



FRIENDS OF CARSHALTON WATER TOWER

NEWSLETTER

No. 64, MARCH 2020

Please note this Newsletter was published before the Coronavirus lockdown, which has resulted in public openings and events at the Water Tower being suspended.

Please see our website and Facebook for updates.

www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk

Dear Friends

We have excellent news to start our Season! We have water in the lake bed, giving us a splendid Lake with all the attendant ducks enjoying their new found haven! It is very pleasant.

This year, in planning your events, we are mainly focusing on Sir John Fellowes and the South Sea Company. In 1720 there was the major financial disaster of the crash of the South Sea Company, known as the bursting of the South Sea bubble. This event not only affected Sir John Fellowes, who was the Sub-Governor of the company and saw his property, including Carshalton House Estate, confiscated by the Crown and sold in auction, but the whole country.

There will be information about the South Sea Company in our Orangery exhibition, with our Dodgy Banker Display. Our AGM talk will be about the Rise and Fall of Sir John as the Company man, given by Andrew Skelton. Andrew will be conducting a

themed walk around Carshalton identifying properties of Company men and shareholders. Andrew will also give us a talk about gardens owned by the South Sea Company men in October.



However, to launch our events season, we are extremely pleased that in April, as is the tradition, we have Amanda Hill's Quiz. Somehow the Season would not start well without it. And in May John Freeman kindly offered to reshew in the afternoon the film presentation Times Past XV, which was on your programme last autumn. If you did not see it or would like to see a second showing, please come. It is most interesting. John has devised a completely new programme for the October film show, Times Past XVI in support of Museums at Night. We will look at post-WWII life and see some very interesting John Betjeman footage.

Before the autumn, however, we are for the first time supporting Carshalton Artists' Open Studios, (CAOS) directly and will have an exhibition of children's work based on the theme of Water. We will open earlier on these two Sundays. We will have a presence at Carshalton Charter Fair and the Environmental Fair. And in September, again support Open House London, the National Heritage Opening and our local Wandle Fortnight. To close your season we have our very popular Christmas Soirée to thank all who have been kind enough to give their time to help steward on Sundays, help with hires, carryout cleaning and gardening. But please remember that tickets can also be purchased for this event. John will floodlight the Water Tower again for the festive season, which gives us such a welcoming presence during cold and bleak winter nights.



The Committee, which has worked hard to bring the 2020 events together, needs your support by attending events. Without it we cannot keep the Water Tower maintained or give our visitors a good service on Sunday afternoons and when they hire the Water Tower.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is, apart from your Schedule of Events with booking slips, a Rota Schedule. Please be so kind as to complete it as soon as possible and return it to Julia. Even if you can offer to help to steward on one Sunday, it will be greatly appreciated. We cannot open to the public unless we have volunteer stewards.

We look forward to greeting you through the Season.

Jean Knight

Obituary

It is with extreme sadness that I report the death of Edmond Weaving in late February. He has been such a good Friend of the Water Tower, extremely supportive of our events and our appeals for funding. We could not have asked for a better Friend. Our thoughts are with his family at this very sad time.

Jean Knight

Carshalton Environmental Fair, Monday 26 August 2019 in Carshalton Park

Bank Holiday Monday was a fine day, which assured a good attendance at the Fair, and the pitch which we share with The Carshalton Society had its fair share of interested visitors finding out who we are and what we do and, in some cases, joining as new members.

Heritage Open Days, 21-22 September 2019

In the autumn we opened, as usual, for the free weekend in support of both London Open House and the National Heritage Opening, which this year occurred on the same weekend, and this time our visitors had the added bonus of viewing the St Philomena's historical display in the Orangery. We also had Wandle Trail Visitors. The general public response was overwhelming!

Although it was very difficult to manage such large numbers in our building, it is extremely rewarding to have so many visitors who can spread the information about our beautiful site. And thanks to Doris Freeman and her team, we sold a very large number of teas with her delicious homemade cakes. These were altogether very successful days.

Times Past XV Archive Film Show: “Life in Britain 1940 – 1960”, Friday 1st November 2019

In Times Pasts 2017 and 2018 we looked at Britain in the 1930s and in the 1940s. In the latest presentation we looked at films showing life in Britain in the post-war period up to the 1960s, and included a couple of “commercial breaks” – short films used in the cinema and some on commercial television. Again in 2019 Times Past was also an event as part of the Museums at Night Festival.

The programme, as usual, was divided in two, the first half starting with a cartoon: “Farmer Charley” a 1949 film for the Central Office of Information. Charley inherits a half-share in a farm run by his cousin but soon has his dream of an idyllic country life rudely shattered by the harsh realities of farming life.

In “Come with me” – Bridport in 1951, Richard Dimpleby props up a bar in Bridport, Dorset and conducts interviews. This film includes the manufacture of nets, twine, line and rope, and the collection of sand and shingle from the nearby beach at West Bay. The interview technique is similar to that used on television today, but was very unusual for the early 1950s. To the best of my knowledge the film, which was not made by the BBC, was not shown on BBC television at the time.

“The Great Milk Bottle Mystery” 1954 is a campaign film asking the public not to misuse or throw away the glass bottles left by their milkman, but to rinse them and put them back out for collection.

“For the Record”, is a Look at Life film following showing how Helen Shapiro's 1961 hit song "Walkin' Back to Happiness" was recorded, processed, pressed and distributed.

After the interval, two short films, “SRN1” and “SRN2”, produced by groups on the Isle of Wight between 1959 and 1962, show the development on the island of the first Hovercraft. The very basic SRN1 was shown in trials at East Cowes in 1959. In 1962 the SRN2 is shown in trials where it carried 59 passengers between Ryde and Southsea on the mainland for two weeks in August for a return ticket price of 10 shillings (50p today)! This led to further hovercraft development, and a service to the Island which still runs today.

“Ringing the Changes” is another Look at Life film from the 1960s: from the great bells of Westminster to small hand-bells, this is a film full of the music of bellringing, and brings into focus the fascinating ancient craft of bell casting and tuning.

Next came “Roundabout 1963”: In the 1960s the UK Government, through the Central Office of Information, produced a number of films for overseas distribution. These films were essentially designed to promote British industry and values abroad at the beginning of Britain’s post-colonial years. This film included motor racing in New Zealand, car production in Britain, rubber production in the Far East and how it was owned and developed by Britain.

“Snow” is a short film made by Geoffrey Jones for British Transport Films in 1962-1963. It shows the efforts of British Railways staff in coping with the one of UK’s coldest winters. The music sound track speeds up as the railway system slowly returns to normal. Snow was nominated for an Academy Award in 1965.

“Members Only” – our final film of the evening – is a Look at Life film from the mid-1960s which takes us round the "private clubs" of London. From the famous political clubs of the 18th century to the gambling clubs and the bohemian night clubs of London’s West End.

If you missed it, or would like to see it again, we will repeat Times Past XV in the Spring, with a Saturday afternoon showing. This is despite the very poor attendance at our repeat last year of the Times Past from 2018; so please tell your friends and family to come long and see Times Past XV repeat at the Water Tower on Saturday 2 May 2020 at 2.30pm. This coming autumn's Times Past XVI for 2020 is set for Friday 16 October starting at 7.30pm.

See our website for further details and confirmation of dates for the 2020 presentations.

John Freeman

Carshalton Day of Dance October 2019

The Water Tower was one of the venues for the Carshalton Day of Dance on Saturday 12 October last. Organised by the local Black Swan Border and the East Surrey Morris men, the day of dance also included the Pennyroyal Clog dancers, and children and junior Morris groups. There was Music and Dance throughout the day around the Carshalton Village area starting at Sassis Café in Grove Park in the late morning and ending in the late afternoon at The Hope public house in West Street.



We started receiving groups at the Tower from 1pm. The Tower turned out to be a useful venue as the day was wet with rain showers from time to time: so dancers could perform inside the Tower, or outside, as the weather allowed. It was an interesting and lively public event.

John Freeman

Christmas Soirée 2019

We launched the festive season on 6 December with our traditional Soirée.

It was a pleasant surprise to see so many new, younger faces amongst our guests and we hope that they will continue to support our events.

We tried once again to choose a theme: our first half focused on carol services and bells. The Revd Richard Coles recounted amusing anecdotes about carol services past and *The Chimes* presented an alternative Charles Dickens Christmas story. We included the theme of generosity at Christmas in a piece about the 'StreetSmart' scheme, whereby customers in restaurants can donate to a homeless charity. The second half concentrated on the Three Kings and their gifts, through poems and a text about the real 'Good King Wenceslas'.

Our final readings lightened the evening with a touch of humour and mystery, through Dylan Thomas and a Noël Coward-themed ghost story.

The quiz rather threw most people – sorry! – But we did have a victorious table. As usual the Raffle was very well supported and the mulled wine and buffet at the interval were appreciated by all.

We hope that our final wishes to you on the night are still permeating through 2020.

Simone Guyonvarch

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www.carshaltonwatertower.co.uk