



STEPPING STONES

2011

Newsletter of the Holly Lodge Centre



HRH Princess Alexandra officially opens the Victorian pharmacy

The Victorian pharmacy officially opened

The Victorian pharmacy was officially opened by HRH Princess Alexandra on 26 January after several years of fundraising and a lot of hard work by our volunteers. The very generous original furniture donated by Alex Mulholland and the artefacts given by him and many other people are making the pharmacy a wonderful teaching venue for our visitors.



Christ's School participate in the drug awareness course

Students from the Royal Ballet School learning how to make powders



The pharmacy was chosen by a TV company to film a documentary about Agatha Christie



'special needs in a special place'





Paddock School attended the presentation of the Sunshine Coach

Sunshine Coach for the Holly Lodge Centre

Mike McGann, a new volunteer, was instrumental in obtaining a Sunshine Coach for us from the Variety Club of Great Britain. This is a great asset for visitors who would otherwise find it difficult to get to the Centre. It is also being used to transport groups to and from the Isabella Plantation, as part of the Isabella Plantation Access Project, as well as to other areas of the park.

Staff and pupils from Paddock School collected the keys on behalf of the Centre from Jimmy Tarbuck and Bernard Gallagher in June on the occasion of a golf day organised by the Variety Club Golf Society at Stoke Park.

Mike subsequently organised a golf day at the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club in September, together with the Variety Club to raise additional funds. So far we now have £29,300 towards the cost of the coach, including some very generous donations.



Kate in action during the storytelling session

A new storytelling activity

The classroom was transformed into a 'storytelling tent' thanks to the generous donation from John Lewis Kingston of marvellous cushions, material to hang from the top of the 'tent' (a parachute bought on eBay by one of our volunteers) and two chairs from a window display that were covered in grass and flowers, which sat either side of the storytelling chair – a separate donation.

The children sat and listened to songs and stories from Kate and then they went for a walk in the Park to get inspiration to compose their own stories. Kate made up some stories about what they had seen outdoors when they returned. In the afternoon Kate used puppets to tell some tales about a rabbit, crows and a tree. The children then worked together in groups to make up their own story, which they told to everyone with the help of the puppets. It enabled the children with special needs to express themselves in a new way and at the end of one morning three of the autistic children sat in the 'story throne' to tell their own stories!

Kate and Dr Pat Ealey will be judging the stories the children have written and awarding some book prizes to the best ones. As we go to press, we are running sessions on stories about Victorians and Victorian Christmas.

Pat Ealey

Environmental Art Day

An Environmental Art Day was held on 8 June for St Elizabeth's School, Richmond. Their task was to make sculptures using natural objects. This masterpiece depicted a spider's web and was made from string and willow.



Artwork made during the Environmental Art Day

'providing a stimulating programme of activities'

Dream catchers, mobiles and ceramic paints

The aptly named 'Summer Fun' took place during the first two weeks of August and was a complete sell-out. This year Summer Fun was run by Annabel Holdsworth, a freelance artist and teacher who also runs activities for the RHS at Wisley.

We had a very wide range of clients and some had come from further afield than usual. For some of the groups it was not only a first time at the Holly Lodge Centre, but also to Richmond Park itself. Needless to say, the time spent round the nature trail was one of the highlights of their day.

Annabel's main activities were the making of 'dream catchers', mobiles, and designing ceramic plates. The dream catchers proved to be a popular choice and we were given a full history of their origins and legends from the North American Anishinabe Nations. Most of the carers and teachers found themselves completely tied up with willow twigs, multi-coloured wool, beads and feathers before finally getting the knack!

The children made some very impressive pottery, drawing their designs on paper before transferring them onto unglazed plates with ceramic paints and crayons. There were varying degrees of skills and dexterity but everybody was able to leave at the end of the day showing off their achievements with great pride and pleasure.

Patrica Calfe



Designing a ceramic plate during the Summer Fun activity

Richmond AID disability access workshop – 26 July 2011

As key partners in the Heritage Lottery funded Isabella Plantation Access Project, the Holly Lodge Centre offered the use of their facilities for a specialist disability access workshop with Royal Parks staff and members of the Richmond AID Community Involvement Group in July.

