

NEWSLETTER

No. 63, AUGUST 2019

FRIENDS OF
CARSHALTON
WATER TOWER

Our Annual Quiz

There really seems now no better way to start the Friends' Season than with our Friends' Quiz. This we did on Friday 26 April. Amanda Hill, as always, set very interesting and fun questions, which fortunately for many of us, were not reliant on knowing television's soap celebrities, but an excellent range. This year we had not scheduled the Quiz well as it was during Holy week when many people are away for Easter. Next year we will programme on a more suitable date and hope that you will join us. Amanda is a wonderful quiz master, offering nothing too serious and a chance to have a very pleasant evening with Friends. However this year was lucrative because Doris had a very good raffle and we sold refreshments.

Garden Matters

We are very pleased to tell you that we have had planted a Magnolia Grandiflora high on the east bank of the lake, with the intention that it will form part of a rich dark green leafy frame on the south side of the Water Tower's west façade to balance the tree on the north side, when viewed from the Mansion across the lake bed. Magnolias were first imported into England from Virginia and the Carolinas in America. The first was introduced by the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, which he had planted at Fulham Palace in the first decade of the 18th century.

By 1756 the American plant collector, John Bartram, was supplying so many new plant specimens to Peter Collinson that the latter remarked, 'England must be turned upside down and America transported here'.

We are also very pleased to report that we have had planted two old cultivar apple trees, White Joaneting, a July summer apple and, also a half-standard, Decio. This species is claimed to date from the time of Attila the Hun! And its season is said to be December to March, but it is already beautifully full of fruit. These trees are planted in two tubs on the north side of the Water Tower.

These trees have been given to us by Robert Thomas Walker as part of his Social Orchards project, with the remit to plant more fruit trees along the River Wandle. We are very fortunate to have only paid for the planting. We are certain that in the fullness of time, the juniors from St Mary's School will be delighted with our latest acquisitions.

Water Tower Decorating Update

We do hope that you have visited the Water Tower this season and seen the redecorating of the Saloon, Kitchen and Toilet areas, apart from the external windows. We will have the ceiling of the Bathroom repainted in the autumn.

The Visit of the Brownies from the Church of The Good Shepherd

Each year we have brownies, cubs and/or guide groups visiting the Water Tower and we were very pleased this year to welcome the 12th Carshalton Brownies, with their leader and helpers, in the early evening of Wednesday 26 June. They meet at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Carshalton. It was an extremely pleasant evening. The group of 20-plus were split into two and John T. gave his group a tour of the Water Tower whilst Jean took the other group over to the Hermitage and then the groups changed tours. They were very impressed with our beautiful Bathroom and wanted to know if they could swim in the plunge bath. The trip in the grounds turned into a different experience. It was a little like Alice disappearing down the rabbit hole as they took the path down, with its overhanging fully leafed trees, to the Hermitage. They were absolutely enthralled by the curving access passage to the circular chamber and the echoes in it.

Their visit finished with presentations. Two of their helpers, who were about to depart to go to university in the autumn, were given gifts. The brownies thanked us very much and said that their visit had been fun and quite an adventure!



Lucida Lambton's Article

You may take the magazine *The Oldie*. If you do, you will see in this August edition that there is a most splendid article titled, *Stately Foam*, about the Water Tower and written by Lucinda Lambton. The article has two photographs, one fine one of the West façade and the other of our Bathroom. Lucinda has focused on the bathing aspect of the Water Tower's pleasure facilities and hence the title of her piece. Please read it if you have the chance to see a copy. We had thought that we were just getting a book review but a two page article is really excellent! This publicity has already brought new visitors in on Sundays.

Jean Knight

Carshalton Environmental Fair, Monday 26 August

We shall again be present at this popular Bank Holiday event, sharing a pitch with The Carshalton Society, publicising the Water Tower activities and, hopefully, recruiting some new Friends.

Heritage Openings, Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September

The Water Tower and the Hermitage will, as usual, be open with free admission on the Open House London days. Also as usual, we shall be serving teas, and Doris's delicious cakes! We expect to be busy.

Repeat of Times Past XIV archive film show: 'Supporting Britain'

This Times Past was based on films made to inform, boost national morale, and to promote Britain overseas during World War II and in the post-war period (*see News Letter 62, March 2019 for details*). The first showing in October last was well attended; and we regularly repeated the show the following spring on a Saturday afternoon for those who prefer a daytime showing. However, this year's repeat on Saturday 18 May was a disappointment, with only 4 tickets sold and no one buying tickets on the day. It

could be more people attended the first showing; those who attended repeats in the past were not around or good weather on the day kept people away? Perhaps an earlier date in the year might have been more appropriate? Views from members would be welcomed and considered, before confirming any Times Past repeat showing for next year.

The first showing of Times Past XV will be at the Tower on the evening of Friday 1st November this year. We will be Looking at Life in Britain from the 1940s to the 1960s though the medium of archive documentary and educational films, and the programme will include films covering transport, technology, travel etc. This event will also be in support of the Museums at Night Festival. See our website for details.

John Freeman

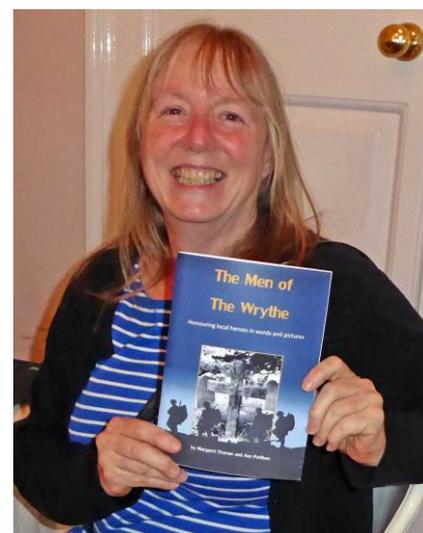
‘The Men of the Wrythe’ – A talk given at the Friends’ Annual General Meeting, on the afternoon of Saturday 8 June 2019.

After the AGM an interesting talk was given by Margaret Thomas about the Wrythe Green area of Carshalton – which was surrounded by open country and a community in its own right at the time of the Great War (WWI). Margaret’s talk centred around the new memorial on Wrythe Green to Men of the Wrythe who lost their lives in WWI.

The Wrythe itself is a triangular area bounded by Wrythe Lane and Green Wrythe Lane, key roads within this area being, St Andrews Road, St Johns Road, St James Road also William Street and Wrythe Green Road, both forming a link between Wrythe Lane and Green Wrythe Lane. At the time of the Great War two pubs associated with William Street were *The Cricketers* and *The Cottage of Content*. On Green Wrythe Lane there was a Salvation Army Hall (which remains today). The church for the area was St Andrews on the corner of Wrythe Lane and Brookfield Avenue near the *Cricketers*. The church and the two pubs were demolished in the 1980s and replaced by housing. This was a working-class community and a disadvantaged area where unskilled labourers with large families lived crowded together, many of them closely related.

In the form of a cross, the new memorial to 45 local men from the Wrythe area who sacrificed their lives in WWI was unveiled on Wrythe Green in 2017. Despite their adverse circumstances, more men from the Wrythe area joined up for WWI compared with those from other parts of Borough as we know it today. Since many of them were related to one another and it was a close-knit community, a lot of people were affected whenever a life was lost. The landlord of the *Cricketers*, Frederick Bird, put up a list of the men’s names on a board outside the pub as they went off to war. He also put up a small war memorial in the grounds of St Andrew’s church. It was dedicated to ‘The Heroes of the Wrythe’ in memory of his adopted son, who died in 1915. The memorial stood outside St. Andrew’s church until the 1980s when the church was demolished and the memorial was moved to the churchyard of All Saints, Carshalton. The new memorial on Wrythe Green lists those on the original Willie Bird memorial and honours all those from the Wrythe who fought in the First World War.

As well as the new memorial unveiling, 2017 saw a play, *The Roughs of the Wrythe*, about the effects of WWI on the local community, performed at the nearby Carshalton High School for Girls. There was also a ‘Men of the Wrythe’ exhibition held at the Circle Library. All the research undertaken for the play and the exhibition has resulted in a book from Margaret Thomas and Ann Pattison. The Men of the Wrythe book details the Wrythe families who were caught up in WWI and lost family members, and also the early days of Carshalton Athletic football club. Thirteen of the team never returned to play after the war.



Many local people who have grown up in Carshalton, even in the second half of the twentieth century, will recognise many of the family names in the book, which still exist in the area.

John Freeman



The Regency Thé Dansant

We tried a new venture for the Summer Solstice this year and hired a Regency dance group, 'Mrs Bennet's Ballroom', to entertain us. Their costumes were most becoming, the men in their flamboyant and stylish costumes and the women in their flowing dresses. They chose several dances whose titles reflected the venue. Despite the space in the Orangery being fairly restricted we were encouraged to join in. It was gratifying to see such a broad span of ages.

The tea was based on recipes from a Jane Austen cookbook and our own three cooks did their utmost to replicate an eighteenth-century tea, despite having no illustrations. (Jane Austen would have had tea at 10 pm!) Our beverage was a 'Negus' – a summer punch, which was most refreshing.

The atmosphere proved that everyone enjoyed themselves. Several guests, in fact, are going to join 'Mrs Bennet's Ballroom'.



Simone Guyonvarch

*Friends of Carshalton Water Tower: Secretary Julia Gertz, 136 West Street, Carshalton SM5 2NR
(The working Committee of the Carshalton Water Tower and Historic Garden Trust. Registered Charity No. 1086243)
www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk*