



FRIENDS OF  
CARSHALTON  
WATER TOWER

**Chairman's Report 2012 - 2013**

Dear Friends and Volunteers

It has been a truly celebratory period. After our last AGM in 2012 we had an extremely enjoyable party to mark the Friends' first 20 years and this year we have featured 21 years of Friends and Volunteers activities in our new Orangery display, *Coming of Age*. In April we had its Private View. Derek, in his role of Chairman of the Trustees, welcomed guests and gave our thanks to John Freeman for his hard work in getting this exhibition together, which will be on show until the end of September.

After our last AGM we viewed the film, *A Day in the Life of the BBC*. It was fascinating to see the workings of the BBC some 50 years ago. We unfortunately had to abandon the Hermitage as the venue for our next event, the *Cider Fest*, due to extremely inclement weather in June but the cider tasted just as good in the Orangery and, sponsored by Simone, the accompanying early English music, was most pleasurable. Still in an historic mode, Andrew Skelton devised two fascinating tours of the grounds, titled *Carshalton House Estate, An Archeological Walk Through Time*, in support of the British Festival of Archaeology. These proved to be very popular as was his special exhibition of archaeological artifacts linked to the Estate. Clive Orton's scholarly explanation of the exhibits for our visitors was also very well received.

As usual we had a stall at the Environmental Fair in Carshalton Park to promote the Water Tower and in September we supported the Nation Heritage and the London Open House weekends again, with free entrance to the general public. We did remarkably well selling teas. This was in no small part due to Doris Freeman's delicious homemade cakes and our Volunteers who helped in giving our customers such good service.

A completely new and extremely interesting programme of archive film, *Times Past VIII*, was devised for us again by John Freeman in October. This programme was very successful and was shown again on an afternoon in mid May this year. Our *Beer Bangers and Mash*, as always, was a sellout. It is remarkably hard work for all the Committee and Volunteers before and on the evening but most enjoyable. Our Christmas Soiree was very well supported. Liz, Simone and John Thornton offered a wonderful choice of seasonal readings whilst John Freeman, as usual, gave his technical support with the music. One of our Friends, Steve Wright, also gave a short talk about stamps which was most interesting.

At the end of the 2012 season, we were delighted to have a £1,000 donation towards the redecoration of the stairs. This work we had hoped to have finished, with an industrial carpet on the treads, before we opened but unfortunately our roofing contractors, who repaired the roof, made an exceptionally bad job of repainting it. We are resolving the situation but until this is finished satisfactorily it would be unwise to carpet the stairs.

We always hope to have a brief sojourn during the winter and just enjoy viewing our floodlit Water Tower and working on the next Friends' programme but this year Julia manfully took a stall for us at the Frost Fair. It was very cold and very crowded but Julia did a splendid job of selling off much of the shop stock that we had had for years.

The new season started well this year with our very popular and friendly event, the Friends' Quiz. Amanda Hill again very generously gave her time to prepare the questions and to be our very sporting Quiz Mistress on the evening. We have supported Museums at Night again this year, with special evening tours, after John's popular afternoon showing of the autumn programme *Times Past VIII*. Also we opened for the London Open Squares event and Carshalton House Opening which have been successful.

We are looking forward very much to John Philip's talk, *The Orangery at Crew Manor and Carshalton House Estate*, just after our AGM and Effie's Strawberry Tea which Simone so kindly arranges now. We are also waiting with great anticipation to our very special event, *An Evening at Vauxhall Gardens*, on 29th June. Michael Symes will evoke the atmosphere of these exceedingly popular eighteenth century Pleasure Grounds for us in his illustrated talk. Light refreshments will also be served. You will miss two real summer treats if you do not come to John's talk about Orangeries or Michael's Vauxhall Gardens experience.

Paul Freeman, who has been making an excellent job of managing our website, has now very cleverly and seamlessly updated it to offer us more facilities including the installation of Facebook. Without our website we would have extremely limited exposure. We thank Paul for his very hard work and this remarkable asset he has given us.

John Thorton manfully took over the accounts from Liz and continues to produce our Newsletter. Also working very hard is Tony Allen with his group of industrious gardeners. They include Jan McHale, John Pickup, Maria and Alan Gellett with help also from Amanda and Tony's wife, Brenda. Although the Trust does employ contractors to carryout the heavy work, we would certain Welcome more gardening volunteers.

Julia worked extremely hard with several hires and numerous group tours during 2012 and although this season had started well, with more Sunday visitors than this period last year, we have extremely few tours or private hires booked in so far. We urge you to consider the Water Tower first if you are thinking of hiring a venue or organizing a visit. The rates are very favourable for Friends and Volunteers. Hires and private tours are vital in giving us an income to carryout the maintenance of our beautiful Water Tower and indeed to pay the electricity bill. We are also desperate for volunteers to help spread the work load. An hour of your time is not too short for us.

Words are not enough, but I wish to thank our Committee, Julia, Simone, our two Johns and Derek. They have been as industrious as ever this year with great supported from their partners Jeff Gertz, Vic Knight and Doris, who has increased our funds considerably with her excellent raffles, very tasty cakes and is always willing to help.

We deeply thank all present Friends for your patronage and our Volunteers who include, Anne & John Dodwell, Clive Orton, Michael Symes, Patricia Basham, Julia Ashford, Beryl Palmier, John Pickup, Dr John Greig, Tony Thorpe, Andrew Skelton, our Trustees who have aided us in a number of ways; helping with our Sunday openings; spreading information about us; attending our events and even organizing events for us. Without this support we could not fulfill our charity status.

Jean Knight - June 2013