



FRIENDS OF  
CARSHALTON  
WATER TOWER

# NEWSLETTER

No. 66, MARCH 2021

## Dear Friends

During the past year, which has profoundly marked all our lives, we wish to thank you very much indeed for your continuing support of our beautiful Water Tower.

We have planned our first opening on Sunday 18th April, from 2.30 pm. but at the moment this looks very doubtful. However, as soon the government lifts restrictions, we will be open and will get our planned events out to you as soon as we can put dates to them. But we have had our public presence, during this very exacting time, with the illumination of the Water Tower at night, this year into February.

We are still hoping to be able to celebrate the addition of the permanent information board for the Hermitage in May.

This display has already been made and we will install it in the spring, ready for our opening. We will have, of course, Amanda's entertaining Quiz, John Freeman's very interesting Times Past film footage, our AGM with our talk and cream tea, our Christmas Soirée and much more, if Covid allows. Although this year will possibly still be disjointed, in when we can offer events, next year will be our **30th Birthday as Friends!** We are planning our celebratory events, and hoping to make it an extremely special year for all our Friends and volunteers!

## The Water Tower: Interior Decorating

Now that we have had the terrace roof repaired, the painters will start work on 1st March to repaint the Saloon wall and ceiling where it has been damaged by water and the Orangery is going to be completely redecorated so that it is fresh to start our season.

## The Garden Committee

We are very pleased to report that the Trust has re-established the Garden Committee under the Chairmanship of Tony Thorpe. You are most welcome to join this committee if you wish, which is scheduled to meet four times a year. If you would like to join the New Garden Committee, please contact Julia.

Work has already started on putting railings along the drive to the Water Tower, on the lake side, from the Sham Bridge to the Causeway.

Some years ago we had a layered hedge planted along the drive, to replace the wooden picket fence as it grew, to offer more habitat for wildlife and prevent St Mary's School children from being able to get onto the lake banks and into the lake bed. Initially the hedge grew successfully but vehicles have consistently driven into it and in areas it is no longer acting as a barrier. In the interest of safety for the children, the Trustees decided to have metal railings installed, with the hope that any damage caused by vehicles will be repaired by St Mary's School from their maintenance budget.

We are very happy to report that there is water in the lake bed and, to add to our wildlife inhabitants, we have a pair of beautiful Egyptian geese (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*). These, native of sub-tropical Africa, were considered sacred by the ancient Egyptians and this is quite understandable as their feathers are very pretty subtle colours.

### Daniel Defoe in Carshalton

Daniel Defoe was charismatic and extremely worldly, having been a soldier, merchant, journalist and novelist. He published over 500 works, perhaps the most famous today are *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. Defoe was also employed as a spy for William III and later for government ministers, and he had several brushes with the Law.

Sometime between very late 1722 and 1723 we find Defoe writing about Carshalton, *a country village situated among innumerable springs of water, which all together, form a river in the very street of the town, and joining the other springs which come from Croydon and Bedington, make one stream, which are called the river Wandell. This village seated among such delightful springs, is yet all standing upon firm chalk: and having the Downs close adjoining, makes a most agreeable spot on all this side of London.*

I am certain that most of us would still agree that Carshalton is still a most agreeable place.

Defoe continues by writing that the evidence is: *as is abundantly testified by its being, as it were, crowded with fine houses of the citizens of London; some of which are built with such a profusion of expense, that they look rather like seats of the nobility, than country houses of citizens and merchants; particularly those of Sir William Scawen; lately deceased, who besides immense estate in money, has left, as I was told, one article of nine thousand pounds a year to his heir: and was himself since the Great Fire of London, only Mr Scawen, a Hamborough merchant, dealing by commission, and not in any view of such an increase of wealth, or any thing like it.*



Sir William Scawen was, by the time of his death on 18th October 1722, Governor of the Bank of England and a neighbour of Sir John Fellowes. There was a certain amount of rivalry between the two men.

Of Sir John, Defoe said: *The other house that of Sir John Fellowes, late sub-governor of the South-Sea Company, who having the miss fortune to fall in the general calamity of the late directors, lost all his unhappy wealth, which he had gained in that company and a good honestly and gotten estate of his own into the bargain; I can not dwell on all the fine houses in this and all the neighbouring villages: but I must take a trip here cross the Downs to Epsome.*

Defoe tells us of Sir John's demise with the crash of the South Sea Company, and appears to have some sympathy for him over the loss of his Estate. This Company, the South Sea Company, and Dodgy Bankers are the subjects of our Orangery Display this Year.

The quotations are from: *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, reprint Penguin Classic, 1986 edition, pages 167-8.

## **End of Adobe Flash software means a New Website for the Carshalton Water Tower**

You may have noticed some prominence in the press and on TV of the end of Adobe Flash Player software, which has for over twenty years been incorporated into computer browsers like Microsoft Internet Explorer. Flash was once one of the most popular ways for people to stream videos and play games online, and brought animations and interactivity to the early web and, as it worked in the background, many would not have realised its significance. But Adobe Flash Player had security problems and failed to transition to the smartphone era. Adobe no longer supports Flash Player and blocked Flash content from running in Flash Player from the 12th January 2021.

