



## Chairman's Report 2017/2018

In June we were still very much in celebratory mood because Sir John Fellowes had purchased Carshalton House Estate and started to build our Water Tower 300 years ago. After an excellent, lecture given by John Phillips about Sir John's neighbours, the Carews at Beddington, we had our traditional strawberries, cake and champagne to celebrate. Our Orangery Display *Dodgy Bankers*, which, as our talks for the year, carried the theme of Sir John Fellowes and his associates, was also very well received.

We again supported London Open Garden Squares and, although we never get large numbers of visitors, as there are no other garden open close by, the people who do come, in addition to our regular visitors, are very interested and a joy to guide.

We thank Doris Freeman very much for giving us such a strong presence at both the Environmental Fair in Carshalton Park and the earlier Carshalton Society's Charter Fair, which took place this year at Wrythe Green as part of the event to honor the lives of the men in that area who were killed in the Great War.

September, as always, is extremely busy for our stewards and caterers with our two heritage openings, London Open House and the National Heritage Opening. Although visitor numbers were overall for the year very slightly down compared to the previous year, we still had over a hundred visitors a day for these openings. John Freeman's film show in October was also very well attended and it appears to work extremely well when linking this event with the Museums at Night festival. It also greatly helps to raise our profile, as with our other heritage openings, we get national publicity.

In December our Christmas Soiree was very well supported. We thank Anne Dodwell very much indeed for her contribution to Simone's programme of carols and seasonal readings, with John Thornton and Derek Yeo. It is always extremely pleasant to have this calm entree to the festive season. All your Committee are involved, Julia, with Hannah's contribution, providing excellent refreshments; John with his technical skills; Doris, as throughout the year, organizing our raffle, providing many items herself. We have several generous Friends who also provide prizes, which is greatly appreciated.

This year for the first time since the Millennium John could not floodlight the Water Tower during our closed season because, as you may have noticed, we have been shrouded in scaffolding. Our building works have been quite extensive this year! As the tower had not been inspected, we believe since the 1980s, the Trust thought that it was time. Fortunately, apart from a tree growing out of the drain pipe and some repointing, the tower itself was in reasonable condition. Having thought we were getting off financially fairly lightly, we had removed a small shrub which had

started to grow out of the West Street facade. To our horror the root system, which was far greater than the size of the bush ever indicated, had pulled away much of the facing brickwork in a considerable area. This unexpected problem and great flurries of snow considerably delayed the works longer than we expected.

However, whilst the Trust has been attending to this project, the Friends have not been idle. The viewing roof terrace has been cleaned and repainted and warning strips placed along the edge of the two roof gullies; Dry rot has been cut out of the window surround in the Robing Room/kitchen and replaced. The steps, from the Pump Chamber to West Street door, the Entrance and Orangery steps have been professionally cleaned and the two latter flights have been restored.

The only disappointment in all this building activity is the length of time London Borough of Sutton Planning department have taken in giving us permission to place two simple handrails, which will not attach to the Water Tower, up to our entrance. We submitted Planning and Listed Building consent in January. We are still awaiting for Listed Building Consent.

Although this is a great disappointment as we wanted the handrails in place for our opening this season, our 2018 events have certainly started on a very high note! Your Friends', team, Julia, John T, Tony Thorpe and Derek won Amanda's Quiz this year. This is the first time we have won! My praise for Amanda, who always devises excellent quizzes for us which are great fun and offers a very pleasant evening, may appear somewhat biased but it is not. We thank her very much indeed!

John repeated his film show, *Times Past XIII, Transport and Travel* which was very well received ~by our attendees. And we are now looking forward to Bob Steel's talk on the River Wandle which will take place just after our AGM. Bob has written a book on the subject which links in well with our Orangery display this year, on the theme of on the *River Wandle in Carshalton*, John gathered the material and devised this very interesting exhibition for us.

Ann Morley very kindly took up the post of Chair of the Garden Committee and this is again operational. We also welcome two new volunteers, Viorica Feler-Morgan and Leo Wenert to our team of very good stewards, Julia Ashford, Anne Dodwell, Margaret Combs, Clive Orton, Tony Thorpe, and of course your Committee who steward as part of their duties.

Paul Freeman has rendered us again a very great service in keeping our website up to date; selling our Friends' events tickets online and passing through all the inquires for hiring our Water Tower. Julia has followed up this information and, through the management of these hires, made a very serious contribution to the Friends funds without which we could not operate. Doris has also raised considerable amounts for us with her raffles and by making exceedingly tasty cakes which always sell very well when we offer teas to our visitors. John T. has continued to manage our funds, which is really no mean task, and edited our newsletters, whilst Hannah produces it for us. And Simone somehow manages to make sense of our committee meetings to produce our minutes in excellent order.

We need your support anyway you can to keep our beautiful property a welcoming place for our present and future visitors. I am certain, with it, we will go from strength to strength.

Jean Knight, June 2018

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[www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk](http://www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk)

*The Friends of Carshalton Water Tower, the working Committee of the Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust, Registered Charity no. 1086243*