



FRIENDS OF
CARSHALTON
WATER TOWER

Chairman's Report 2016 - 2017

Celebrating 25 years of the Friends

We are extremely happy to report that this year, as Friends and Volunteers, we have been looking after our beautiful Water Tower for 25 years and that this has only been made possible because of your continuing support. We sincerely thank you for this. We also have cause to celebrate this year the commencement of the construction of our building 300 years ago. Sir John Fellowes purchased this area of land late in 1716 and had already employed Charles Bridgeman, the landscape architect, with a team of tradesmen. It is therefore extremely likely that building work to create the Water Tower started early in 1717.

To celebrate Sir John Fellowes' purchase of Carshalton House Estate, we have had an excellent talk given by Andrew Skelton who introduced us to Sir John's neighbours in the area and, just after our coming Annual General Meeting, we will have a talk, given by John Phillips, titled *Old Money & New, Sir Nicholas Carew of Beddington & the Financiers*, introducing us to another of Sir John's neighbours. The Orangery exhibition this season also picks up on the financial & banking theme. We have mounted the very pertinent exhibition, *Dodgy Bankers*, again.

However, other exciting Friends' events have been staged throughout the year. After our AGM last year we had a very enlightening talk about the Old Rectory given again by John Phillips but as Chairman of CORA, a group formed to protect that building. John updated us on what was happening to the Old Rectory. This was followed in July by an excellent talk given by Michael Symes about the landscape architect, 'Capability' Brown to mark his tercentenary. Michael took a very interesting approach by talking about Brown's legacy and very neatly introduce us to local examples.

As usual we had a presence at the Carshalton Charter Fair and the Environmental Fair talking to the public and distributing our leaflets. Our support of London Open Gardens was successful and the Heritage Open Days were, as expected, extremely busy with well over a 100 visitors each day. Again we were fortunate that Doris Freeman had time to bake her delicious cakes. The tea making team always produce very good revenue when Doris' cakes are for sale. John Freeman's film show followed with his Times Past theme this season of Vintage 1930s & 40s films, with clips from information and advertising films and virtually no mention of war. This showing was again successfully repeated this May.

Our Christmas Soiree, managed by Simone, was also very popular. Simone always plans a rich variety of seasonal texts which were read by, Anne Dodwell, Simone, John Thornton and Derek Yeo. Popular carols were sung and there were seasonal bites. This event is free for our Volunteers as a *Thank You*. But there was a high demand to purchase tickets. The Friends' season closed with John floodlighting our Water Tower. An extremely welcomed annual tradition, as was the opening of our new events season in April with our Heritage Quiz night. Amanda Hill again very kindly devised and conducted our Quiz which was, as always, extremely enjoyable even though our Friends' team failed to win. Our activities have generally been well supported but we would always like to have more participants. So, please come and bring your friends to our events. They will be most welcome as indeed you are.

The only thing that has marred the year is that we are still seeking someone to Chair our Garden Committee. These committee meetings are a vital communication link with the two schools, with whom we share the site, as they both have a representative who attends these meetings. A Chairman or Chairwoman would not need to actually garden but be interested in our historic landscape and be free during school hours to chair a meeting approximately once every month or two. If you are interested, we will be very happy to give you full details.

Your Committee, as always, have been fully committed to the Water Tower. John Thornton, our Treasurer, and Hannah, who is establishing our archive, have produced our newsletters; Simone, our Minutes Secretary, has arranged events; John Freeman has given much technical support and helped Paul who so ably manages our website; Julia has very successfully organized school visits and specialist party tours which always have been well received due mainly to our very able guides, Andrew, Derek, our two Johns and Margaret Coombs. During the year Julia has also dealt with a number of general hires but unfortunately no photo shoots, although promised, have materialised which are our most profitable means of generating funds. But we have managed to raise enough money this year to contribute more than half of the cost of Water Tower repairs to the parapet and roof above the stairwell. And to upgrade our electrical power outlet sockets to meet new regulations for hiring out our building.

Again our Volunteers have been most generous with their time in stewarding on Sundays and we are extremely grateful to Julia Ashford, Margaret, Anne, John Greig, Clive Orton, Bob Steele and Tony Thorpe for this. We have also had offers of help from new members, Mandy Lorenz, Matin Russell and his partner Katie Wren, which is also much appreciated.

Our Friends have been remarkably generous with their gifts. We were absolutely delighted to receive an early 19th century painting of the Hermitage from Mr Grahame Berridge. Hannah has very kindly donated a photocopier with scanner for the archive room in the Lodge. The O'Donoghues have given drinking glasses and many Friends & Volunteers have donated prizes, in particular Anne, for Doris' very successful raffles. Also a considerable sum of money has been raised to meet the cost of image publication licenses for the Trust's book, *Carshalton House: A Landscaped Country Seat*.

We, as Friends, have achieved a great deal in the last 25 years, of which we should be proud. And we, the Committee, with your continuing support, look forward to the next 25 years of managing our fascinating Water Tower, follies and listed landscape for the Trust and general public. **Jean Knight 2017**