The end of the Adobe Flash software by Moonfruit, our service provider, has not affected those using the site, but problems were found when we came to making updates. Moonfruit have now provided a basic editor to make some changes, but it was found unusable. Using the latest version of their website builder would be a way forward leaving us to rebuild the site with them.

However, as Moonfruit are increasing our subscription by 20% in February, starting with a new provider is a better way forward and will give us more flexibility in the future. We have chosen to use a new hosting provider, 34SP.com.

They kindly offer charity hosting, as also used by Friends of Honeywood, which in turn will actually lower our costs. This is especially important after the last year where we have been unable to generate any income from events and openings.

We will keep our current web address for the new site. There will inevitably be disruption while the site is built, with possibly no site on line at times or only a basic page available as we proceed. However, we will continue to give information via Facebook.

Find us as [www.facebook.com/carshaltonwatertower](http://www.facebook.com/carshaltonwatertower). The new website will look different with simple and modern layout to aid future editing and better security. Whilst there will be changes we expect that content will remain unchanged and will continue to inform and inspire visitors from around the world. More information as we go forward.

*Paul Freeman*

## **Twenty-one years of winter floodlighting the Water Tower: A look back.**

The floodlighting of the Carshalton Water Tower was delayed over the recent festive season due to the replacement of the roof surface (see our November 2020 Newsletter). However, we managed to set up the floodlights before Christmas and made up for the lost time by running the lighting into February 2021. At this time it's good to remember how the floodlighting of the Tower came about.

On the evening 31st December 1999, a group of the Friends assembled at the tower to witness the first switching on of the floodlighting and to crack open a bottle or two to celebrate the event and the coming of the New Millennium. That year the lights ran during only part of January. There was good feedback from all who saw the Tower illuminated during this short period. But the true benefits were to be achieved over a longer period of time.

For my sins I suggested lighting up the Tower to celebrate the coming Millennium. I did however have access to suitable lighting components through my job at the time in electrical product safety testing, which included lighting. In 1999 domestic 500 watt halogen floodlights were used in pairs for the North and South upper faces of the Tower, with the East (road) side of building illuminated by one floodlight on the flat roof of the stairwell and another lower down on an extending parapet. The installation was considered temporary and, with little access to the building over the winter, cables could be safely laid across the flat roof, with power fed from a socket in the Orangery via a cable taken up the stairs to the top landing. It was not possible to light the West Tower face as this would have exceeded the loading on the 13-amp socket in the Orangery.

It was considered good to continue to floodlight the Tower over the festive season in future years. In the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 the floodlighting was started a week or so before Christmas, and a local pub paid a donation to help cover the electricity cost for a couple of years. The same original setup was still being used for the lighting, but the system needed to be upgraded to remove the trailing cables and to illuminate the Tower's west face.

Plans were made for more power, a safer installation, and easier setup. A cable located in the loft space above the Orangery allowed for an increase in power supply for the floodlights to 16 amps. Using this supply a new control panel including a 16-amp industrial socket was installed in the loft space, accessed via a hatch almost at the top of the stairs to the roof.

On the roof there was a need to get rid of the trailing cables: so, funded by a grant from Sutton Arts Council, I installed four weatherproof 13-amp sockets and armoured cable attached below the parapet around the roof area. This permanent outside wiring does not form part of the Tower's fixed mains wiring, so roof sockets and wiring can be isolated (unplugged in the loft) when floodlighting is not required. Floodlights in most cases are simply placed in position and plugged into the adjacent socket. The West face of the Tower can now be illuminated, as a socket is to be provided in this area. Setting up and control can be made via the loft hatch door without any degree of technical knowledge. The system ran successfully for three further seasons but, with a power consumption of 4000 watts, it was expensive to run and not environmentally friendly. Also the bulbs needed regular replacement.

At work in 2005 I was safety-testing an advanced generation of floodlights using ceramic discharge metal: it occurred to me that they might be suited to future floodlighting of the Tower, so I approached the manufacturer to see if they would pass on the test samples. They agreed on the understanding we would provide photographs of the Tower floodlit. The new arrangement was for 150-watt models for the North, West and South faces of the Tower and two 70-watt models for the front of the tower – all situated in the same positions as the old halogen floodlights. The new lights are very efficient, producing high light output and a good colour rendering well suited to architectural floodlighting. The lower power usage – 590 watts down from 4000 watts – also reduces running costs, and reliability has been very good over their 15 years of use. No special high-power supply is required for the CMD floodlights and the cabling is now connected to a standard 13-amp socket installed in the loft, used with a normal plug-in timer for control. Arrangements each year are for the floodlights to be set up and run from the start of December to the end of January, when they are then stored in the loft for the next festive season.

We have had many good reports that the public like to see the Tower floodlit and pictures people take have often appeared on social media giving us additional publicity. We hope to continue to keep the Water Tower floodlit in the future.

*John Freeman*



South & West Floodlights  
setout out on the new roof surface



Tower Floodlit December 2020



Arrangement for lighting the front of the  
Tower from the roof of the stair well

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*(The working Committee of the Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust. Registered Charity No. 1086243)*

[www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk](http://www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk)