



FRIENDS OF
CARSHALTON
WATER TOWER

NEWSLETTER

No. 60, MARCH 2018

Dear Friend

Because of the new Privacy Law coming into force in May, we have to change the wording on your Membership Renewal Form. When you come to renew your membership, you will need to tick the box to affirm that you allow us to keep your contact details on file. We only hold your data as is necessary to carry out the work of the Friends of Carshalton Water Tower Committee. We do value your privacy and will not give any of your details to a third party. If you wish to have further information, please contact me, Jean Knight, on 020 8669 1546 or email irvineknight@btinternet.com.

The Season's Events

We hope that our programme this year will dispel those cold winter blues and bring the warm breath of spring as we are celebrating the **River Wandle** in Carshalton with our Orangery display. John Hawks has very kindly allowed us to use his material from his series of information boards about the complete length of the Wandle. John was instrumental in preventing the foundation of Merton Abbey from being concreted over and is very active now in turning that site into a first class historic venue. We also have him to thank for rescuing Merton Mills from demolition. We will carry the Wandle River theme through with a talk, just after our Annual General Meeting in June, given by Bob Steel who is the co-author of an extremely informative book about the River.

Our social season starts in April, with our traditional **Friends' Quiz** and we are extremely fortunate to have Amanda Hill again as our Quizmaster. If you did not form part of a team last year, do come and enjoy the evening. You will find it great fun. In May John Freeman has agreed to repeat his very popular autumn presentation of **Times Past XIII**, which is a programme about past transport and travel. If you have not seen it, do join us for the afternoon. If you have seen it I think you will agree, the programme is certainly well worth a second viewing.

In June we are again supporting **London Open Garden Squares** and later in the month this year we have our **Annual General Meeting**, followed by Bob Steel's talk. This is free to you as a Friend but please bring your friends as there is the added bonus of our traditional cream tea. We will, in July, support **Carshalton Charter Fair** which will return to the Memorial Gardens in Carshalton this year and in July, very exciting news, **Carshalton House** will open to the general public for two afternoon tours. Also, as is traditional, we will have a presence at the **Environmental Fair** in Carshalton Park at the end of August and in September we will again support the **National Heritage Opening** and **Open House London**.

John Freeman is very kindly devising an entirely new programme in his Times Past series for the autumn. This time it will be on the theme of morale boosting around the time of World War II. We will also, with this **Times Past XIV**, support the national festival of Museums at Night opening. Our programme finishes with our **Christmas Soirée**, a very enjoyable social event to thank those who have helped throughout the year and celebrate your support. Priced tickets will be available for your friends.

Details of these events and a booking form for tickets are enclosed with this mailing

Volunteering

Please do not forget to volunteer this year for a Sunday afternoon duty. You will always be welcome even if you can just manage an hour or two. You will find it very interesting and you will be with other Water Tower Friends. If you cannot support as a steward on a Sunday there are other ways. Please bring with you as many of your family and friends as you can to our Friends' events or hire the Water Tower for your very special occasions. It is only with these funds that your Friends' Committee can refurbish our wonderful building, the Water Tower.

Building Works

In this closed season, as usual, we are trying to ensure that our Water Tower is maintained as well as our funds will allow. As you no doubt have noticed, if you live or journey nearby, the Tower has been shrouded in scaffolding. We have been active in getting the actual tower of the Water Tower refurbished. We had a tree growing out the drainage outlet on the roof on top of the tower but fortunately that flat roof deck was in good condition. But brickwork, mortar joints and stone dressing needed some attention. On the West Street face of the main building the brickwork was bulging and this is being reinstated.

In doing this work the Tower reveals just a few more of its secrets. We knew that there was a chamber in the lowest section of the tower, accessible through the roof of that room, but we did not know that large sections of the beautiful portland stone flaming urns, which act as weights on the eight buttresses supporting the tower, have been replaced in the past with cement copies. Also that there were flanges on the originals to enable them to fit snugly on the buttresses against the tower wall. There also appear to have been metal brackets to hold them to the tower. It is just so fascinating that there is always something new to discover.

We expect, before we open for the season, to get the visitor viewing terrace of the roof over the Orangery, Saloon, Bathroom and Robing Room, repainted and warning marker strips placed either side of the two drainage roof gullies to make them more obvious for our visitors.

For the benefit of our elderly Friends and visitors, we have started the Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission process to place a handrail on either side of the main entrance to the Water Tower. We hope that by the time we open to the general public that these will be in place.

Gardening News

We are very pleased to report that we are back with regular Garden Meetings under the chairmanship of Ann Morley. If you would like to help with gardening and/or attend a meeting, or find out more details, please contact Jean Knight, telephone number: 020 8669 1546.

Obituaries

It is with the deepest sadness that we report the death of Tony Allen. He died peacefully in the Royal Marsden on 18 February. Tony was an active supporter of the Friends from the beginning and was until recently our Head Gardener. He was also for many years the Treasurer of the Trustees' Management Committee. He will be greatly missed.

We have sadly also learned of the death of David Braim on Christmas Eve. He had very gallantly fought cancer for a considerable number of years. Dave, with his wife Shirley, have been great supporters of our Friends Water Tower events for several years. Our thoughts and best wishes are with Shirley and their family.

Heritage Openings Events, 10 and 16-17 September 2017

Last year, as we annually do in September, we supported both the National Heritage Opening and both days of the Open House London weekend. We are very pleased to report that there has been no drop in our numbers, with well over a hundred visitors on each of the three days. We had extremely appreciative and complimentary visitors who were given very good tours of the Grounds, apart from our stewards giving historical details of the Water Tower.

Also, as usual, we made a considerable amount of money on our teas which were on offer throughout the openings. This was certainly in no small part due to Doris' exceedingly tasty homemade cakes and the pleasantness of the service our customers received. The Committee thanks everyone involved for making these demanding events so successful.

Christmas Soirée, Friday 1st December 2017

We always like to welcome the season of goodwill early and this year we did so on the very first day of December. Our celebration was well attended and we were pleased to see several new guests.

We tried, in the first half of our programme, to keep to a regal theme from a flippant 'King John' poem by A.A.Milne to Anne's reading of an extract from the Olney Hymns. John's amusing reading of 'Wenceslas: The inside story' by Oliver Pritchett made us think again about what yonder peasant was really up to. A more serious tone prevailed with readings from Pepys's and Evelyn's diaries and a comparison of the Nativity as seen in different gospels.

The guests were encouraged to join in with six carols this year and executed their task admirably. The second half of the programme covered (after a much appreciated buffet and more mulled wine, together with the raffle) a varied selection of readings, and extracts from *Orley Farm* by Trollope, and *Mr Fezziwig's Ball* from Dickens's Christmas Carol, read by Juliet Stevenson and Simon Callow. Our own readings meandered around Christmas in the countryside at *Lark Rise* and with Laurie Lee in *Cider with Rosie*. The tongue-in-cheek news report on the Downing Street panto (*Brexit at Tiffany's*) contrasted with King George V's Christmas broadcasts, from 1932-5.

From comments made at the end of the evening the event was a great success, not in small measure due to the convivial atmosphere and bonhomie of all those present.

Simone Guyonvarch

Times Past XIII archive film show "Transport & Travel", Friday 27 October 2017

Times Past XIII, our 2017 archive film show at the Tower looked at Transport & Travel in the changing Britain of the 1950s and 1960s. Documentaries promote holidays at home and abroad. As usual the show was split into two parts with an interval between.

We started the first half with a film made by British Transport Films for SAGA Holidays. In "Travelling Sixties" (1968) a group of elderly people are on their way to a holiday on the Isle of Wight on a special train from Newcastle – a film with amusing narration. "London to Brighton Side by Side" from the BBC is made up of two films based on a speeded trip from London to Brighton in four minutes, one made in 1953 and a remake in colour from 1983. Split screen side by side, even though they were made 30 years apart, the trains are of similar style. Perhaps the BBC should consider a remake – but I am not sure whether there are any non-stop services now.

“Take to the Boats”, another film from British Transport Films made in 1962 for British Waterways, captures the beginnings of mass leisure travel on Britain's inland waterways with brief scenes of the later years of commercial canal carrying. Coventry Cathedral is also featured when it was newly built. I understand the film was not released at the time, and is now hard to find. “The Needles Point the Way” is a film in the Look at Life series from around 1965; however some material used is possibly older. The film gives a brief glimpse of the Isle of Wight at the time as a holiday destination with a famous yachting event – but it is an island full of surprises, and the film includes a Royal visit with the Queen shown leaving in a Hovercraft.

Four films made up the second half of the programme. “Rails to Talsarn” (1962) featured the horse-drawn Nantlle Tramway in Gwynedd, North Wales. ‘Prince’ and ‘Corwen’ pull slate wagons from Pen-yr-Orsedd quarry to Talsarn station, guided by Mr Oswald Jones, guard/driver. The railway station at Talsarn closed in the mid-sixties and is now occupied by housing.

“Talking of Coaches” (1959) is one of the first films in the Look at Life series, and is a brief introduction to coach history in Britain, which then follows a coach tour to Italy in the early days of mass continental travel, including a flight from Lydd airport in Kent. “Into the Blue” (1950), a Public Information Film made by the Crown Film Unit, shows the development of aircraft and air travel after the second World War, and includes the early days of Heathrow airport, and airlines BEA and BOAC.

“Holiday with Everything” (1959) was made for P&O, possibly by Pathé. A family of four take a cruise to the Mediterranean on the SS Arcadia. In this film some faces of actors may be familiar but are not credited. The film itself is undated and may be earlier than 1959.



Into the Blue 1950
Development of Air Travel



Holiday with Everything
A 1950s Mediterranean cruise.

Our October showing of Times Past XII was very well attended, but if you missed it, or would like to see it again, we will repeat it at a daytime showing at the Tower on Saturday 26 May 2018 at 2.30pm.

The theme of this Autumn's Times Past XIV for 2018 is “Supporting Britain” – documentary films made to boost morale at home and abroad during World War II in the later 1940s. Times Past XIV is set for October 26 starting at 7.30pm. See our website for further details.

John Freeman