a Holy Water Stoup of the 20th century found during excavations on top of the Hermitage. A full range of pottery, including the Middle Bronze Age Collared Urn probably used as a cremation urn and disturbed during the 18th century, Saxon pottery, and a (once) beautiful tin-glazed Flower Pot, found in excavations on the site of the former greenhouse in the lower Kitchen Garden. Unusual finds on display included a name tag for Belgian student Daisy Halot (1894-1954, at St Philomena's c1912-1916), and the remains of a German Imperial Naval Sword dated from 1848, but likely to have been broken and discarded in the Water Tower at the time of the occupation of the estate by the Royal Ordnance Cadet School in the mid-19th century.

Despite the uncertain weather and the advent of the Olympics, the moderate number of visitors who attended the afternoon and took part in one of the two guided walks were able to appreciate the value of the archaeological record on the Carshalton House estate. In preparing for the event I would like in particular to thank my colleague Jeff Perry, and John Phillips and Clive Orton who acted as 'Special Stewards'. Finally John Freeman, as always, provided invaluable background assistance without which the exhibition would not have been possible. *Andrew Skelton*

Heigh Ho, Come to the Fair (again)

Some of you came and talked to us in the War Memorial Garden at the Carshalton Charter Fair, and again on the day the Olympic Torch came by. Well, we shall be pitching our tent (or gazebo) once more on Bank Holiday Monday at the Environmental Fair in Carshalton Park, so if you can find us, come and say hello.

Calling all Gardeners, a Garden Working Party!

Tony has arranged a garden working party on Saturday 20 October. All are welcome from 10.30 am. As usual refreshments and a light lunch will be provided. Please contact Tony Allen on 01737 354690 if you would like further details.

*Friends of Carshalton Water Tower: Secretary Julia Gertz, 136 West Street, Carshalton SM5 2NR
(The working Committee of the Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust. Registered Charity No. 1086243)*

www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk