



# NEWSLETTER

No. 56, FEBRUARY 2016

## FRIENDS OF CARSHALTON WATER TOWER

Dear Friends and Volunteers

We hope with this Newsletter that you will lose any winter blues, which you may still have because we have a very exciting programme for you this season. We were going to theme the events around Sir John Fellowes, as it was late this year three hundred years ago that he purchased Carshalton House Estate. However because it is the tercentenary of the birth of the famous landscape architect Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, we could not let it pass without honouring him. Michael Symes has kindly agreed to give us a talk, which I am certain will be most enlightening, in early July, about his work and influence on other garden designers. We will celebrate Sir John's arrival, and his landscape architect Charles Bridgeman's works, next season, by taking the liberty of using the Julian calendar, which Sir John would have used, where the new calendar year did not start until Lady Day, which is on the 25th March.

This year we start our activities with the working party in March and we will certainly welcome anyone who can help, even for an hour. April is going to be a busy month with our first event, a Private View of John Freeman's display in the Orangery. This will show some of the restoration projects we have carried out to date. It will be a free event for you and we welcome your friends but there will be a modest charge for them.

We have acquired a very pleasant habit, and that is to have Amanda Hill as our Quiz Master with her most interesting and sometimes quite challenging questions. So do come and possibly bring your own team of four. It is always fun and this year, with your help, Water Tower may actually come first. April still has more to offer. John will show the second part of his John Betjeman archive film, in his 'Times Past' programme, on a Saturday afternoon. It was very well received last autumn. If you have not already seen it, it is certainly a treat and if you did, it is certainly worth a second viewing.

In May we have reintroduced our celebrations on a European theme and this year it is the Mediterranean. There will be music, a display of dancing and typical food served during the evening and our deepest thanks go to Brenda and Philip Steventon for devising this programme for us.

For our talk after the AGM in June, we will welcome John Phillips. He will give us an illustrated talk about the Old Rectory and update us on the current position of that building and the council plans. There will be an opportunity for a discussion, which will be followed by a strawberry tea. We will open as usual to support London Open Gardens and Squares and hope to support the Carshalton Charter Fair. We look forward to Michael's talk about 'Capability' Brown and the celebration we will have to accompany this special event. Also in July, there will be support for the British Festival of Archaeology with the Orangery display.

At the end of August, we hope to have a presence at the Environmental Fair in Carshalton Park.

During September, we will be very busy with both the National Heritage Opening and London Open House. The Committee certainly looks forward to the chance of having tea in the Saloon with a piece of Doris' delicious homemade cake and, of course, our numerous visitors on these occasions.

For October John is planning an exciting new programme from his archive, which will be vintage film footage from the 30s and 40s. We are going to link this with the national Museums at Night event, which is now also being scheduled for this time of year. Our traditional Christmas Soirée for Sponsors, Volunteers, Friends and their friends, with the joyful illumination of the Water Tower, will congenially round off our year's events.

During the closed season Julia has been very busy with private Water Tower hires. The Water Tower and indeed the Hermitage are available to you at a special reduced rate as a Friend, if you are considering hiring a venue. Without these hires, we Friends could not achieve as much as we have with our refurbishment projects. So please, if not hiring the Water Tower, do come to our events and please bring all your friends. You will be most welcome.

*Jean Knight*

### **The Trust's Archive**

Hannah Witkowska, a long standing Friend, has fortunately decided to stop regular employment and has made a tremendous start in trying to organize our archive which is situated in the Lodge. This is extremely good news as we do, albeit infrequently, receive questions from the general public and it will be so much easier if we do not have to spend a long time finding the answers. Dare I say that we hope, in the fullness of time, they will be able to find the detail they want online. A very big 'thank you' to Hannah for all her work to date.

### **Volunteers wanted!**

Even if you have just an hour or two to spare, we will certainly welcome you on Sunday afternoon as soon as the Water Tower is open for the Stewarding rota. Please let Julia know as soon as possible, as Julia will be preparing this rota soon.

We would also like volunteers to help just for the day on Saturday 19th March, our Working Party day, for both Water Tower and gardening jobs. Please tell Julia what time you expect to arrive, as a light lunch will be provided.

### **Special Openings in September**

Once again we took part in the national heritage and Open House London weekend openings.

For the first of these, we opened on Sunday 13th September. As we were the only property in the area opening for this event, attendance was low – about 40 – but we are hoping that this year, with better publicity, we may see more visitors. For Open House London, we opened on both the Saturday and Sunday, 19th and 20th. Over the years, public interest has grown in this well-publicised event and this time we had over 340 adults and 23 children visiting over the two days.

As there is no admission charge on these days, our only source of income is from the sale of refreshments and, as always, Doris Freeman provided us with a tempting selection of home-made cakes, which rapidly sold out, giving us a profit of over £200. We are very grateful to her and to all the other volunteers who helped out.

## **Times Past XI Archive Film Show: More films of John Betjeman, 2 October 2015**

Times Past XI, with a subtitle of 'Betjeman 2', continued on from the last Betjeman films shown in Times Past X. These documentary films had been very well received by the audiences. They enjoyed Betjeman's unique narration skills, and his poetical, and sometimes-cynical delivery, covering subjects about architecture, transport, conservation and the English countryside, etc. With such a large number of films to choose from, a second selection was put together as 'Betjeman 2'.

The first half of the Betjeman 2 programme started with 'Devizes', taking a look at the architecture and history of this Wiltshire town. Devizes is part of a series of films made for HTV between 1962 and 1964, the films being rediscovered after being lost for 30 years. 'Marble Arch to Edgware', is a film Betjeman made for the BBC in 1968. He takes a trip up the Edgware Road, starting inside Marble Arch, and on the way looks at places as they were in the past and the situation as it was seen in 1968, the period the film was made. 'A Branch Line Railway' is a little-seen BBC film made in 1963, which covers the route of the Old Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway (now long disappeared). John Betjeman takes a trip by steam train on the line from Evercreech Junction to Burnham-on-Sea on the Bristol Channel. In the second half of the programme, in the film 'Royal Mint', Betjeman takes a tour of the Mint as seen in 1967. The film is probably part of a series, Betjeman's London, made for the London ITV company Associated Rediffusion, and shows the activities in the Mint before its move to South Wales. The final Betjeman film was 'Thank God it's Sunday'; a compilation of two BBC programmes made in 1972 looking at what goes on in London on a Sunday and shows the Londoners who escape on trips out of town to the seaside and the countryside, etc. Betjeman promotes his preferred method of travel: by train. It was noted that London was much less crowded on a Sunday than it is today.

The Times Past XI programme will be repeated at a daytime showing at the Tower on Saturday 23 April 2016 at 2.30pm, so if you did not get to the October showing, or would like to see it again, please come along. A new Times Past XII will be presented in the Autumn, which will feature documentary films from the 1930s and 1940s and will take place on Friday 14 October at 7.15pm for 7.30pm start. Further details will be on our website.

*John Freeman*

## **Surrey Beers at Beer, Bangers & Mash on 17 October 2015**

Beers for the night came from the Hogs Back Brewery near Farnham in Surrey and again sausages came from Scott's at Wrythe Green, Carshalton.

Hogs Back is a small family-owned brewery tucked away in the village of Tongham, near Farnham, just off the main A31 road southwest of Guildford. Started in 1992, in 18th-century farm buildings that at various times have stored wheat and housed cattle and, appropriately, hogs. The majority of the hops Hogs Back use are sourced within five miles of the brewery. In 2014 Hogs Back planted their own traditional hop garden, just across the road from the brewery. It's the first new hop garden in the immediate Farnham area for over 100 years and has become quite a local landmark.

The brewery shop at Tongham was the original brewhouse, and is well worth a visit, and brewery tours are also available (see [www.hogsback.co.uk](http://www.hogsback.co.uk)).

The first three beers on the night were: TEA Traditional English Ale, probably Hogs Back's most popular beer with an amber colour with a hoppy and slightly fruity aroma, and an ABV of 4.2%; HOP Garden Gold, a light and refreshing pale golden beer with hints of banana and pineapple, ABV 4.4%; and Gardener's Tipple, a refreshing 'thirst-quenching bitter', with exceptional taste and light amber colour and an ABV of 4%, a good balanced beer with a long dry finish and a sense of sweetness. We selected Gardener's Tipple to accompany our Bangers & Mash meal. Another thing, which went down well, was the sausages – with

Cumberland, Pork & Leek, and barbecue-flavoured Smokey Joes – and a vegetarian option also available.

After the Bangers & Mash supper our raffle was drawn with a good number of winners from those attending. Profits from our raffles help to support the upkeep of the Tower. We then moved on to the tasting the two final beers – the strongest of the evening. RIP Snorter was a reddish-amber bitter, malty but with refreshing hoppy high notes on the taste, brewed with the English pale malt combined with some crystal malt and a touch of chocolate malt and an ABV at 5%. The final beer was OTT Old Tongham Tasty, a traditional style ‘Old Ale’ – a strong black beer with a rich taste, complex aromas, and smooth on the palate with powerful roasted malt flavours and an ABV of 6%.

It’s difficult to pick the most popular beer on the night, particularly as the small number of bottles remaining at the end of the evening, when offered for sale, were all quickly snapped up by the audience. All beers received favourable comments, with HOP & OTT possibly just out in front.

*John Freeman*

### **The Christmas Soirée, Friday 4 December 2015**

The spirit of Christmas certainly permeated the atmosphere of our traditional Soirée on 4 December. This, not simply from the enthusiasm of the large number of new and habitual participants, but also from the imbibing and savour of the mulled wine!

Anne Dodwell was unable, at the last minute, to join us for the readings, but Mary Yeomans most ably stepped in and immersed herself in both Wendy Cope’s humorous ‘19th Christmas Poem’ and the dour account of Dostoyevsky’s Siberian barracks, amongst others. War, indeed, was a theme, which recurred through the evening, as was forgiveness. Derek Yeo not only tackled our usual Good Housekeeping advertisement from the thirties, but also familiarised us with the US Presidential pardoned turkeys, which somehow linked with Benjamin Zephaniah’s own reading urging us to ‘Be nice to yu turkey dis Christmas’.

We hoped, this year, also to be able to bring a flavour of Christmas abroad, with descriptions of celebrations in France, India, Germany, Martinique and the trenches. Marriott Edgar’s account of ‘Old Sam’s Christmas Pudding’ lifted the mood, but a 14-year old’s poem ‘Christmas Thoughts’ brought home the deprivation felt by many in several countries at this time of celebration.

John Thornton’s understated humour was appreciated in his readings from the 19th to the 21st century

And where would we be without our music? The introductory songs were worldwide and new – not to everyone’s taste – unlike the carols, which we managed fairly successfully to keep up with. Our thanks to John Freeman for the extra microphones and to Doris for yet another tremendous raffle. I should not forget the Cordon Bleu refreshments, which were appreciated by all.

Now begins the search for new and unusual material for the Soirée on Friday 2 December 2016. We hope to see you all there – but please reply to your invitations, or book in advance, as it helps with planning the catering and the seating.

May 2016 be serene and rewarding for you all.

*Simone Guyonvarch*

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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)