



FRIENDS OF CARSHALTON WATER TOWER

Chairman's Annual Report 2009/10

This has been a very exciting year. We have been extremely fortunate in having received very generous gifts and donations. Several of our Friends & Volunteers have gone that extra distance to be of such a great help and your Committee has really risen to every occasion, irrespective of the difficulties.

The tiles, which were so kindly donated to us by the Daughters of the Cross of Liege, have been arranged to form two panels. These are now on display in the Pump Chamber. This has only been made possible because of the benevolence of our Friends and the grant of just over £1,000 from the Mercers' Company. We have had a beautiful painting of the Hermitage most generously given by Mr Grahame Berridge which we will display in the Orangery. We have also been given shelving by GlaxoSmithKline, which is now set up in the Lodge, for the creation of our archive and resource centre. This had been so kindly arranged by our Friend, John Greig. We have at last managed to raise enough funds to commence the restoration of our folly, the Sham Bridge. Viridor Credits have given us a most excellent start with their grant of £20,000 and the work on our ornamental bridge, much to our pleasure, is well underway. We have also been able, during the year, to have a new door made and installed in West Street. We hope that you have noticed the improvement.

The Friends' Committee have organised a successful and interesting series of events. After our last AGM, we had a most informative talk by Andrew Skelton to update us on his latest research about Sir John Fellowes and the Water Tower, with an intriguing reference to two baths in our Bathroom. Unfortunately Sweet Harmony, who were to give us a concert of Mozart's music in period style dress, at the end of June, had to be cancelled because of Martha Kingdon Ward's ill health. July and August were busy with private hires and tours, so ably arranged by Julia, and our stalls at the Environmental Fair and Carshalton Charter Fair. In September we had numerous visitors for our support of both London Open House and the National Heritage Open Weekends. We had an extremely enjoyable October with two very popular, although completely different events, Beer, Bangers and Mash and Times Past, Transport IV, for which John Freeman produced a most enjoyable interesting programme. All the Committee had a role in making our beer tasting so successful and our great thanks to our excellent chefs.

The Christmas Soirée rounded off 2010 beautifully in seasonal mood with mulled wine, readings so ably recited by Liz, John and Simone and technical support from John Freeman. The winter seemed incredibly long even with the Water Tower beautifully illuminated and requests for hires. However not long enough, as the Committee were hard at work getting a Programme of Events together for this calendar year. It was decided, if possible, to support more local and national events.

At last our 2010 season started and there was a very merry band of volunteers for our Water Tower and Garden Working parties in March. These included our Friend and MP, Tom Brake and several

new volunteers. We are extremely pleased to welcome them and they will be a great asset. Our first public event of the year was the traditional Heritage Quiz and our deepest thanks goes to Carol Jenkins, who kindly set our questions again and made the evening so enjoyable. Unfortunately our Friends' Team did not win and the shield went once more to the Friends of Whitehall. May has been busier than we have ever known and delightfully so. John Freeman very kindly offered to re-show his Transport Film IV programme in the afternoon for Friends and the public, who had not wished to come out in the evenings. This was highly successful. We opened the Water Tower for the first time in support of Museums' at Night initiative and had an extremely congenial evening in spite of the awful weather. This event has replace Museums' Month on the national calendar. In mid May we had a wonderful afternoon unveiling our new tile panels in the company of our sponsors. Sister Veronica Hagen, Sister Provincial of the Daughters of the Cross of Liege, who is also a Trustee, unveiled the two new tile panels; Ms Caroline Tate, a Mercer, represented the Mercer's Company and our Friends, who had generously contributed were also present. The Deputy Mayor Councillor, John Leach, gave an address.

At the end of May we opened our display, 'Bridges That Deceive', which will be updated as restoration work on our bridge progresses. This is set up in the Orangery in support of the Carshalton Arts Festival and highlights the restoration work being carried out on our Sham Bridge. At the Private View we were very pleased to welcome Peggy and Denis Philpott, Joan Hartfield and Beverly Shrew who are members of Viridor's, our major sponsor, local Steering Committee. After we were extremely fortunate to have Michael Symes, a landscape garden historian, writer, advisor and a Trustee, give us an illustrated talk, 'Sham & Illusionistic Garden Bridges'. This was very well received. We still have to come in June, before the AGM, the Wandle Valley Festival and Open Garden Squares Weekend, which have formerly been very well supported.

We deeply appreciate the many hours Tony Allen spends, with his team, in keeping the gardens in order, and our special thanks goes to Kay Mills for her work and John Pickup who so kindly has taken on the endless task of re-establishing our posts around the south lawn. We have also worked hard this year to open up the vista to the Mansion and we hope soon to have a new terrace created in front of the Saloon above the wheel race.

We have benefited, even more this year, from our website which Paul Freeman initially designed so well and has been most diligently updating for us with our changing events. Without this advertising tool we would not have continued to heighten our profile or generated the income we have from hirings. We thank Paul very much for the hours he spends on our behalf. We have other wonderful Friends and Volunteers, Doris Freeman, who runs our raffles and makes such excellent cakes, Amanda Hill and our Sunday Stewards, including Ann & John Dodwell, Clive Orton, Tony Thorpe, John Greig, Meg Woodford, Julia Ashford, Beryl Palmier and Patricia Basham, without whom it would be impossible to open to the general public as unfailingly as we do. It is however very sad that we lost such a good and helpful Friend, Philip Graves, who so tragically died in a rail accident. He is truly missed.

Our events, which are absolutely essential for us to generate the type of income needed, are not productive if they are not supported. The Committee, Julia, Liz, Simone, Derek and our two John's all work so hard to try to ensure that they are successful. Please, as Friends, give your Committee and our beautiful heritage all the support you can by advertising, attending the events, hiring and visiting us often. Jean Knight, June 2010.

www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk

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