



**FRIENDS OF
CARSHALTON
WATER TOWER**

NEWSLETTER

No. 50, February 2013

Our New Season

We hope that you have had an extremely good start to the year, albeit snowy, and that we will have your company at many of our events. For the Friends and Volunteers this is a very good year as we are twenty-one! We will celebrate this with our new season's Orangery display, 'Coming of Age', We are gathering pictures of our past events and key happenings throughout our twenty-one years for this exhibition and do hope that you will be able to attend the Private View on the afternoon of Saturday 13 April. But before this, we do have our traditional Quiz, which is always great fun, to start the year with our excellent Quiz Master, Amanda Hill.

In May John Freeman is giving us a repeat showing of his very popular archive film programme, Times Past VII, this time on Saturday afternoon. If you missed this most interesting event last September or you would like to see it again you will be most welcome. Also on 18 May, but in the evening, we are opening the Water Tower in support of Museums At Night when we will have conducted tours of the Water Tower. On 29 May Carshalton House will be open for the only time this year. Tickets are not available from Julia but can be obtained from Val Murphy. Her details are on the Programme of Events for 2013 information sheet.

June will be an equally interesting month. We are opening as usual in support of London Open Gardens & Squares and will have our 21st AGM on Saturday 15th. This will be followed by a very special talk given by John Phillips. We will gain the benefit of all John's research of the Carew Manor Orangery and ours will not be forgotten. To round off June there is a very exciting evening planned by Michael Symes who will evoke for us the atmosphere and spirit of the very popular eighteenth-century pleasure gardens at Vauxhall, quite a treat!

We intend to have a presence at both Carshalton Charter Fair and the Environmental Fair and we will support the Festival of British Archaeology this year by having tours to the Hermitage. We are also supporting the National Heritage Opening, Open House London and Wandle Festival which is this year linking its events with World Rivers Day at the end of September. In October we will have a very interesting and new programme of digitised archive film, Times Past IX, excellently devised by John, and in December our year would not be complete without our Christmas Soiree with the usual seasonal fare, a carol or two, a delightful selection of pertinent readings and the Water Tower illuminated for the festive season.

We do hope to welcome you and your friends frequently in the coming months both at our events and possibly privately hiring the Water Tower. We also hope that you will have an hour or two to give as a volunteer. This so vital if we are going to be able to show off our beautiful heritage to the general public and continue to have very good years!

Jean Knight

Pre-Opening Working Party

Do please come along to help get the Water Tower and Garden ready for our Open Season on Saturday 16 March. You will be amongst Friends with no time to be bored, and a light Lunch will be provided as usual. Please contact Julia if you can, albeit for an hour. Thank you.

Gordon Rookledge

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of one of our most charismatic Friends, Gordon Rookledge. Always keenly interested in local matters - he had been Chairman of the Carshalton Society and President of the local archaeological society - he was an exceedingly good supporter of the Water Tower. We were particularly privileged to have known him and to play a part in the Celebration of his Life in September when the Water Tower was used for guests after his funeral service which had been held in the War Memorial Garden. We miss him dearly and our thoughts are with Jennie and her family.

Hiring the Water Tower

2012 turned out to be a good year for hires. We had an assortment of bookings, ranging from wedding receptions, birthday parties and baptism parties to a 'Henna Party', where the Tower was transformed with a covering tent and beautiful cushions on the floor. We also had a live music event and it was used as a venue for a funeral gathering. The Water Tower is a very versatile building, so if you are thinking of having a celebration in the near future, this may just be the place for you. Please contact me and I will give you all the details.

Julia Gertz

Splendid Heritage Weekend Openings in September 2012

Last season in September we opened as usual free of charge in support of the National Heritage open days and the London Open House weekend. We used to have many more visitors for the former than the latter. Possibly due to the Borough, in recent years, only supporting the London Weekend with their advertising, the balance has changed. This was compounded last year by the fact that English Heritage, who formerly organised the National Openings had, because of cutbacks, passed the management over to a group of interested parties, headed by the National Trust and we did not have the benefit of their publicity. For these reasons, in our support of the National Open days, we are extending our hours on the Sunday only.

During these days we also try to have as many tours to the Hermitage as our volunteer steward numbers will allow. But it is sometimes difficult to do this because we have too few volunteers over these weekends. We need more stewards than normal in the Water Tower and Julia, Simone, Doris Freeman and Anne Dodwell serve teas, with home-made cakes provided by Liz and Doris, to compensate for the loss of the entry fee.

However these open days were splendid! Not only did our 'Ladies' really boost the funds with their excellent teas, but we can boast visitor numbers in three figures each day. It is extremely worthwhile to know that so many people, often for the first time, wished to view our beautiful Water Tower. But if this was not reward enough, an exceedingly generous couple, so impressed and totally unsolicited, gave us a cheque for £1,000 for the Friends' good works! Well done everyone who was on duty!

Jean Knight

A Range of British Beers featured at Beer Bangers & Mash on 6 October

This year rather than beers from one brewery, a selection from breweries around the country was sampled. A further change had to be made to the event: this year the sausages came from Scott's at Wrythe Green, Carshalton due to the closure of the butchers Woodward's in Carshalton High Street, which had been our supplier for many years. It can be reported however that Scott's sausages were just as popular. Of the five bottled British beers obtained for 2012, three were tasted before the Bangers and Mash supper, and the remaining two after. The first three beers were, 'Black Sheep' from Yorkshire, 'Old Speckled Hen' which was the flagship beer of the Morland brewery, now part of Greene King at Bury St Edmunds. The third beer was 'Banks Bitter' from the Marston's-owned Banks Brewery in Wolverhampton.

After the food and a profitable raffle, which helps to support the upkeep of the Tower, the final two beers were tasted. 'Fortyniner', from the Ringwood Brewery in the heart of the New Forest, another Marston's-owned brewery, bears a name which matches its strength at 4.9%. We ended on a strong dark beer, 'Hobgoblin' from the Wychwood brewery in Oxfordshire, a brewery with its own unique style.

Although I obtained the beer and prepared the tasting programme, I could not present on the night. However my thanks to others who presented the beers, which were well received. Thanks also go to all who attended, and those who worked so hard both before and on the night. This event is very labour-intensive and relies heavily on volunteers. This and rising costs has resulted in Beers Bangers and Mash not being included the 2013 events list.

John Freeman

'Times Past - Transport VIII' Archive Film Show, Friday 26 October

The Saloon at the Tower was again the venue for a well-attended Times Past archive film show. The films can be old documentaries or films used in education and come from various sources looking at a changing Britain during the 1940s to the 1960s.

The following films made up the first part of the programme: 'Long to Reign over Us', 1951, is a film from the time of the death of King George VI. A unique film, being taken by a peer of the realm and very keen amateur cameraman, with privileged access. 'Michael and the Flying Boats', 1949, originally shown at the Tower many years ago, is an educational 16mm film featuring a young boy's trip on a BOAC Flying Boat from its terminal on Southampton Water. 'Your Good Health' is a cartoon from the 1940s produced for the Central Office of Information introducing the new National Health Service. Next were three short humorous Public Information films from the 1940s, made by and featuring Richard Massingham, writer, producer, director and actor: '30 Miles an Hour', 'Don't Spread Germs' and 'Pedestrian Crossing'. The final film in the first part of the show was 'Oss Oss Wee Oss' a unique colour film with sound from 1951 which records the traditional May Day festival held in Padstow, Cornwall based around a Hobbyhorse. It's worth mentioning to those who attended the October showing that the loss of the last few minutes of this film on the DVD, was caused by damage to the centre-hole by the clips in the storage box, which had only been used on the day of the showing.

Three films made up the second half of the programme: 'Down to Sussex', made in 1964, promoting the Sussex seaside, country, and history, was followed by 'Shopping by the Ton' a Look at Life film about London's food markets in 1966. The final film, back by request, was 'All in Good Time' a light-hearted film about a pub in Banbury, its barmaid, and a beer. A film sponsored by Guinness back in 1964, though their name is never spoken during the film.

We will again repeat last October's Times Past VIII at a daytime showing. So you will be welcome at the Tower on the Saturday afternoon of 18 May at 2.30pm. A new Times Past is being scheduled for October, see our website for further details.

John Freeman

The Frost Fair, Saturday 1st December

The annual Environmental Fair is organised by EcoLocal and attended by thousands on August Bank Holiday in Carshalton Park. As usual the Friends had a stall (shared with the Carshalton Society) to promote interest in the Water Tower and advertise our events. Our thanks go to Doris Freeman who, with a friend, supplied a colourful array of merchandise to attract the public.

In December EcoLocal with the Friends of Honeywood promoted a new event - the Frost Fair, held in the Memorial Garden and Honeywood Walk. Again the Friends shared a stall, manned by Julia and Jean. The weather was fine but cold and luckily the stall was inside the marquee. The event was very well supported and we took £153 for the Water Tower. Among the stalls there were, in addition to the usual suspects, traders from the Farmers' Market and there was live music. The Frost Fair may well turn out to be another annual event in view of the astonishing numbers who attended - in fact there were complaints that it was too crowded!

Julia Gertz

The Christmas Soiree, Friday 7 December 2012

We invariably hold our Soiree in early December in the hope that it will introduce the idea of Christmas with some humour, interest and enjoyment. This year we were pleased to see several new faces and received very positive comments at the end of the evening, so ... we guess we achieved our goal!

There was a mixed bag of readings, poems and anecdotes which took us from the rural Christmases of Laurie Lee and D.H.Lawrence, where the calm young carol singers contrasted with the elaborate preparations for a performance in the church. We learnt that in 1942 life was tough for the Land Army girls and that their Christmas Day was barely different from every other day.

Across the Channel, Frederic Mistral painted the Provencal Christmas Eve tradition of the 'Christmas Log' in the 1800s. Less welcome were the Frenchmen who invaded the Isle of Wight at Christmas in 1403. However, Hilaire Belloc restored the tone with exultations of 'Burgundy all the year round'. This somewhat linked with the mulled wine and refreshments awaiting us all during the interval.

Just prior to this, we were fortunate in having some anecdotes and provocative information from Stephen Wright. As he explained some old laws relating to Christmas we realised that we are probably all unwittingly lawbreakers!

After the interval a touch of humour crept in with Richard Steele's letters to 'Mr Spectator' from disgruntled parishioners and we dabbled in the customary ghost story. We did our best to keep up with the carols and the audience sang with gusto and enthusiasm.

Thanks go to all who came, to those who prepared and took part in the Soiree, and to all those of you who have helped **us** during the year. A Happy 2013 to you all.

Simone Guyonvarch

Friends of Carshalton Water Tower: Secretary Julia Gertz, 136 West Street, Carshalton SMS 2NR

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

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