Using the Holly Lodge Centre minibus for the day enabled the Richmond AID group to be driven from Teddington to the Isabella Plantation for a site visit, as members of the Group have a wide



Hilarity during 'Stories in Gardens'

Stories in Gardens A joint activity with the Orange Tree Theatre and Funsense

On 17 August the Holly Lodge Centre played host to a group called Funsense, led by Jenny Lockyer, who together with the Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond presented an event called 'Stories in Gardens'. The event was offered free of charge to anyone who cared to come, which resulted in a very mixed group.

Activities included making miniature gardens, potting a flower to take home and a music session in the Victorian room provided by Tom Janssen, which gave everyone a chance to relax and 'chill' to some very mellow guitar playing, although some of the children preferred to dance!

A marquee was set up on the nature trail for the storyteller (a lovely lady called Debs) who told each group a story about either an oak or a silver birch tree. During each story she stopped at critical points on the trail and took the group round to find either an oak or a birch tree before she would continue her tale – a great use of the space.

Each event finished with a visit from Graham Cornick of Hydestyle Wildlife Hospital, who brought a number of animals and birds into the main classroom, to the great delight of the visitors. I think everyone's favourite moment was when the 'jumping-kangaroo-rat' leapt wildly at Pat Ealey causing much consternation!! (It was actually a stuffed toy – whew!)

Isabel Scott

range of mobility issues.

The site visit and workshop afterwards focused on access issues around the Plantation and how to resolve them, in addition to physical improvements to the Isabella Plantation. The project will also involve creating resources that can be used by a range of groups for activities at the Plantation. The project team will be working closely with the Holly Lodge Centre team to develop these.

Hannah Pritchard

'set in the natural environment of Richmond Park'

Fundraising events

Our annual **Christmas concert** was held in December 2010 and once again this was a very successful and enjoyable evening. One of the highlights of the evening was the choir of Linden Bridge School singing their music teacher's composition, 'Joseph's knocking at the door'. We are truly grateful to The Academy Choir of Wimbledon and Claire Tomalin, David Antrobus, Saeed Jaffrey, Linda Readman and Wendy Partridge for their participation.

ICE, Independent Charity Events, organised another very worthwhile **bridge lunch** for the Centre in Pembroke Lodge in January. Over £2,000 was raised towards our storytelling activity, for which we are very grateful.

On 7 April, Tenors *Un* Limited entertained a rapturous audience at the fundraising **dinner** held by the Centre and over £8,000 was raised. Everyone was delighted that HRH Princess Alexandra met all the guests at the reception prior to the dinner, which was held on a balmy evening on the terrace at Pembroke Lodge.

The 10th anniversary of **Richmond Park Reflections** was held in Pembroke Lodge on 8 June, in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra. It was again a sparkling evening, thoroughly enjoyed by everyone, and raised £3,000.

Unfortunately, Paddy Hughes has decided to stand down as organiser of the event after many years but Kathryn Hide and Caroline



Louise Crane, Kathryn Hide and Jacki Piper before their performance at Richmond Park Reflections, with Nigel Lawrence in the background

D'Cruz have kindly agreed to slip into his shoes. Our thanks go to all the performers and to Paddy for all the enjoyment they have given us.

Nigel's cycle ride raises £1,000 for the Centre

For a full 24 hours in June, Nigel Smith cycled around the Park and raised the magnificent sum of £1,000 for the Centre for which we are very grateful.

This is indeed wonderful but what is even more wonderful is that Nigel plans to do it again next year and is enlisting friends to do it with him! If you would like to join him, please contact us.

Star supporters

We are very grateful to everyone who has given funds, equipment, encouragement and time to the Holly Lodge Centre during 2011. Some of these supporters are mentioned in various articles but we would also like to thank:

- ★ HRH Princess Alexandra, Royal Patron
- ★ Pippa Hogg-Andrews and Melanie Brice and the staff and pupils of the Royal Ballet School
- ★ Simon Richards and all staff and contractors of the Royal Parks, the Metropolitan Police based in Richmond Park, the Richmond Park Safer Neighbourhood Team and the Friends of Richmond Park
- ★ The Hearsurn Family
- ★ The Variety Club of Great Britain and Alligator UK, Axa Insurance, Cobra, Liverpool Victoria, NIG Insurance, Travellers Insurance, Websure for help with Sunshine Coach. Peter Stovold, Executive Director Variety Club Golf Society, Currie Motors, Robert Holmes & Co and the Captain and Staff at Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club for all their help with the golf day.
- ★ Theo Aicolina, Ed Gates, Richard Hebblethwaite, Christopher Howard, Jang Hwa Koo, Joseph Jenson, Chris Shanahan, Hugo May, Gemma Mitchell, Lorna North, Clara Nunes, John Owen, Kay Owen, Sophie Penfold, Thomas Penfold, Christopher Sanders and Emma Scott for running and cycling in the London Duathlon, raising £4,500
- ★ Julian Abbott, Belinda Carroll, Malcolm Childs, Joanna Crompton, Ron Crompton, Monika Federowicz, Juan Ignacio Gaston, Inigo Gaston, Raquel Gaston, Mike (Mark) Gregory, Kathy Leech, Andrew Pears, Maite Ramilla, Pablo Riesco, Linda Scrase, Russell Scrase and Miriam Walsh for running the Royal Parks Half Marathon. This raised over £5,500 for the Centre
- ★ Axa Insurance, Department of Culture Media and Sport, Axa UK, Breakaway, Goldman Sachs Gives, True Volunteer Foundation for supporting us with team days and making important contributions to the maintenance of the Centre.
- ★ Cameron McKenna, Ernest Cook Trust, Malcolm Childs, Epsom MGOC, Philip Georgiadis, Hampton Estates, Perry Hay & Co, Lene Wood and John Lewis Kingston, Marsh Christian Trust, Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Reuben Foundation, Richmond Parish Lands, Rotary Club of Richmond, Richmond Park Charitable Trust, The Edwin George Robinson Charitable Trust, The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, Val D'Arden Associates, Waitrose Limited, White Lodge Golf Club, Winter Scott LLP, Wimbledon Village Stables and WMR Productions for their generous donations.
- ★ The late Shirley Salter and her family.
- ★ Last but not least our dedicated team of volunteers who gave 5,572 hours of time to the Centre in the last financial year.

'enabling access to fun and learning for everyone'

A message from Baroness Kramer, Patron



I've always thought of the Holly Lodge Centre as Richmond Park's version of Dr Who's 'Tardis'. First-time visitors enter expecting a small display area and suddenly find they are at the centre of buzzing activity with arts and crafts, work in the Victorian kitchen garden, displays in the Victorian Pharmacy, photography, walks, environmental activities and all sorts of engagement with Richmond Park in all its diversity.

Everyone has a place at the Centre and the number of people who are using wheelchairs or who have special needs simply underscores how much most amenities in this country fail to appreciate people with disabilities. The Holly Lodge Centre makes Richmond Park a place for all of us.

In my years as the local MP I came to appreciate how much the Centre contributes to the local community. It does not get the attention of the big national charities but few can match the opportunities for learning and the pleasure it gives. Thank goodness for the stalwart staff, amazing volunteers and generous supporters who keep the Centre thriving. When I was privileged to join the House of Lords I chose Richmond Park as my title not just because of the beauty of the Park but because it offers so much to all the community thanks to the Holly Lodge Centre.

We can all work together to make sure that the future of the Holly Lodge Centre is secure and that it can grow its activities. In the economically difficult times we face, Richmond Park and the Holly Lodge Centre, with the pleasures and opportunities they bring, are more important than ever. Let's make this the most exciting year yet.

How Alex Mulholland and his brother in law, David Bentley, conquered Hadrian's Wall

I set out with my brother in law, David Bentley, on 7 September 2011 to retrace the footsteps of the legions of people who built, worked, and fought on the borders between England and Scotland from AD 55 onwards.

The journey started north of Newcastle upon Tyne at the first fort to be built at Segedunum. Each day we encountered new scenes of splendour and magnificence as history unfolded. Slippery, rocky crags eventually merged downwards into grassy slopes and vales towards Carlisle.

Finally we walked through the Vale of Eden, an evolving panorama of lush grass pastures, flocks of so many different breeds of sheep, boggy, muddy fields and herds of cattle munching grass and flicking tails. The last few miles of this epic walk took us through the Solway Firth, a haven for seabirds, a wild and almost desolate borderland where occasionally I heard the clash of steel and some Latin orders



Mission accomplished!

shouted from a Centurion leading his men into battle!

The Wall is done, we are done, and to all who helped us – in support of the Holly Lodge Centre - 'Well done'. Alex Mulholland



Gillian Thorpe, Jennifer and Saeed Jaffrey enjoying becoming Victorian children during a visit to the Centre in July

Riding for the Disabled

Following an introduction from Joe Mastroiani of Kingston Riding Stables, we met with Sheila Patel, one of his clients, to see if we could enable riding for disabled people at the Centre in Richmond Park.

Through the contact with Sheila we received a generous donation from Goldman Sachs Gives and have rebuilt the riding arena at Holly Lodge to make it suitable for Riding for the Disabled. We are piloting with Kingston Riding Stables the use of the arena for their disabled riding groups and hope to expand this facility in the future.

Dr Pat's casebook

Josie, the tawny owl, came to visit during the summer holidays. She was found injured and rescued by Hydestyle Wildlife Hospital. She is now very old and blind, but has a great life getting out and about meeting people. The Holly Lodge Centre helps people who perhaps can't get outdoors so easily to enjoy nature in the beautiful Park.

The Park was used for inspiration for our new venture into storytelling. Kate Corkery has been running workshops for us as a means of getting children to create and write their own stories – and I mean write them with a pen and not a computer! While standards are high in many schools here, there are still far too many children who struggle with reading and writing, and do not attain acceptable competency by the time they leave primary school.

'More than one in two primary school teachers believe children are starting school having never been read a story at home. The research, carried out by Oxford University Press, also reveals a staggering 72% of teachers think primary school children today are less able to tell stories than they were 10 years ago. These are concerning findings given that reading and storytelling play a huge part in developing and improving children's writing skills.' (from



The feathery visitor

'Education Today', June 2010)

So I hope that our introduction of storytelling as one of our activities will help to address this and encourage children to use their imagination. I'm also learning to be a storyteller, although some people will already say I'm good at telling stories!

Pat Ealey
Project Manager

What is the Holly Lodge Centre?

The Holly Lodge Centre has grown in strength since I joined as a volunteer in 2002 and we have taken on many new volunteers and signed up many new supporters. Some of these people might not be aware of the reasons why the Centre was founded and I thought I would try to encapsulate this briefly in this newsletter.

The Holly Lodge Centre has been in existence since 1994 when it was officially opened by Rolf Harris, as one of the founder Patrons. Rolf was at that time President of the national charity, Phab.

The Centre was the brainchild of Mike Fitt, the Superintendent of Richmond Park from 1990 to 1997, who wanted to ensure that the Park became more accessible for everyone – especially for children and adults with special needs. In 1992 the current Project Manager, Dr Pat Ealey, was employed – she was still a student at the time – and the only facility was a basic classroom. The Holly Lodge Centre became an independent charity in 1999.

The aim of the Centre is to advance the education and enjoyment of visitors, in particular people with special needs, in the environment and in the Victorian history and heritage of Richmond Park.

The Centre has a licence agreement with the Royal Parks and works in partnership with them and has always been grateful for their support.

Since 1992 the Centre has changed beyond recognition – the Victorian room has been developed and we have created a Victorian kitchen garden, where we grow some of the plants which would have been used in Victorian times, including some of the herbs used for making medicines. The Victorian pharmacy, 'Mr Philip Palmer Chymist' was officially opened in January 2011. There is a wheelchair path on the nature trail, ponds and colourful murals adorn the picnic area.



Looking for bugs during an OPAL project session



Enjoyment during a Victorian Christmas activity

Numerous activities have been added to the programme on offer to visitors by the Centre – storytelling, life of birds and Message from Mars, to mention just three. Apart from these, the Summer Fun activities programme is very popular with summer clubs for people with special needs, as are the Victorian Christmas activities.

Joan Braune

Would you like to become involved?

If you can help us in any way or would like to know more about our activities and facilities, please contact us:

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